

# THE NOR'WESTER

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto

Issue #10

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April 2010



**April 4th @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**“An Easter Lesson from  
Buddhism for All of Us”**  
**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**Dr. John Mayer**

We hope you can join us Easter Sunday morning for one of our favourite speakers, John Mayer. In his talk, John will attempt to integrate the resurrection theme with the Buddhist teaching of impermanence and transiency. He will explain how the Western notion of process philosophy is such a project.

John has recently taken on a new role as President of the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara. As you may know, John is a Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Brock University. John and his wife will shortly be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with their 4 adult children and eight grandchildren.

**April 11th @ 10:30 a.m.**  
**“The History of Haiti”**  
**Jem Carter**

When Haiti experienced a devastating earthquake early in 2010, some must have wondered why any one cares much about or holds any hope for a poverty-stricken country that just seems to lurch from one crisis to another, with no long term improvement. However, many people across the Americas do hold Haiti in their hearts and see it as tremendously important in an historical context. In the early 1800's the Black slaves of Haiti gained freedom from slavery and gained independence from France - an unprecedented achievement that inspired slaves in other countries and put fear in the hearts of slave societies across the Americas and elsewhere and led to decades of economic suppression of Haiti by France, the U.S. and others.

Jem Carter is the son of Joy Carter (who has attended many of our services over the years and whom many of you know) and is a University of Toronto student. From a very young age he has always had an strong interest in history with a particular passion for the history of Africa and the Caribbean. He has spoken to us before about Afghanistan and also about China.



**April 18th at 10:30 a.m.**  
**Sharing the Faith Sunday**  
**Kalvin Drake**

April 18th will be a special Sunday for two reasons ~ Calvin Drake will be coming to speak to us for a special “Sharing the Faith” Sunday and Megan Ratcliffe is going to become a member! Isn't this appropriate? We, as a congregation, are sharing our faith with Megan and, since she first walked in our door, Megan has been sharing her time and talents with us. Be sure to come out on Sunday, April 18th to welcome Megan to our Fellowship.

## Sharing the Faith Sunday - A Special Offertory

Each year we take a special offertory which is sent to the Canadian Unitarian Council. The money goes to Unitarian congregations in Canada who need financial help for special projects they may not be able to afford otherwise. These are projects which enhance the ministry, growth, or outreach for the particular congregation or for the Unitarian/ Universalist movement in Canada. Please contribute to this worthwhile cause.

**April 25th at 10:30 a.m.**  
**“Theodore Parker and the Shape of  
Modern Unitarianism”**  
**Dr. Peter Hughes**



In 1841 Rev. Theodore Parker preached a greatly influential sermon, “The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity,” whose main idea set the pattern for much of later Unitarian thought. His experience over the next few years, under fire from many other Unitarians, set a pattern for how Unitarians deal with members whose ideas challenge the current accepted consensus.

Rev. Peter Hughes was the minister of the First Unitarian Church of Woonsocket in Rhode Island (1986 - 1999). While living in New England he made a study of early Universalism and wrote a number of articles on New England Universalist history. He is now retired and, living in Toronto and does historical research on the roots of Unitarianism and Universalism in the Reformation.

## HIKE FOR HOSPICE

The Hike is a nation-wide event hosted by hospices and palliative care organizations to help build awareness and raise funds. Held in May each year, people of all ages come together to walk, run or stroll in support of the Hospice's Bereavement Services. With a variety of trails to choose from, participants can walk 1 km, 5km, or 10 km. A special tribute honouring deceased loved ones is the cornerstone of this fun, uplifting special event. This year's Hike for Hospice takes place on Sunday May 2, 2010 with the start and end of the hike being at the Hospice Residence. If you would like to join this year's team from Northwest, please contact Judy Magney.

## *Like Water for Spices* **South India**

Learn all about South India and the Unitarian journey planned for March 2011.  
Enjoy dessert and tea at  
Neighbourhood Congregation - 79 Hiawatha.  
Saturday, May 1st @ 7:15 p.m.  
RSVP Beverly Carr  
416-939-4007 or bgcarr@rogers.com



## **Welcoming Congregations**

This year's Gay Pride Parade will be held on Saturday, July 4th. The theme for this year is "You Belong".

The Unitarian Congregations of Greater Toronto (UCGT) has been marching in the Gay Pride Parade for several years now. At last year's parade, Melanie Walters, from this congregation, joined them to help hold signs and march through the streets of downtown Toronto.

If you would like to join Melanie and the rest of the Toronto Unitarians at this year's parade, please contact Melanie.

## **SO YOU THINK YOU CAN SING!**

Do you think you would like to be part of a special choir Marilyn is putting together for the 50th Anniversary?

We will have fun with some "oldies" at the party on Saturday night, but we'll also learn three songs for the special Sunday service. They won't be difficult, but we will want to get them right!

To do this, we'll have to meet almost every Sunday morning from the middle of April until the middle of June for an hour before the service. Marilyn will contact some of our known singers, but if you are a shy someone whose voice has been hiding, tell Marilyn that you would like to sing with us.

## ***Garden Clean-up day at Northwest***

The Ad-Hoc Building Committee will be scheduling a clean-up yard day in May and another one in June to make the Fellowship beautiful on the outside for our 50th Anniversary. Any help from members and friends would be appreciated. More details to follow in May newsletter.



## **GIANT YARD SALE** **At the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto**

Date: Saturday, May 15, 2010  
*Rain or Shine*

Time: 9:00 a.m. to noon

Purpose: Fundraising for our 50th  
Anniversary Celebration

Items for Sale: Gently used household  
items, clothes and books. Furniture  
and much more!

## ACROSS THE DENOMINATION

### **The Canadian Unitarian Council has moved!**

Our new address: Canadian Unitarian Council  
100 - 344 Dupont Street  
Toronto, ON M5R 1V9  
Our phone numbers remain the same: 1-888-568-5723;  
email: [info@cuc.ca](mailto:info@cuc.ca)  
For directions to our new office visit our website at  
[www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca)

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### **Where do we come from, What are we, where are we going?**

The lines from the song in the UUA's hymn book, "Singing the Journey", are simple yet they ask fundamental questions we'd be wise to spend some time thinking about. It is easy in the busyness of our personal, congregational and associational lives to continue along the path we find ourselves on, without questioning if the path is suited to us, or is the one we need to be on. Too often, we find ourselves trundling along a path without asking ourselves if it was ever the right one. Small questions! Big impact!

Until we know if the story of our past, "where do we come from", is the same as the one we tell ourselves, we may not really understand the patterns we're not aware of that continue to influence us. Often congregations bump into resistance and leaders become frustrated, not understanding the reasons for it, because they don't know the story of the congregation's past; a story that continues to influence patterns of influence and relationships. Sometimes an avoidance of conflict is rooted in a nearly forgotten but traumatic congregational split. An understanding of our past helps us understand ourselves better and leads to greater congregational awareness, "what are we", which in turn helps us better understand the strengths we can bring to the work that is needed for congregational vitality. Similarly we'll be better able to understand where our congregational weaknesses are. Self-knowledge based on a clear understanding of our history is essential if we are to make changes that challenge the status quo. Without that self-knowledge, people may wonder why intensified efforts fail to bring the desired results. Finally, a congregation has to have a clearly articulated and commonly understood vision for itself, if it wants to re-imagine its future. Failing to do the work, failing to have hard and sometimes difficult conversations about "where are we going" can lead to crossed communication, cross purposes and cross members and leaders. Spending time in small group discussions and in larger informal discussions about shared dreams will help the congregation develop

plans to help realize those dreams. This is tough and important work. It is hard, particularly in our smaller congregations to face the reality that not all members are going to like the direction that the majority identify. Sometimes vocal and unhappy members cause others to question themselves and to apply the brakes to the work that the larger group has determined they will undertake. Clarity of vision, leaders who are able to articulate goals and who can help encourage and reassure others and a strong sense of values and purpose are key to a congregation's ability to move forward. Knowing why we are going in a particular direction, knowing who we intend to serve and knowing how we believe we can contribute to the work of the world add to a congregation's ability to present a strong and compelling vision to itself, and furthers its ability to muster and keep the energy needed for the journey. Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? Small questions! Big impact!

In faith and with affection,  
Linda Thomson  
Director of Congregational Services

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### **First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo**

Likely most of us have, at one time or another, found ourselves wondering what to say or what to do when someone is in crisis. Most of us have found ourselves holding back for fear of doing the wrong thing. In Waterloo, the minister, Rev. Jess, and the CARE Network are hosting a special Pastoral Caregiving training session called "I Don't Know What To Say: Cultivating the Non-Anxious Presence". The session will explore how to be a respectful companion in crisis. For more information email [info.waterloo@unitarians.ca](mailto:info.waterloo@unitarians.ca)

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### **Upcoming Events:**

May 14-17, 2010  
Travel to Boston with a Unitarian Focus  
Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation

May 21-24, 2010  
2010 Annual Conference And Meeting  
Victoria, British Columbia

July 15-18, 2010  
Canadian Unitarian Universalist Leadership School –  
2010  
McMaster University, Hamilton, ON



# Around the House



## CALLING ALL BOOKIES!

The next Book Club meeting will be following the service on April 11th. The book we will be discussing is *Tuesdays With Morrie*, by Mitch Albom. The moderator will be Judy Magney.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 50:50 Oscar Picks sponsored by the Mississauga Veterinary Emergency Hospital where Debbie Wood works. The winner generously donated her half of the winning, so the entire amount of \$186.00 was donated to the *Phoenix Fund* which helps sick and needy animals.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Helen, Joanne and Dee who successfully completed the Lifesaver 101 - First Aid & CPR Training Course in a very enjoyable and effective learning environment. "As First Aiders, the goals are to develop a competent approach to help minimize human suffering, promote recovery, sustain life and prevent death." Well done!



## CAMEO

When: Thursday, April 22nd

Time: 11:30 a.m.

What: Join us for lunch and stay to watch a video of our 30th Anniversary Celebration, which features some long-time Northwest members!

Please RSVP to Grace by Monday, April 19th. Cost for lunch is \$5.00. Hope to see you there!

## BUSY CLEANING BEES!

Have you noticed how beautiful the Fellowship is looking? There were busy cleaning bees at work the last two Saturdays in March.



Thank you so much to Helen and her crew for getting down and dirty. There was a hive of activity throughout Fellowship House. Of special note is the decluttering, the kitchen, the new pamphlet holder, and improvements to the bulletin board areas.



## 50th Anniversary Celebration Weekend

*Celebrating Our Past, Sharing Our Future*

June 19th & 20th, 2010

- Please send us any pictures or memories by April 15th for an Anniversary CD (ufnwt@bellnet.ca)
- 50th Anniversary Donations/Contributions will be gratefully accepted
- RSVP by May 1st to Northwest 416-249-8769/ufnwt@bellnet.ca