



Sunday Programs for March and April

Services start at 10:30am at 122 Harris Street, Guelph www.guelph-unitarians.com 519-836-3443
We have Spiritual Development programs for children 4 and older, and childcare for younger children.

March 7 (Pod 1) PREDICAMENTS OF MORTALITY

Aspen Heisey leads us to explore the subject of death and the writing of Thomas Lynch, a poet/undertaker. Inside his poetry and writing is an uncommon, sometimes humorous, place to stand and look at this thoroughly human predicament of mortality with consciousness and a sense of mystery. Lynch writes, "I'm more interested in the meaning of funerals and the mourning that people do. It's not a retail experience. It's an existential one."

Speaker and Service Leader: Aspen Heisey

March 14 (Pod 2) GIVING BACK TO PLACE

How do we engage with the places in which we live? How can art help us to challenge the spaces around us? Drawing on her background in place-based community art, Dr. Rebecca Caines will be talking about our connections to real, imagined, and experienced places. She will focus on a controversial community-based refugee memorial in Australia's capital, Canberra.

Speaker: Dr. Rebecca Caines

Service leader: Dave Hudson

March 21 (Pod 3) THE GREAT STORY: DARWIN, EVOLUTION AND HUMANITY

Charles Darwin, evolution, and science have given us a new "creation" story of life and the universe (with optional "creator"). This Great Story is a voyage of continuing discovery driven by the power of human curiosity. Ryan Gregory, an evolutionary scientist from the Univ. of Guelph, will share his reflections on Darwin and help us appreciate the miraculous gift of evolution and science.

Speaker: Ryan Gregory

Service Leader: Paul Smith

March 28 (Pod 4) WHITHER THE WEATHER

On October 24, people in 181 countries took part in the most widespread day of environmental action in the planet's history. Around the world, people rallied for strong action and leadership in anticipation of the UN's Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. With so much conflicting information about this debate, what is the science actually saying about the situation, what does the science not/yet know, and how should we respond? Moreover, what are the spiritual dimensions that can help guide our reaction?

Speaker: Alisa McClurg

Service Leader: Julie Elliotson

April 4 (Pod 1)

DREAMS, VISIONS & LETTERS TO GEORGE

My ways of coping with the environmental crisis.

Speaker: Joan Cornfield

Service Leader: Harold Chapman

April 11 (Pod 2) MARRIAGES AND COMMITMENTS – SOME UNITARIAN PERSPECTIVES

Many of us in love have chosen to be united with our lover for the rest of our lives. While this union is often formalized through marriage, some prefer a more personal commitment sanctioned by neither church nor state.

However we recognize this relationship, we make a leap of faith when we commit to another human being--faith in this person's capacity to love, to believe in us, to share the trials and tribulations of life. But we make a leap of faith in ourselves--in our own ability to love, to care when we are angry, to love when promises are broken and feelings are bruised. In this service, four UCG members will share their stories about their lives of commitment.

Service Leader: Nancy Schmidt

April 18 (Pod 3) RACISM AND WHITE PRIVILEGE: A UNITARIAN RESPONSE (and New Member Sunday!)

A service to assist UUs in identifying and addressing white privilege and racism within the context of our society by providing tools for creating and maintaining an anti-racist stance, a stance that embodies so many of our UU principles. White privilege is examined as a vehicle for racism, having an impact on and reducing opportunities for Canadian marginalized groups. Wilburn Hayden is Director of the School of Social Work, York Univ. and a member of Toronto's Neighbourhood UU Congregation.

Speaker: Wilburn Hayden

Service Leader: Melina Bondy

April 25 (Pod 4)

"GRUMPY GECKO" - EARTH DAY PAGEANT

Join the UCG children in our annual Intergenerational Pageant. Take time to celebrate Earth Day with this story that reminds us how all of life is connected. After the service, everyone is invited to take part in an activity to give back to the earth. Children wishing to participate in will be able to rehearse during our Sunday morning programs and join us for craft night, Apr 16th, to get ready.

Service Leader and Presenters: Children of the UCG

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF GUELPH

The Unitarian Congregation of Guelph is a spiritual community that is deeply rooted in Unitarian Universalist principles which provide a spiritual basis for ethical living. We celebrate diversity and affirm each individual. We support social and environmental justice through a democratic process. We welcome all seekers of truth and meaning in to our religious community.

(adopted at the Annual General Meeting, September 29, 2002)

The UCG News

is the newsletter published regularly by the Unitarian Congregation of Guelph
122 Harris Street,
Guelph Ontario N1E 5T1
Phone: 519-836-3443

Typed, handwritten or phoned-in submissions are always welcome, as are contributions by e-mail to admin@guelph-unitarians.com or telephone 519-836-3443. **Items for our next newsletter are due by April 12, 2010**

In an effort to save trees and money, we are e-mailing as many newsletters as possible. If you prefer it by mail, please let us know.

COMING EVENTS

- Mar. 3 – Chant Club 7:30pm
- Mar. 11 – Youth Group sleepover in Fergus
- Mar. 18 – Pagan Group 7:30pm
- Mar. 19 – Chalice Café 7:30pm
- Mar. 20 – Daring to Live in Gaia workshop
- Mar. 21 – Mindfulness Group 4:30pm
- Mar. 23 – Stone Soup 6:30pm
- Mar. 25 – Board meets 5:30pm
- Mar. 27 – Earth Hour 8:30pm
- Mar. 28 – Youth Group meets 6pm
- Mar. 31 – Susan Dafoe-Abbey talk 7pm
- Apr. 7 – Chant Club 7:30pm
- Apr. 8 – Stone Soup 12:30pm
- Apr. 10 – New UU Course 9am-1pm
- Apr. 11 – Youth Group meets 6pm
- Apr. 15 – Home Routes Concert 7pm
- Apr. 16 – Chalice Café 7:30pm
- Apr. 17 – Drum Making Workshop 1-5:30pm
- Apr. 18 – Mindfulness Group 4:30pm
- Apr. 22 – Board meets 5:30pm
– Pagan Group 7:30pm
- Apr. 25 – Child Haven dinner in Waterloo
– Youth Group meets

Meditation: Mondays 8pm

Yoga: Mondays 6:45pm & Thursdays 8:30am

Back to Basics NA group: Tuesdays 7pm

Reiki Share: Mar. 2, 16 and 30 7-9pm

UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF GUELPH

122 Harris Street, Guelph Ontario N1E 5T1
Phone 519-836-3443

www.guelph-unitarians.com

Lay Chaplains

Aspen Heisey 519-822-8666
Melina Bondy 519-824-9148

THE BOARD FOR 2009 - 2010

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| President | Lorna Wylsun | 519-822-1053 |
| | lwojcick@ovc.uoguelph.ca | |
| Past President | Deirdre Yates | 519-766-0523 |
| Vice President | Helen Prinold | 519-763-4585 |
| Treasurer | Steve Chovaz | 519-766-1965 |
| Member at Large | Harold Chapman | 519-763-2406 |
| Member at Large | Maria Chovaz | 519-766-1965 |
| Member at Large | Janet Colley | 519-824-0207 |
| Member at Large | Julie Elliotson | 519-831-6534 |

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------|
| Social Action | Open | |
| Membership | Cheryl Laird | 519- 821-7324 |
| | cheryll@rogers.com | |
| Support Network | Sarah McDougall | 519-829-1679 |
| Sunday Services | Linda Reith | 519-837-9471 |
| | lreith@on.aibn.com | |
| Chaplaincy Committee | Deirdre Yates | 519-766-0523 |
| | deeyates@gmail.com | |

STAFF

Program Coordinator for Spiritual Development

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Child & Youth Program Coordinator

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Office Administrator (Newsletter Editor * Distribution and Building Rental)

Rebekah Jamieson 519-836-3443
rebekahjamieson@hotmail.com

OTHERS WHO HELP

POD Coordinator Deirdre Yates 519-766-0523

Interior Co-ordinator & Exterior Co-ordinator,
Harold Chapman 519-763-2406

Musicians Naomi Matsui 519-821-2830

Pam Dickie 519-823-1891

Paul Smith 519-767-1033

Unitunz Bruce Walton 519-837-0322

Puppeteer Stuart Dixon 519-822-5008

FROM THE CENTRE OF THE WEB – A Message from Our President

The UCG Board has been working on developing policies for the benefit of the congregation including the very important and much needed Safe Steps which is designed to increase the safety and well-being of vulnerable members of our community. For me, it brings up some interesting dilemmas with respect to welcoming. How do we reconcile our commitment to be a welcoming community with keeping the congregation safe?



I recall June Gilbertson at one of our training sessions for Service Leaders talking about how vital it is for the Service Leaders to create a welcoming and inclusive space for newcomers. One of the ways she directed us to do this was by providing clear directions and a description of the elements of the service that are familiar to us but not obvious to others, such as the chalice lighting, sharing joys and concerns, and creating the arch for the children as they leave. The unspoken message these actions convey is that new people are welcome and we appreciate that they're joining us.

How do we reconcile the cautions provided to us by the insurance and legal systems as we develop policies while continuing to build relationships and invite new members to our community? It is a subject we will continue to explore.

An exercise I discovered recently in a book by Starhawk is the following:

Think of a group that has more structural power than you do. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine yourself walking into a room full of members of this group. What would they have to do to make you feel included?

How well do we do this at UCG?

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and discussing this further at the Congregational meeting on February 25.

Blessings,
Lorna



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

there is so much violence, conflict and destruction in us and around us and in the world. we have destroyed a lot of our planet and many species have disappeared. and what we need the most is peace. but who is going to bring peace into our lives? into our hearts and our environment? who is the one that can make peace? you already know that person - the one who is going to bring peace to you, to the world, is yourself. you are that very one.
(thich nhat hanh)

dear friends,

i had the great, great blessing to spend the month of january with my zen teacher thich nhat hanh and the plum village community in france. i got to reconnect with dear friends, play a lot of music, and of course enjoy great teachings and meditation in many forms. and now february turns to march and back in canada, winter turns to spring and i'm doing my best to bring plum village to guelph. many people have asked if i will share with them about my time in france. i will do so gladly, and the best way that i can do this is to share the practice. so, please consider yourself specially invited to join the mindfulness community of guelph, on the third sunday of the month, from 4:30-6:30pm. I can think of nothing more wonderful!

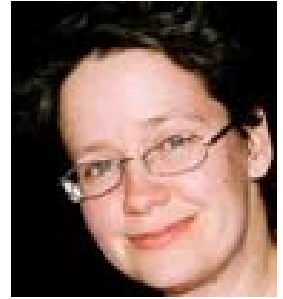
except, of course, the upcoming earth day pageant! on sunday, april 25th, during earth week, our children's programs will be performing the story of the grumpy gecko. if you have a child who would like to perform, or share crafty skills, please let me know! this will be a great event for everyone, and an opportunity for us all to reflect a little more deeply on why we celebrate our precious planet.

may you be well and at peace,
melina

REBEKAH'S CORNER

YOUTH GROUP Thanks to all our youth for the great service you led in February! There was a big turnout of people interested in what these young people had to say. March brings us an overnight sleepover in a yurt beside the Grand River, as well as a homophobia workshop.

KIDS' STUFF The 4-8 year old children have worked through UU principles #2 and 3, and we're now getting into #4 and 5 ("Search for what is true", and "All people need a voice!"). There has been much excitement around the Secret Pals, and identities will be revealed on March 7 – thanks again to everyone participating to make it so fun! We're looking forward to being able to spend more Sundays outside (remember to dress for the weather, just in case!) and to the intergenerational service on April 25.



Daring to Live in Gaia For a year and a day, one day every quarter, we will gather to deepen our ability to be fully present and active in the Great Turning, the change from living in industrial growth society to sustainable society. SophiaHeath and Linda Reith will facilitate a day-long workshop building energy and insight to free participants to be all that they can be in this turning.

Our goal is to support people in being a constructive part of the effort to restore our way of living on earth to sustainability. We are influenced by the ideas and practices of Joanna Macy, a long-time activist and educator. We plan to offer five connected workshops at the hinges of the year on the pagan calendar: spring equinox, summer solstice, fall equinox, winter solstice and spring equinox again. The workshops will all follow the arc of opening to gratitude, acknowledging our pain/fear/grief, seeing with new eyes and going forth. In spring we will look at beginnings/seeds of work, in summer the search for fertile ground, in fall the harvest so far and the resistance, in winter that grows in the unconscious/where we're not looking, and in spring reflection and new beginning. The series is "Daring to Live in Gaia."

The first workshop is Saturday, March 20, 2010. The charge for each workshop is \$85 with half the money being returned to UCG. Participants that attend all five workshops will be given a reduced rate on the last workshop. If you are interested, contact Linda Reith at 519-822-4889 or lreith@on.aibn.com.

Cultivating a Multi-Generational Community of Attachment

Wednesday, March 31 7:00 – 9:00pm



We put a high premium on social responsibility in our children but often lack an understanding of how best to develop values. Raising caring and considerate individuals who realize their full potential requires special conditions. It takes a whole community. This talk is based on the developmental and relational work of Dr. Gordon Neufeld, and presented by Susan Dafeo-Abbey, Parent Consultant and Family Therapist. Susan will address how cultivating the 6 roots of attachment sets the stage for caring, multi-generational communities. She will also describe how adults can harness the power of attachment to make their lives with children easier and more effective. This, in turn, creates a healthier society for people of all ages. Parents, grandparents, step-parents, foster parents, caregivers, teachers, community leaders and all those interested in this timely topic are invited. The cost is \$30.00/person. Advance tickets only. This is a fundraiser for our Congregation. Subsidies are available.

The New Unitarian Course

Do you want to know more about the UCG and Unitarian Universalism in general? Everyone is welcome to attend this informative and engaging workshop on Saturday, April 10 from 9am-1pm (lunch to follow). Topics include: What does "Unitarian" mean anyway? What does it mean to be a member the Unitarian Congregation of Guelph? What is the history of the Unitarian Universalist religious movement? When was the UCG founded? How does the UCG organize itself? What does being a Unitarian mean to me? This course is offered free of charge. Childcare can be provided upon request and 5 days notice. Please contact Sarah McDougall at smcdouga@uoguelph.ca or call at 519-829-1679 for more info or to register.

FROM THE COMMITTEES OF THE UCG

SUNDAY SERVICE COMMITTEE

The juice is flowing and we hope you are enjoying the services so far this year. Julie Elliotson has joined in the magic of imagining, organizing and reflecting that is the heart and soul of Sunday Services, and we are glad to have her. She comes just as we are saying good-bye and THANK YOU to Anna Bishop. What a pleasure to work with her energy and creativity and sharp insights. We wish her well on her adventures now that she's out of high school. We are speaking to folks who might be glad to be part of this work, inviting them to come to our Spring Retreat, so they can check us out. If you have an interest in joining in, please let any one of us know. We will welcome you.

The retreat is March 27 and will be a very stimulating Saturday. This is our next project now that we have had a successful service leaders workshop. We got together to review the excellent resources that we have in our service leaders handbook and in our hymnbooks. We reflected on the contributions each part of the service makes towards creating a stimulating and satisfying Sunday Service, and we practiced selecting and presenting readings. Everyone came out of the workshop feeling inspired and more confident, so I'd call that a success. We'll have to have another one soon, so others can join in the fun.

MEMBERSHIP

The UCG's year is half over and we are finalizing the new membership directory. If you have any changes in your contact info, or if you want to be added or removed from the directory, please contact me, Cheryl Laird, at cheryll@rogers.com or 519-821-7324. Thanks for everyone's prompt responses to our updating requests!

The new Unitarian Universalist Course is just around the corner. On April 10th, Sarah McDougall and I will provide you with information about UUism and the fun stuff happening at the Guelph congregation in particular.

Currently we have four members in this committee - Maria Chovaz, Ruth Martin, Katie Gad and myself. I would like to thank them for the great work they are doing. I would also like to thank Rebekah Jamieson for the great desk she donated to the Welcoming Table. It is a wonderful addition to our corner.

The Membership Committee would like to extend an invitation out to anyone interested in sitting in on a meeting to learn about what we do. Our next meeting is Mar. 9 at 4:30pm at the UCG. If you want to sit in, please contact me first at the above contact info as we sometimes change the location last-minute.

Remember, if you or someone you know would like to learn more about Unitarianism or would like to become a member of the UCG, please invite them out to a service and/or enroll in the course offered by Sarah McDougall (see page 4).

UCG SUPPORT NETWORK

Thank you to everyone who signed the Support Network Update Grid. If you're going through a tough time, there are people in our community who are willing to help with a ride, dog walking, meals, and much more. When everything is falling apart, it may feel impossible to ask for help, but know that we are here for you and all that we need to know is how we can help.

On that note, we know that there are people needing support who aren't able, or don't know how to ask. We gladly accept "referrals" - if you know someone in need of support, let us know. We always ask the recipient before a service is provided. And if you have ideas about how to let more people know how to access Support, please let us know!

LAY CHAPLAINCY

We are beginning a search for a new lay chaplain! Aspen Heisey will be retiring in the summer of 2011 after serving a 6-year term. We would like the new chaplain to start shadowing her this summer. This is a unique way to explore your spirituality. If you are interested in becoming a lay chaplain or being part of the search committee, please let me know!

Deirdre Yates - deeyates@gmail.com 519-766-0523

ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE UCG

STONE SOUP AT UCG

**Tuesday, March 23 at 6:30pm &
Thursday, April 8 at 12:30pm**

What happens when a bunch of UCG-ers come together to make stone soup? The body and soul get fed.

A pot of broth will be set on the stove and whoever comes will bring a vegetable, bean or pasta to make the soup. While the soup cooks, the chalice is lit and a reading is shared. Everyone is invited to share thoughts, feelings and experiences. Then we extinguish the chalice, bring out the soup and bread to share a simple meal together in gratitude and friendship. This is a great opportunity to get to know your Sunday morning neighbours better. Open to all, childcare will not be provided. For more information, call 519-836-3443 or speak to Melina after a Sunday service.

THE CHALICE CAFÉ

March 19 and April 16 – 7:30 pm

Don't forget the third Friday of every month is Chalice Café. This informal song circle gets started at 7:30pm and all are welcome, regardless of ability to play an instrument or carry a tune. If you want to sing or strum along, or even just listen, this event is for you. Bring a song to share or choose from our selections. This is a time to jam, have fun and sing out your soul! For further information, contact Jennifer Erickson or Bruce Walton at 519-837-0322.

COMMUNITY MEDITATION

Mondays at 8pm

This is a time to gather in silent practice, whether it is in Buddhist meditation, Christian contemplation or self-healing visualizations and everything in-between. We sit together for 30 minutes and then end with 10 min. of a guided loving-kindness practice. Everyone is welcome to this drop-in group. This is not a meditation course so there will be no formal instructions, but some guidance can be offered as needed. Suggested donation: \$2-5.

MINDFULNESS COMMUNITY OF GUELPH

Practicing the teachings of Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh
3rd Sunday of the month – 4:30 to 6:30pm
(March 21 and April 18)

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present and at one with those around you and with what you are doing.

We will begin with a guided sitting meditation, walking meditation and silent meditation. We will then share a teaching from Nhat Hanh and listen deeply to one another as we share what is on our hearts. This is a community practice that strengthens not only our formal meditation practice but also our ability to live in awareness and joy day by day. For more information, please contact 519-836-3443.



EARTH-BASED SPIRITUALITY has

long been an important part of the spirituality explored at UCG. This year we have initiated regular monthly gatherings to share ritual and deepen our understanding, as well as committing to marking the eight Hinges of the Pagan Year to the best of our ability. For more information, contact Linda Reith lrreith@on.aibn.com 519-822-4889.

Thursdays at 7:30pm – March 17 & April 22

AROUND THE CONGREGATION

HOME ROUTES CONCERT

Thursday, April 15 at 7:30pm

The UCG is proud to support the Winnipeg-based "Home Routes" concert program (www.homeroutes.ca). Home Routes is about world-class musicians, known and unknown alike, performing complete concerts in the comfortable intimacy of private homes and other non-traditional spaces. They're fun to attend, fun to present, and fun to play. Just imagine our sanctuary as a concert hall with 25-40 of your closest friends and their closest friends gathered for an evening of great music!

Bruce Walton has arranged the UCG to host the final concert in the Southern Ontario Concert Circuit for April 15. Tickets will be just \$15 for an evening with Rik Palieri (www.banjo.net). This is a great way to make our physical space a real community space. Check out the Home Routes website as well as Rik's site. It is hoped that the UCG can be a "regular" stop on the Southern Ontario circuit each year which means that we'll be bringing wonderful music to our community, in our own space! Further information can be obtained by contacting Bruce Walton at 519-837-0322.

PIZZA DINNER AND GRUMPY GECKO CRAFT NIGHT! FRIDAY, APRIL 16

Everyone is invited to a pizza dinner (6pm) and craft night (6:30pm) to make costumes, props and set pieces for the Grumpy Gecko Earth Day Pageant. Suitable for all ages, and lots of fun for everyone! Please RSVP to participate. To order your pizza (\$1.50/slice), please phone the office at 519-836-3443.

DRUM-MAKING WORKSHOP WITH JOHN SOMOSI **Saturday, April 17 1-5:30pm**

Your choice of drum size to make with respective costs: 12" = \$100, 14" = \$150, 16" = \$200 + \$5 per person. Materials supplied: frame is red cedar, skin is white-tail deer hide. Reserve your place and materials for your drum by calling Tricia: 519-837-8217.

REIKI SHARE

March 2, 16 and 30 (Tuesdays) and
April 8 and 22 (Thursdays) 7-9pm

Are you a Reiki healer and want to practice? Would you like to experience a free Reiki session? These are drop-in sessions for UCG members and a chance to share the magic of energy healing. We ask for donations, offering what we receive to the UCG space and anything extra for the healers who come. For more info, please contact Heather Isabela at: heather.isabela@gmail.com or call 519-994-9565.

THE NEXT UNITUNZ SERVICE

Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 16th. The Unitunz ensemble will be leading a musical service on the theme of "Optimism". We are very pleased to announce that Guelph's own award-winning folk recording artist, Tannis Slimmon, will be our special guest! If you are interested in playing or singing in the group for this service, please contact Bruce Walton at 519-837-0322. The rehearsal schedule will be published shortly so make sure you are on the contact list! We look forward to seeing you out for the service ready to raise your voices in song, clap your hands and stomp your feet.



COMING BACK TO LIFE WORKSHOP

May 8 from 9-5pm

On Saturday, Nov. 28th, Linda Reith and Melina Bondy held a day-long workshop called Coming Back to Life exploring The Work That Reconnects. It was well received by 20+ participants and the day was an excellent beginning to this journey. Another day-long will be held in May to introduce those who didn't get to participate previously, and go deeper for those who did.

"The Work That Reconnects (TWTR) is a pioneering form of group work that began in the 1970s, demonstrating our interconnectedness in the web of life and our authority to take action on its behalf. It has helped many thousands around the globe find insight, solidarity, and courage to act, despite rapidly worsening conditions. It is based on systems theory, spiritual teachings, and deep ecology." This work is completely ordinary and absolutely extraordinary. Everyone can do and as long as you participate, you will get a lot out of it. I'm not trying to be vague. It's just that experiential education isn't something that you talk about - you do it!

Registration Fee: \$80 (subsidies and energy exchanges available). Lunch is included - please let us know if you have any food sensitivities.

This is a fun'draiser for the Unitarian Congregation of Guelph. To register: email coordinator@guelph-unitarians.com or call 519-836-3443 and you will be sent a registration form. Registration and payments must be received by May 3rd.

For more info about TWTR: www.joannamacy.net

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILD HAVEN DINNER

Sunday, April 25th 2010

Join us for a fundraiser for Child Haven International, an organization that operates homes for formerly destitute children. This is the organization that Megan Gilbertson has gone to volunteer with! This exciting bazaar-style evening features Silent Auction, Door Prizes, Cash Bar, Objets d'art from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Tibet, Indian Dance Performance, vegetarian dinner catered by Jaipur Indian Cuisine, and Child Haven home updates from directors Rev. Fred and Mrs. Bonnie Cappuccino. (Activities begin at 3pm, dinner at 5:30pm)

Location:

St. George Banquet Hall (665 King Street N. Waterloo)

Tickets: Adults \$35.00 Children 5-12 \$10.00

Tax Receipts will be given for all donations above the price of the ticket. For tickets, talk to Joan Rentoul.

ECOCONSCIOUS FUN'DRAISING

The UCG is more than halfway to our fun'draising goal of the year – over \$6000! Thank you for your continued support! Don't forget our fair-trade and organic coffee, tea and hot chocolate. We also have individual bottles of eco-friendly cleaning products for sale. For more information, contact Janet Colley at 519-824-0207 or janetcolley@hotmail.com.

DONATIONS CAN NOW BE MADE ON LINE

Just a reminder that your pledged donation can be made online at www.guelph-unitarians.com by following on the link at the bottom of the homepage. Charitable receipts will be issued whether donations are made online or in person.

WHO DOES WHAT AT UCG?

In case you're confused about who to contact for what...

Weddings, funerals, big ideas, UCG programs – Melina Bondy 519-836-3443

Booking rentals, kids and youth, newsletter items – Rebekah Jamieson 519-821-4176

Board-related questions, issues: Lorna Wylsun

MEGAN OFF TO INDIA WITH CHILD HAVEN

February to May

One of our youth, Megan Gilbertson, has now left to volunteer her time at the Child Haven orphanage in India. Thank you again to everyone for your support and encouragement – proceeds from our weekly soup sales will continue to go to her work there.

SUPPORTING HAITI

A big thanks to everyone who donated to the relief efforts in Haiti. During one Sunday Service at the UCG, we raised over \$1100!

EARTH HOUR

Saturday, March 27 – 8:30-9:30pm

Cast a vote in favour of action on climate change! A global initiative of the World Wildlife Foundation, individuals, schools, organizations, businesses and governments are invited to turn off their lights for one hour. By voting with their light switches, Earth Hour participants make a personal commitment to the planet while sending a powerful, visual message to their leaders demanding immediate action on climate change.

UNICAMP 2010

Our very own Rebekah Jamieson will be Director at Unicamp this summer! The program brochure is now available at our Welcome Table.



Looking for somewhere to have your special event or retreat? Why not at Unicamp? In July, Unicamp offers week-long camps for children ages 7-13 and youth 13-15, as well as a Counselor in Training and Leader in Training program. In August, we offer 3 weeks for families, with weekend programs like Sacred Circle Dance and the Magic of Music. Every Friday in August, join the drum circle followed by storytelling or dancing!

If you've never been to Unicamp, 2010 is the year to experience the magic yourself. Phone 519-822-6353 or email admin@unicampofontario.ca to make your reservation. Or visit www.unicampofontario.ca

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND US

A REFUGEE STORY IN THE MAKING

This is a story about a young woman named Soffi Castaneda. She and her two sisters were born in the village of La Plata, Huila County, Colombia. La Plata is a town south of Bogota, Colombia, on the edge of the Andes Mountains. It sits at an elevation of 1050 metres, surrounded by green mountains.

Nine years ago, Soffi's mother fled to the United States with two of her sisters after her political activism brought her into conflict with FARC. In 2008, one of the sisters, Liliana, moved with her husband and their young son to Kitchener, Ontario, where they have been granted permanent residence as refugees.

Meanwhile, Soffi, her husband Julian and her two sons Camilo Andres and Santiago continue to be threatened by FARC as part of their campaign against her mother. They moved in with her father for protection but were forced to leave when he was targeted by a paramilitary

organization. In Nov. 2008, her father was "disappeared". Since then, Soffi and her family have been in hiding.

Liliana contacted the Canadian Unitarian Council in early January, seeking help to bring her sister's family to Canada. Reverend Jessica of the Waterloo Congregation listened to her story and then asked the Board for help. The Board responded with a unanimous "Yes!" Thus began the anti-climactic filling out of form after form. Many members of the congregation stepped forward to offer their assistance and the forms are now almost complete. By the time you read this story, they will have been forwarded on and the great pause will begin as we wait for the machinery of immigration to complete the next chapter of this refugee story.

As a neighbouring congregation to KW, the UCG has asked to be kept in the loop about the unfolding of this story and process, and when the time is right, there will be opportunities to help this family. So, stay tuned for the next chapter in this story! If you are interested in lending a helping hand, there will be many opportunities over the next year. We'll keep you updated in the next newsletter. Let's keep Soffi and her family in our hearts and minds and wish them a safe and smooth transition.

Summary of the Jan. 28th UCG Board Meeting

(a full copy can be found on the bulletin board)

- We raised \$1108 for Haiti! The UCG is on budget.
- Harold has taken the mic for repair. We are getting costs for a screen for the high sanctuary window.
- Sunday Services cttee needs more volunteers. People in the building on Sunday are encouraged to help service leaders set up/take down chairs so the room is clear for programs during the week.
- We've reached the \$6000 plateau for UCG fun'draising (goal of \$10,000). We need another big fun'draiser in the next four months. Contact: Steve.
- Support Network have been updating our lists of UCG members able to offer support to others (posted in the Sunshine Room).
- Helen explained many of the details and concerns about UCG's rental of the building to third-parties. Next meeting: explore purpose/goals of renting the building.
- Work is ongoing to incorporate more concrete policy on working with Vulnerable Adults into Safe Steps Policy.
- We continue to work on getting accurate info and costs regarding a solar energy system for UCG.
- Next meetings – March 25 and April 22 at 5:30pm