

OUR FIRST YEAR ON OUR OWN

SHARING OUR FAITH SUNDAY WORSHIP MATERIALS



November 22, 2002

Dear Service Leader,

Every year the Canadian Unitarian Council offers your congregation worship materials to help you celebrate our faith in Canada. This year's "Sharing Our Faith" service is special because it is the first of its kind in the "new CUC" (i.e. independent of the Unitarian Universalist Association).

You will find the worship materials in this package do not focus on heritage as much as the ever-nagging questions of "What does it mean to be Canadian, or Unitarian Universalist for that matter?" and "Where do we go from here? Never in the lifetime of the CUC have these questions been more important.

We are building a new CUC upon the strong foundations of the old. Building such a faith is both a joy and vitally important if our values are to be lived in our nation in future generations. We need to be careful, deliberate, intelligent, spirit-filled and generous as we build if we are to succeed.

This year's "Sharing Our Faith" service is an opportunity to begin building in earnest. Please give your congregation an opportunity to make a donation to the CUC during the service. Also, please inspire your congregation to give generously. All special "Sharing Our Faith" donations will be used to....? We encourage you to schedule the service for sometime in January or February.

I hope you find these worship materials useful, inspiring in places, humorous in others, and in every way heart-felt.

Yours in faith,

Rev. Joan Montagnes

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OPENING WORDS

When asked, “What does it mean to be Canadian?”

We are just as lost as when we are asked

“What does it mean to be Unitarian Universalist?”

It won't do to define ourselves in the negative:

“Not this, not that.”

It won't even do to define ourselves in comparison:

“More this, less that.”

The time has come for us to say who we are,

To discover who we are,

To know who we are.

As clearly as a point on a map.

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CHALICE LIGHTING

We light this chalice
together with our brothers and sisters in faith
who live with rainy moss-covered trees,
with imposing mountain beauty,
with huge-horized grasslands,
with ancient rock-sculpted lakes,
with the wide sea-way,
and with chilly, wave-smashed coasts.
We light this chalice with those who share our faith.

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HYMNS

#49 Stillness Reigns, lyrics by Guttormur Guttormsson, Canadian Icelandic Unitarian Poet

#159 This is My Song

#121 Come Build a Land

#293 Sing Out Praises for the Journey, lyrics by Mark Mosher DeWolfe, Unitarian Universalist minister in Canada

This Land is My Land, This Land is Your Land, Canadian Version

“From Bona Vista to Vancouver Island

From the Arctic Circle to the Great Lakes Waters

This land was made for you and me.”

Several hymns translated into French may be found in. *Vers un reve a batir/Fulfilling a Dream*, edited y Ray Drennan, Canadian Unitarian Council, Toronto, 2002.

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STORY FOR ALL AGES

Choose three of the following poems for your intergenerational time.

In Kamloops

Bump on Your Thumb

Thinking in Bed

The Fishes of Kempenfelt Bay

The Hockey Game (with thanks to A.A. Milne)

Kahshe or Chicoutimi

Tongue Twister

Adapt the poems to suit your children and your congregation accordingly. For example, replace Kempenfelt Bay with English Bay; add “On Main Street (or whatever Street), I’ll eat your feet;” change the poem to read “tickle your tum in Regina.” All the poems come from *Alligator Pie*, by Dennis Lee, Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, Toronto, 1974.

Hints for reading these poems to children of all ages:

“...feel free to re-locate the place poems as drastically as you want. Put in the streets and places you know best; the rhyme and the metre may get jostled a bit, but so what?

...nursery rhymes can’t be approached at an adult’s reading rate. They unfold much more slowly. In fact they need to be brought to life almost as tiny plays, preferably with much pulling of faces and bouncing of rear-ends on knees. One of these four line poems may take a couple of minutes to complete, especially if you drop in new words and verses.

I had never realized how soon a child can take part in “doing poems”. A two-year-old will join in, if you pause at the rhyme-word and let him complete it.”

**DENNIS LEE, CANADIAN POET, ALLIGATOR PIE,
MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED, TORONTO, 1974,
P. 63**

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MEDITATION

This meditation may be read by a single voice or antiphonally by a chorus.

We have set ourselves free.

Set ourselves free to discover what it really means
to have a North

To strip off our Mountie uniforms

To wear touques only when our heads are cold in winter

To be polite because, gosh darn it, we like being polite.

We have set ourselves free:

To disagree about the origins of Boxing Day

To be proud of a curling broom

To love Anne Murray and Celine Dion, or not.

We have set ourselves free:

To have a donut shop on every corner, just in case...

To believe a little socialization can be a very, very good thing

To be awestruck by the abundance of our natural resources
and then to be gentle with them.

We have set ourselves free:

To be immigrants among immigrants, Canadians among
Canadians

To have the Queen on *some* of our stamps.

To get a tear in our eyes when we think of stubbie beer
bottles, and then to move on.

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We have set ourselves free:

To know who won the war of 1812

To get to know each other

To begin to build a just relationship
with First Nations Peoples

To begin to heal the wounds inflicted
on the Plains of Abraham.

We have set ourselves free:

From worrying that nobody else knows who the Group of
Seven were

To enjoy either vinegar or gravy and cheese curds
on our fries.

To learn how to pronounce “Newfoundland”
and finally to find the time to go there

We have set ourselves free:

To understand the significance of “the last spike,”
the Trans-Canada highway, or even “.ca”

We have set ourselves free to be one honking huge landmass
of unfathomable geologic age,

filled with a great deal of wilderness,

a few extremely diverse people,

some steel and glass, a tangle of highways,

as well as muskeg, tundra, and mostly...mostly empty space

We have set ourselves free.

What shall we do now?

Inspired by Douglas Coupland, *Souvenir of Canada*, Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, 2002

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SERMON IDEAS

- What are your thoughts on what it means to be Canadian and Unitarian and/or Universalist?
- What are your thoughts on the future of Unitarian Universalism in Canada? Where are we going?
- How will we celebrate who we are without becoming a Nationalistic Religion, forever competing and contrasting with the UUA?
- How will we become a hipper, more happening CUC?
- Ask three members of the congregation to share five minute testimonials of what it means to them to be Canadian and Unitarian and/or Universalist?
- Ask three members to describe their visions of the future of our faith in Canada.
- Ask a CUC staff or board member to speak at your church or fellowship (they will need plenty of notice).
- Give a short talk (five minutes) to introduce the issues and open the sermon time up to an all-congregation discussion on the topic.

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OFFERTORY WORDS

Today we are talking about sharing our faith. Every year the Canadian Unitarian Council invites us to celebrate our faith in Canada. This year's "Sharing Our Faith" Service is special because it is our first year on our own, independent of the American based Unitarian Universalist Association. Over the last several years, we and our friends in other Canadian Unitarian Congregations, decided to set our selves free to pursue programming and services more relevant to our members. This was a very daring move, but we made it carefully, deliberately, intelligently, and with good spirit.

Now we need to take another step, another daring step, into our future as a community with the same care, deliberation, intelligence and good spirit. We are a small, widely dispersed council of congregations. Our existence is fragile. We need to be generous if our daring vision is to grow into a successful reality.

Every year the Canadian Unitarian Council invites you to make a generous donation to our "Sharing Our Faith" projects. In the past your donations have supported congregational youth programs, Summer Sunday Services, part-time ministries, studies for growth, web site design, Directors of Religious Education, hymnals, signage, music programs, men's groups and Leadership School tuitions.

In this first daring year on our own, your donation to "Sharing Our Faith" projects is more important than ever. Please be especially generous to support our next exciting and promising steps together.

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CLOSING WORDS

Let us be aware that the first step we take from this holy place will both create our new heritage and direct the course of our collective future.

Let our steps be wise and joyous.

And may all our paths of memory, caring and hope bring us safely together once more.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Drennan, Ray, ed. *Vers un rêve à bâtir/Fulfilling a Dream*, Canadian Unitarian Council, Toronto, 2002.

One and Universal, Skinner House Books, Boston, 2002.

Singing the Living Tradition, Beacon Press, Boston

#440 From the Fragmented World, Phillip Hewett, Canadian Unitarian minister

#470 Affirmation, Leonard Mason, Canadian Unitarian Universalist minister

#580 The Task of the Religious Community, Mark Morrison-Reed, Canadian Unitarian Universalist minister

#693 And Now May We Have Faith, Emil Gudmundson, Canadian Icelandic Unitarian minister

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Joan Montagnes was raised in the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. She received a BSc. from the University of Toronto and a MSc. from the University of Alberta for her studies on a rare Arctic moss. Joan attended Meadville/Lombard Theological School in Chicago. She has served congregations in Edmonton; Beaconsfield, Quebec; Toronto; and Wenatchee, Washington in various capacities. Joan currently serves the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse in Moscow, Idaho. She returned to Toronto on her sabbatical this past year and contributed this work to the CUC.

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HANDLING THE MONEY

1. Announce that there will be a special collection in advance of "Sharing Our Faith" Sunday, so that people are prepared.
2. Individuals contributing by cheque should make out cheques to the Canadian Unitarian Council, and mark them "Sharing Our Faith."
3. If you are contributing the loose offering to "Sharing Our Faith," please count it and send us a cheque, rather than sending cash. Provide receipts for identified contributions which are in cash; it is quite in order for you to send us money which has been receipted.
4. We have some printed envelopes available. Call Kevin Virtue 416-489-4121 or kevin@cuc.ca and let us know how many you need. A sample is enclosed for your information.

TAKING THE OFFERING

In the service, you might want to mention some of the congregations and projects for which the donations were used last year to give people an idea of this.

You might note that all of the money collected is then given out directly to other Canadian congregations.

If your congregation has received a grant in the past, it would be good to mention that and how the money was used.

INTRODUCING THE SERVICE

If your congregation regularly holds a Sharing Our Faith service, mention that at the beginning of the worship service.

If this is your first time, but you intend to do it yearly, mention that, especially if you've decided on a particular date (many congregations do it on the first or second Sunday in February.)

NEXT YEAR'S SHARING OUR FAITH PACKAGE

We are having a sermon contest. Details were sent in last month's mailing.

Please check the www.cuc.ca for information if you missed it.

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Sharing Our Faith Grants

At the May, 2002, board meeting, the CUC Board of Trustees approved the following Sharing Our Faith grants:

Congregation	Project	Amount
Winnipeg	Youth Programs Coordinator	\$633.42
PEI	Summer Services	\$750.00
Saint John, NB	Part Time Minister	\$2000.00
South Fraser (Surrey, BC)	Update demographic study and undertake growth activities	\$1510.00
Halifax	Web Design and Implementation	\$750.00
Kingston	Director of Religious Education	\$1500.00
Westwood (Edmonton, AB)	Part-time ministry support	\$1000.00
	Total Grants	\$8143.42

CRITERIA FOR SHARING OUR FAITH GRANTS

POSSIBLE USES FOR FUNDS INCLUDE:

- Topping up the salary package offered by a congregation moving to ministry.
- Supporting a "Minister on Loan" program for an emerging group.
- Providing travel funds to enable remote congregations to have access to ministerial services.
- Developing religious education programs for children or adults.
- Other uses relevant to ministry, outreach and extension.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

Recipients will usually be either current member congregations or emerging groups. The CUC board will, however, consider new starts where funding is requested for the very early stages of group development.

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The application for funds should include a clear description of the project the congregation wishes to undertake, indicating how it fits into the overall growth plans of the group. A specific budget for the project should be part of the proposal including the funds the congregation or group have allocated for this project.

Please include the following information:

- evidence of systematic and sustained financial support of the group/congregation by members (e.g. a regular every-member canvass, pledging of specific annual contributions by members, budgets based on predictable support by the group, an increase in the average contribution per member in the preceding three year period).
- financial statements for the three previous years. If less than three years old, for the years they have been in existence.
- indication that they have held a "Sharing Our Faith" Sunday themselves during the current year, in order to demonstrate their commitment for our larger religious community.

To demonstrate a commitment to growth, applications should:

- describe programs, events, or other activities recently undertaken to support growth, including visibility, advertising, community involvement. Describe the ways in which new members are integrated into the congregation.
- identify particular communities or constituencies (through demographic data or other background information) in which outreach is taking place.
- provide evidence of a telephone book listing under Unitarian, Unitarian Universalist, or Universalist Unitarian. The CUC board will consider alternative evidence of public visibility such as a web-site, signage, posters, etc.

REPORTING:

If awarded a grant, recipients will report on their project, one year after receiving the funds, including a financial statement indicating the use of the funds and the impact of the funds on growth.

Applications must be received by April 15, 2003, preferably in both electronic and printed form.