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Deadline for next Spire
submissions:
February 13, 2016



Caring Contacts

February

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In Memoriam

Anne MacKinnon Jeffrey ~
wife of Ian Jeffrey
Died November 20, 2015

**Marion Louise (Mary Lou)
Curtis** ~ wife of the late Bert Curtis
Died November 22, 2015

Arthur R. Palmer ~
(predeceased by Ursula, 2001),
partner of Mary Simpson
Died November 22, 2015



[Love] is a fire that, kindling its first embers in the narrow nook of a private bosom, caught from a wandering spark out of another private heart, glows and enlarges until it warms and beams upon multitudes of men and women, upon the universal heart of all, and so lights up the whole world and all nature with its generous flames.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson, Unitarian
<http://www.emersoncentral.com/love.htm>



President's Corner

—Maury Prevost

The Beat Goes On

I wish you a belated welcome to 2016! I am reminded of the Sonny & Cher song, “*The Beat Goes On*,” because our congregation’s activities never stop. Since my last column, we have had another very successful Fall Fair and made further progress in supporting Syrian refugees, to name just two activities.

I am also pleased to welcome two new Directors to our Board, Amy Bérubé and Jennifer Shaw-Read, who were appointed by the Board in December to complete the current year of the terms started by Charles Lanktree and Peter Goddard. Amy and Jennifer will stand for election at the Annual General Meeting on April 24.



The search for volunteers is one of our never-ending activities. Current opportunities I will highlight (look for others elsewhere in this newsletter) include a group of five people to organize this year’s Time & Talent Auction, a new Chair for the Denominational Affairs Team, and volunteers to transform our Stewardship Team into a more year-round, all-encompassing fundraising group.

Speaking of fundraising, our pledge campaign for the 2016 Operating budget is at 71% of its \$500,000 goal at the time of writing (one full week into January), but

we would like to be at 100% by the time you are reading this. I am one of a group of about a dozen people making follow-up contacts.

The Board, selected staff and a few others will meet for half a day on January 16 to review our governance and organizational structure and decide on possible changes and follow-up actions. Our current structure has been in place since April 2012, so it is due or overdue for such a review.

Board meeting business in January and February will include a review of how we ended 2015 financially (including the annual report on our investment portfolio), what’s next with the LRT project, and how we can more effectively comply with the requirements of being a registered charity (following up from the information session on this topic in late November). A key consideration for this last is how to do so while also fulfilling our mission/vision to increase love and justice in the world – another never-ending task.

Let us savour the complex rhythms of our congregation and the world we live in ... as the beat goes on.

~Maury Prevost



Religious Exploration

–Liz Roper



Happy New Year

A Happy New Year to you all! I have had a wonderful first semester here at First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. You have all been so welcoming, supportive and enthusiastic. I wanted to take a moment to give you a little insight into my philosophy of religious education and faith development so that you may see the drive behind some of the work I put into First.

I believe we are all spiritual beings with the capability to lead full, deep, spiritual lives in connection to whatever our hearts call divine. We need to give ourselves space in order to do this; we also need to commune with others so that we can grow in ways we cannot alone. Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us, with the Third Principle, to work on this within our faith home –

“acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.”

How can we do this to our best ability? It starts with community, and grows with good leadership; we have both at First Unitarian.

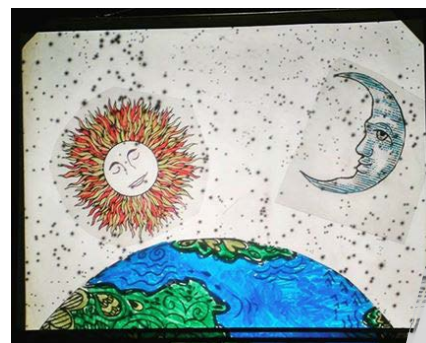
As Director of Lifespan Learning, I see my role as one of taking people from birth through death, (or any portion of the way) on their faith journey. I work with my religious education teams to explore what we wish to teach someone along their journey and how we wish to teach it. It begins with our religious exploration program. Our curricula are picked with a life journey in mind, and this is what most people think of when they think of religious education. However, that is just where it starts.

Faith development happens in all aspects of our lives, including all aspects of our

congregational lives. Worship is a perfect example of how we develop. I said that each of us is a spiritual being, but we are not born with the knowledge of how to worship within community. Each faith tradition worships differently and each person has to learn how to worship when they join a community.

Children especially need to learn how to worship, and they learn best by doing. We work together as a team to make sure each part of our worship that children observe and participate in adds to their development. Our first hymns in Sunday service, our welcome, and our “time for all ages,” all are curated to teach them how we worship.

I use the time for all ages to simulate a sermon, as stories can express the same message as a sermon in a way that reaches a different part of ourselves. This also gives children a time to learn how to sit with their families in a worshipful setting. This learning is increased with our monthly All Together NOW services and our Multisensory services which follow the monthly themes so that people from all generations have something to connect with. Different learning styles are used to engage as many people as possible.



continued on page 4...

Religious Exploration...continued from pg. 3

Many people, not only of the younger generation, find it difficult to express their spirituality through a traditional worship style, as it rarely connects with the visual or kinaesthetic senses.

Our faith development does not stop with our religious exploration program, nor with worship. Just as our children receive up to 18 years of curated educational and spiritual programs to learn and grow within our faith, we need to provide similar learning opportunities for adults who joined later in life.

The Adult Learning team works with congregants to seek out the passions that we wish to share with each other; it also decides what members may need to continue our spiritual paths. There is a faith development model that talks of all of us as trees, no matter what our age – saplings or new growth, growing trees, old growth, and deep growth.



A child and their parent may be at the same stage if they join at the same time, but an adult who has attended for many years may not have as much deep growth as a youth who actively works on their faith each week in a structured setting. The team is committed to provide learning opportunities to all ages and stages of growth so we can deepen our faith together.

Watch for the faith development workshop, **“Fluent in Faith,”** on Sunday, February 28, 12.30 p.m. to 3 p.m. (For more details, see page 5). We will be discussing 15 words that hold immense power for many and in very different ways:

God, Faith, Hope, Love, Covenant, Doctrine, Sacrament, Prayer, Sanctuary, Sin, Atonement, Blessing, Grace, Mercy, and Salvation.

Why do the words invoke particular emotions for us individually and how can we work and worship in harmony with our fellow congregants when we differ so much? I hope to see many of you at this workshop so we can accept each other and encourage spiritual growth, living our principles in earnest. You can read more about this workshop and others in our updated Lifespan Learning Guide.

If you want to know more about my plans for my time here at First Unitarian, or if you have feedback, and especially if you would like to get to know me better, please do drop in for tea! I have created a sign up so that I can meet as many people as possible.

http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0a4ea_aab28a4f85-afternoon

Blessings, health, and steaming hot cups of tea,

~Liz Roper, Director of Lifespan Learning

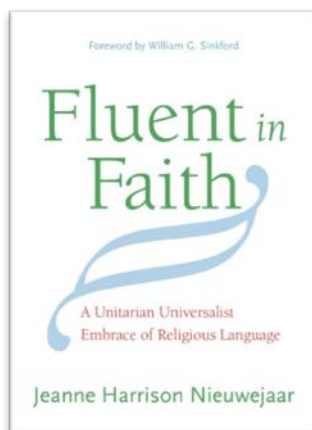


Adult Education Program: Fluent in Faith

God, Faith, Hope, Love, Covenant, Doctrine, Sacrament, Prayer, Sanctuary, Sin, Atonement, Blessing, Grace, Mercy, Salvation.

These words are very evocative, especially in the Unitarian Universalist faith where many people have come from different faith backgrounds with different ideas on what they mean.

Fluent in Faith will explore how we individually identify with these words in order to see how we can embrace them as a community. This workshop is based on Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar's book, "*Fluent in Faith: A UU Embrace of Religious Language*," which calls us to embrace our religious language in all its diversity and wide range of meaning. The author sets forth a vision for Unitarian Universalism where, as an articulate people, we can both deeply feel and deeply express our faith.



Who is this program for?

- People who look at this list of words and long to hear them more often
- People who look at this list of words and feel pain or discomfort at some
- Parents who want to explore what language they are comfortable using with their children
- Newcomers who want to know what Unitarians think of these words
- Long-time members who want to delve into their understanding of these words
- Worship leaders, speakers, poets, community builders, word smiths, who wish to explore meaning
- Everyone who wishes to understand more about their own spiritual beings and those with whom they share their spiritual space

The workshop will address many tensions that Unitarians have wrestled with for decades. We will open our hearts and minds to different interpretations and hear the joy and sorrow attached to these concepts by our neighbours in faith.

The workshop will be led by Director of Lifespan Learning Liz Roper, a life-long Unitarian with a degree in Philosophy, Psychology, and Religious Education – which all adds up to talking about words and how we feel about them very nicely!

Sunday, February 28, 12.30 p.m.-3 p.m.

Please RSVP to dll@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Unitarians with Life Float at Ottawa's Climate March



Musical Interludes

–*Deidre Kellerman*



Music News!

December 2015 was a busy month for the choirs at First Unitarian. We sang our Winter Concert to a full house on December 19, with our guests, the Goulbourn Male Chorus. Thank you to our audience for such positive feedback, to our volunteers for their help and, of course, to all the singers for their energy, talent and hard work!

Christmas Choir

A big thank-you to everyone who participated in our Christmas Choir for the 7:30 Christmas Eve service! It was great to see so many faces, both new and familiar.

Missed out on our Winter Concert? Our Spring Concert will be **Saturday May 14 at 7:30 p.m.**

The Chalice and Jazz Choirs are always looking for new members. We welcome everyone, no matter your experience. Check in with me to see which choir may be the best fit for you! No audition required.

Calling all instrumentalists

Interested in music but choir isn't your thing? We still would love to have you participate! Whether you can tinkle the ivories, strum a tune on guitar or play a mean set of spoons... if you'd like to share your music, let me know! We are also looking for drummers (or those interested in trying it out) to play our djembe, either with the choir, or during a hymn. If you can clap your hands and count to four, you can play the drum!



New Program Announcement!

Come join us in a monthly Song Circle, with music from the Rise Up Singing songbooks! Lyrics will be provided and will fit in with our themed ministry. Each month will feature a guest musical leader, as well as a new day and time, but always held in the NOW Room. This is a musical activity for all ages and all abilities....come one, come all and SING!

Tuesday February 16, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Musical leader: Deidre Kellerman

Saturday March 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Musical leader: Mackenzie Costron

Sunday April 10, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Musical leader: TBA

Looking forward to making music together throughout 2016!

Yours in song,

~*Deidre Kellerman*



Intern's Reflections

A.J. Galazen



Excerpt from “The Myth of Mud Lake,” a sermon

I meditate on what I call “mythical geography.” Mythical, because it tells a non-literal story with many meanings. And geography, because awareness of our surroundings is one of the deepest ways that I embody my theology. I associate places with spiritual truths and philosophical concepts.

I have been wide-ranging in my explorations of Ottawa, driving hundreds of kilometers back and forth, from Orleans to Kanata, from Parliament Hill to Kingston. I have gone down to the river to pray, and journeyed across the rivers, and across the canal. I have sought out the low spots and the high spots, the mountains and the islands. My mythical geography has helped me feel right at home wherever I have travelled.

There is travelling, and there is arriving. Travellers watch the sights as they go by. Arrivers plant themselves into the soil, and become one with the ecosystem.

Of all the places I have visited here, of all the streets and thoroughfares I have travelled, I recently found a place where my heart truly arrived – a place where my heart was scooped out of my chest and planted forever, a place called Mud Lake. As far as I know, Mud Lake is not on anyone else’s Top Ten Sights of Ottawa. In fact, you really have to get off the beaten track to even find Mud Lake. And that’s my point. My spirit needs off the beaten track. Especially in the city, where everyday business can easily overtake necessary quietude. Somehow, I found Mud Lake – or Mud Lake found me.

Mud Lake reminds me of my home in Wisconsin. The trails at Mud Lake are wild trails, not formal, manicured paths. The bridge at Mud Lake is the most rickety thing

I’ve ever seen. It has pieces of plywood to cover holes nailed to the deck. It has handrails coming off. It goes left and right and up and down. But it does the job, and ducks float aimlessly right next to the bridge.

The white pines and the red twig dogwood and the carpet of needles and the rocks and the water all remind me of home. As I continued down the trail, I eventually came upon a clearing, and suddenly I was visited by a flock of chickadees. I love chickadees! There are some who say the chickadee should be the state bird of Wisconsin, because it stays with us all year long. It endures the winters just like we do, not like some fair-weathered feathered friends like the overrated robin.



And chickadees are friendly fellows too! I stretched out my hand, and one proceeded to land immediately. But alas, I was barren of nourishment, and he flew off.

When I told this story, a friend commented that these must be trained birds, used to special attentions. I tested the theory by returning the next day with sunflower seeds ready for the taking. But no birds appeared. I remained alone.

continued on page 8...

Intern's Reflections...cont

I do not give up so easily. Armed with my seed, I returned the next day, ready to offer if called upon, but not expecting anything. This time the birds did not disappoint. They descended upon me en masse, taking turns landing on my outstretched hand, grabbing one seed at a time. I felt the grace and power of St. Francis flowing through my bones. I was statuesque in my avian meditation.



But there was one bird that would not make the jump from pine branch to wrinkled palm. Fluttering about, he seemed to know about the glory of the seeds, but could not reconcile the oddity of the seed giver. I attempted to ease him by calling out "chicka dee dee dee... chicka dee dee dee" in my Wisconsin version of his native tongue. His brethren continued picking seeds while he hesitated. Finally, either peer pressure or the hunger allowed him to find just enough courage to gingerly grab a seed from my hand. I fully understand his reluctance. I am most comfortable in familiar surroundings, and am wary of strangers bearing treats.

So Mud Lake has become one of my myths: a story that tells you something about how I find meaning in my life. I invite you to consider using the symbolic geography of your life to help construct your own myths.

~A.J. Galazen



Inuit dancers from Nunavut Sivuniksavut performed at the First Unitarian November 15th service.

"Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS) is a silattuqsarvik, dedicated to providing Inuit youth with unique cultural and academic learning experiences that will allow them to develop the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to contribute to the building of Nunavut.

For 30 years, this Ottawa-based college program has been achieving remarkable success in helping Inuit youth make the transition from high school into the workforce and/or further post-secondary education.

"In 2003, a 2nd Year program was introduced to meet the needs of 1st Year graduates who wanted to continue on with further post-secondary, but who didn't feel ready to tackle regular college or university on their own."

<http://www.nunavutsivuniksavut.ca/about.php>



January-February Worship Services

Themes: Aging and Love

January 24 *They that love beyond the world*

Speaker: John Marsh

My title comes from William Penn, the English Quaker who founded the city of brotherly love in America. He embraced a religious way of being known for its eloquent silence. Yet he was known for his words: *"They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it."* Let's reflect on the ways death does separate us from those we love, and how it also binds us together.



January 31 *Aging*

Speaker: A.J. Galazen

February 7 *Love Letters*

Speakers: Liz Roper and A.J. Galazen

A Multi-Sensory sensory service for all ages

Note: There will be a breakfast for Mystery Pals prior to the service.

February 14 *What the World Needs Now*

Guest speaker: The Reverend Allison Barrett

In the world of today, does our old Universalist belief in the saving power of love and our Unitarian faith in the oneness of all still have resonance? On Valentine's Day, a service about the complexities, challenges and triumphs of a life lived well with love.

Rev. Allison Barrett first walked through the doors of a Unitarian congregation as a young person in our Ottawa congregation and was mentored early in her ministry by Minister Emeritus Rev. David Pohl. She served as Parish Minister to the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton for 12 years and prior to that was minister of the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto.



February 21 *On Love*

Guest Speaker: the Reverend Fred Cappuccino, author and activist, will speak on the travails of love and other risks of being authentically human.

February 28 *Refusing To Be Enemies*

Guest Speaker: The Rev. Peter Boullata

Can the transforming, generous and self-forgetting love taught by a number of world religions be expanded to include even our opponents?

After twelve years serving UU congregations as parish minister in both Canada and the US, Peter Boullata recently began doctoral studies in pastoral care and psychotherapy at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo.

March 6 *The Three Jewels of Unitarian Universalism*

Guest speaker: The Rev. Carol Strecker

The ideals at the heart of Buddhism are known as "The Three Jewels":

- The Buddha - the one who shows us the way in this life (including our own Buddha nature);
- The Dharma - the teachings or the path to understanding; and
- The Sangha - the community that supports our practice.

This morning we'll take a look at the "jewels" at the heart of Unitarian Universalism, especially the role of community in supporting our practice.



♥ Thank you Merci Meegwitch

~ compiled by Alastaire Henderson

Here are some people and activities to appreciate, recognize, and celebrate:

- ♥ Thanks go to **Joe Connor and Joan Turner, Elizabeth Morrison, Jennifer Davis, Mary Jackson and Gary Campbell** for their help making the December 25 Christmas dinner in Fellowship Hall a success.
- ♥ Appreciation to **Ria Heynen** for managing the Fair Trade sales table, being a Raging Granny, and fighting injustice wherever she sees it. She is treasurer for the Hassan Diab Legal Fund and forwards Ottawa's activist e-list of current events and issues to a large number of people.
- ♥ Thank you to the members of the Nominating Committee, **Elisabeth Morrison, Carl Sonnen, Kate Kirkwood** and **Isabel Burrows**, for their diligent work in recruiting prospective Board members.
- ♥ Thanks to all who helped make the Winter Choir Concert a smooth and successful event! And to **Lois Marion** for her help preparing music.
- ♥ And two very important thank-yous, to **Alex Campbell and Pat MacDonald** for providing music at Sunday services while Deirdre was away.
- ♥ A big thank you to participants in the "Mystery Pals" program organized by **Marie Gabe**, Lifespan Learning Assistant.
- ♥ Thanks to all those working hard to make our sponsorship of Syrian refugee families a reality, particularly **Patricia Paul-Carson**, for her excellent leadership, and others on the Steering Committee, as well as the many other volunteers who have taken on tasks big and small.
- ♥ Sincere appreciation to everyone who has pledged and/or contributed to the 2016 Operating fund, no matter the amount. Every gift is a treasure.

To submit items please contact Alastaire at hendersalas@gmail.com or 613-562-2253 at least 48 hours before the Spire deadline.

The House Next Door



Unitarian House of Ottawa

We call it home

Maison unitarienne d'Ottawa

C'est notre chez-nous

Western Light Rail Transit (WLRT)

"Not on our property" continues to be the focus of the campaign to alter the City's preferred routing of Phase 2 of the WLRT through the private property on which Unitarian House is built. Presently, we are waiting for the release of the Notice of Commencement, scheduled for the end of 2015, which starts the environmental assessment process. This 120-day study will be our next opportunity to voice our objections to the WLRT routing, followed by a final report which is made available to all interested persons, including Unitarian House, prior to submission to the Ministry of the Environment for approval.

The environmental assessment process does not cover short- or long-term health and safety issues per se, nor does it address our structural integrity concerns for Unitarian House during the construction phase. Therefore, we are pursuing these two issues separately: one, with the Ministry of Health, and the other with an engineering firm in an effort to garner support for our positions. Our strategy is to keep the issue front and centre at all levels in an effort to remove the WLRT from our front door.

~Brian Castledine, Unitarian House Board member

Unitarian House needs to replace its roof, and has started a "Raise the Roof Campaign" to raise the necessary \$380,000 before next spring. Here is an event the House is hosting that has to be confirmed. Kristy's Restaurant is going to hold a fund-raising meal in the winter, possibly a breakfast, to help with our campaign. Stay tuned.

~Kathy Yach

Fall Fair Success—Again!

THANK YOU

Happiness is a report that the Fall Fair succeeded again in meeting its three goals: contribute to the church budget, build community, and collect goods for community services distribution. The Fair is enjoyed by so many, it's easy to overlook how important it is in keeping the lights on and continuing our many community outreach initiatives.

Thanks to generous donations of goods and eager buyers, the Fair increased its "take" to be the largest ever...

...contributing eight percent of the congregation's operating fund.

Donations of food, coffee and other supplies, which also contribute to the bottom line, included:

- Food for volunteers through the week
- Bridgehead coffee for the long line of early buyers
- International café food from:
 - **Mia's Restaurant** (Indian),
 - **Montha McGinnis** of the Siam Bistro (Pad Thai),
 - **Shree Kumar family** (Nepali),
 - **Joan Auden and Ed Cuyllits** (Mediterranean),
 - **Karl Nagelschmitz** (German)

Tables for the Fair and ongoing use by the church, courtesy of **Ron Wilson**, and metal shelves from **Anne and Phil Nagy**

But there would be no fair without **the 300+ volunteers** – their enthusiasm and effort is the major factor in our success. Though it takes space, it's worth noting the names of our leaders. A core group are involved for months and often do more than one job: **Ron Wilson, Katherine Gunn, Gwen Harman, Jen Brennan, Kate Kirkwood, and Paula Theetge.**

Their convenors stepped up to the plate to organize a booth or several booths:

- **Kate Kirkwood** (coordination plus volunteer food),
- **Jane Lindsay and Elisabeth Morrison** (lunch room),
- **Evelyn Algar** (baking & preserves),
- **Karin & Karl Nagelschmitz** (International café)
- **Jen Brennan** (coordination & women's & teens),
- **Angela Beale** (Boutique),
- **Robert Gordon** (men's)
- **Eva Berringer** (the new area of Fashions & Accessories)
- **Gerald & Tanya Batten** (electronics),
- **Gerald Boucher & Stephen Gabe** (music),
- **Barry Read** (stamps & coins),
- **Meghan Dunn** (children's),
- **Amy McRobert** (outdoors)
- **John Harris** (safety),
- **Lori Snyder** (recycling),
- **Ellen Derry** (aprons)
- **Dave Luck** (parking),
- **Graeme Jones** (room layout),
- **David Hudson** (signs & table acquisition),
- **Carl Sonnen** (sound & announcements)
- **Carol Card & Nic Vanderkraaj** (books),
- **Kim Ross** (volunteer database),
- **Jill Whitford** (communications design)
- **Paula Theegee & Gail Scagnetti** (Timeless Treasures),
- **Lorraine Yorke** (silent auction),
- **Marg Lee & Elisabeth Waechter** (gift shop),
- **Ria Heynen** (jewellery)
- **Lisa Sharp & Rozanne Lepine** (Flea market),
- **Lise Lavoie & Carolyn McAndrew** (Linens)



Fall Fair Success cont...

Change is inevitable and even desirable to keep the Fair fresh and fun. The unexpected need to start the set-up for the Fair late on Sunday without the convenors caused a lot of anxiety but actually facilitated the process. The redistribution of women's fashions to increase dollar per square foot was met with a roll-up-the-sleeves attitude but the result was equivocal; some more tweaks may be needed!

Change in people also is to be expected. **Margaret Linton**, after 4 years serving as the Director of the Fall Fair, assisted **Sherri Watson** to take over that role. Though that seemed daunting, the program base Margaret & her predecessors created, her ongoing involvement, and the commitment and knowledge of the cadre of other volunteers, many of whom have also served for decades, made the transition seamless.

Our thanks too, to **Marg Lee** and **Elisabeth Waechter**, who are moving on after their years of beautiful presentations in the Gift Shop, and to **Jen Brennan** for her coordination of the Fashions booths. We hope they will remain involved in some way.

We have been alerted already of several possible vacancies before the next Fair. In addition, some of the roles are quite demanding and having co-convenors and/or trainees is needed to ensure smooth delivery of the event. You can expect there will be calls in the coming months for new blood to infuse the volunteer body for the continued good health and success of the Fair!

~Sherri Watson

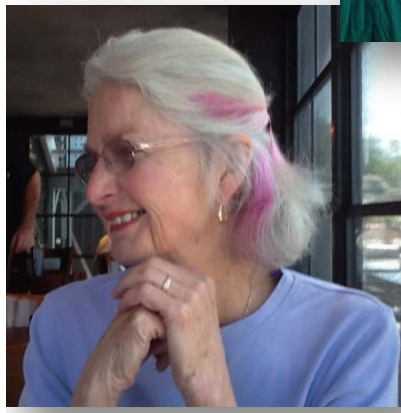
Editor's note: *And a huge THANK YOU to Sherri for stepping up and doing such a fine job!*

Lovely Model
Margot Clarke



Flea Market Crew

Gift Shop Gals
Marg and Elisabeth



Our fearless FF Directors:
Sherri and Margaret



Introducing the Communications and Outreach Committee

In October 2015, the Board struck a Communications and Outreach Committee to develop a strategy to improve both internal and external (outreach) communication.



In the congregational 2014-17 Strategic Plan, this was a priority: “A Renewed, Growing Congregation – To raise our profile and attract visitors, welcome and integrate newcomers and encourage long-term retention of members.” You can find the whole Plan at: http://www.firstunitarianotawa.ca/uploads/2/1/0/6/2/1068182/strategic_plan_for_congregational_approval_v2_web.pdf

In late 2015, Board liaison Terry Kimmel chaired several meetings of interested congregants to kick off discussion of how best to proceed on these twin tracks.

Some suggested avenues to pursue:

Internal communications: develop a consistent look, update print publications; make bulletin boards more effective, hire a part-time communications officer, make First Unitarian’s Facebook page more active.

External communications: promote our values, market our uniqueness, advertise our Sunday sermons, expand and improve our social media presence, (e.g. Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/First-Unitarian-Congregation-of-Ottawa-477953832312448/?fref=ts> and

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/168272813184177/> (Youth Group); develop a punchy slogan for publicity; make use of our events to inspire new members.

Focus Group Consultation

On Saturday, January 30, a facilitated focus group discussion will be held to collect feedback and more ideas from the congregation that will help us formulate a strategy.

Discussion topics will include what attracts people to the congregation, what keeps them here, and what they are seeking (and perhaps not finding) at First Unitarian. This input will help us to further define our internal and outreach messaging and develop our strategy.

Watch for more details in the E-UU, or contact Terry at terrykimmel@sympatico.ca

You are all invited!

~Communications and Outreach Committee members

Spring - by Mary Oliver

Spring

Somewhere
a black bear
has just risen from sleep
and is staring
down the mountain.
All night
in the brisk and shallow
restlessness
of early spring
I think of her,
her four black fists
flicking the gravel,
her tongue
like a red fire
touching the grass,
the cold water.
There is only one question:
how to love this world.
I think of her
rising
like a black and leafy ledge
to sharpen her claws against
the silence
of the trees.
Whatever else
my life is
with its poems
and its music
and its glass cities,
it is also this dazzling darkness
coming
down the mountain,
breathing and tasting;
all day I think of her—
her white teeth,
her wordlessness,
her perfect love.

~Mary Oliver

<http://maryoliverpoetry.tumblr.com/post/78089363986/spring>

Editor’s Note: Mary Oliver is often referred to as the unofficial poet laureate of Unitarian Universalists.

Social Responsibility Council

UU-UNO Intergenerational Spring Seminar



New York City, April 7-9

Registration will open soon to attend the UU-UNO's 2016 Intergenerational Spring Seminar. The seminar, "***The Colours of Inequality: Costs and Consequences,***" will take place in New York City from April 7-9, 2016. (Youth will arrive on April 6.) We will be addressing the connection between economic inequality and racial discrimination worldwide.

Please visit uua.org/unspringseminar to learn more.

Contact: Frances Deverell

Centre 510



Odawa Native Friendship Centre deeply appreciates the support of faith and other communities, including First Unitarian, by funding groceries and providing volunteers for its drop-in

centre for homeless and marginally housed aboriginal people in Ottawa at 510 Rideau Street. On December 4, Odawa hosted an appreciation dinner, with entertainment, for donors and volunteers.

Our congregants made a very significant donation to Odawa last June and within a week raised more than the requested \$900 to support Centre 510 from July to December of this year. Enough money was raised and enough volunteers are participating to extend the program until the end of March. Unitarian volunteers report this has been a most rewarding experience.

Opportunities to volunteer still remain.

Contact: Poverty Awareness Working Group

~Marlene Koehler

First Unitarian shows environmental leadership

Our congregation has been an early adopter of measures to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We not only decided to divest from top fossil fuel companies; in June 2015, we also signed a contract with Bullfrog Power to offset our use of natural gas to heat our building by paying for an equivalent in green natural gas to be injected into the grid.



This project is funded annually from the Social Responsibility Council's budget allocation.

By choosing green energy, we are reducing our building's energy pollution, supporting community-based renewable energy projects in our region and across Canada, and helping to lead the way to a renewably powered future.

Bullfrog's green natural gas is sourced from a groundbreaking methane capture project situated on one of Canada's thousands of landfill sites. Heating with this methane – which would otherwise be released into the atmosphere – is a climate-friendly alternative to conventional polluting natural gas. Our support also helps bring online new renewable energy projects across Canada, from wind and solar to low-impact hydroelectric.

Choosing green energy is one step forward on our sustainability path. In addition to supporting green energy, we continue to encourage congregants to reduce their carbon footprints at home and in their daily lives.

*~Alastaire Henderson
Environmental Working Group*

Update on our Syrian Newcomers



The Syrian Refugee Subgroup is welcoming in the New Year with gratitude and anticipation. To date we have received over \$150,000 to support our Syrian newcomers—*thank you for your tremendous generosity!*

Our first Syrian family, found through the Ottawa Rainbow Refugee Group, consists of a husband and wife with three daughters, a son and one set of grandparents. Two of the children (the 22-year-old son and the 16-year-old daughter) have developmental delays and the youngest girl (age 15) is in Grade 9. The oldest daughter is engaged to be married so will not be coming to Canada. The husband responded to our initial email with the following (translated from Arabic):

“Saying, thank you so much for all your doing for us and for the warm emotions toward us...In this occasion we wish you a happy new year to you and to the world to live in peace.”

We have found a second family through the Canadian government's Blended Visa Office Referral Program. It includes the parents and five children ranging from ages one to eight. We are going to wait a bit before starting the

process to sponsor a third family as we don't want to over-tax our volunteers!

Speaking of volunteers, most of our teams are well in hand; they have met and some have started their work.

The Housing Team is actively looking for accommodations, contacting landlords, following up on leads, and visiting potential rental units. *If you have any leads on permanent or temporary housing (four-bedroom units, max. \$1600 including utilities) please contact Jan Andrews at janandrews@rogers.com.*

The In-Kind Donations Team has been locating furniture and household items. We have also arranged for two volunteers to help out in the office a few mornings a week so that Carolyn and Jen can focus on their additional administrative work related to the Syrian refugee project.

As of early January, we are still looking for Family Team Coordinators to play key logistical roles in ensuring that each family is well supported by our volunteer teams. *If you might be interested or would like more information, please contact Jane Lindsay, janelindsay@sympatico.ca.*

In the New Year, Jane began contacting our “second wave” of volunteers: those who were put on hold until she could process the initial group. We are thrilled that so many people both inside and

outside the congregation have stepped up to offer their skills, experience and enthusiasm.

The Syrian Refugee Subgroup is also offering support to private groups to expedite their sponsorship processes through the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) — our volunteer MOU team is in discussions with five groups. Once their applications to sponsor are submitted, our involvement with them will be limited mainly to ensuring the funds get to the refugee families.

In addition, we have agreed to help two Ottawa Syrians known to the congregation to sponsor their families through two separate MOU's. The families will be totally supported by those already living here, so our role will be limited to helping them with their applications.

Now that we have two “real” families to sponsor, we are eager to start the next phase of welcoming them to our community.

If you would like further information about the Syrian Refugee project, please contact us at syrianrefugees@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

*~Jan Andrews,
Communications Coordinator*



Adult Learning: Compassionate Communication Programme

We continue the challenge of practicing Unitarian Universalist principles in all our interactions and relationships through Compassionate Communication.



Schooled by our social and cultural environments to demand, to compete against others, to win, and to judge what is “right” and “wrong,” many were taught to claim our feelings in terms of something “done to us.”

Non-violent Communication (NVC), also known as Compassionate Communication (CC), allows us to shift our perspective. We can restructure our thinking, acting, listening and speaking through conscious, honest and genuine presence to ourselves and to others. This approach to communication gives us practical ways to live out our highest purpose in every relational interaction, whilst it teaches us what we still need to learn.

The next learning circles offered in 2016 are founded on UU principles.

Note: All sessions are in Room 5, 12:30 -2 p.m.

Sunday February 14: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process *“If you loved me, you would share my beliefs.”*

Sunday March 13: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. *“Someone on the internet wrote something about the Middle-East and I have to tell them why they're wrong.”*

Sunday April 17: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. *“This is everything you should be doing, if you truly supported the environment.”*

Please drop in and join us at any or all sessions. If you're new to NVC/CC, our activity is geared to welcoming everyone, whatever your level of familiarity with Marshall Rosenberg's work. The Lifespan Learning binder in the main foyer has a registration sheet for each session.

Contact: Rozanne Lépine, AdultLearning@firstunitariannottawa.ca

Announcements

Friends of the Meditation Gardens

The FMG is holding its first meeting of 2016 on Sunday, February 7, at 12:30 p.m., in Room 13. On the agenda are plans for the coming gardening season. Ideas and newcomers welcome.



Nominating Committee Update

The Nominating Committee is looking for input with respect to any prospective Officers and/or Directors for the Board of Management of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa.

We have recently recruited two members, Amy Bérubé and Jennifer Shaw-Read, who have agreed to put their names forward for the April AGM election. Bylaws require that this notice be posted at this time

Unitarian GoGos



Announcements cont...

Welcomes New Members

Unitarian GoGos welcomes your interest and your attendance at our meetings. Since January 2007 we have been meeting at the church on the 3rd Thursday of the month. On January 21, we will meet at 12:30 p.m. for a brown-bag lunch & social time before our meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. On Thursdays February 18 and March 17, we will meet at 1:30 p.m.

Where: Room 5 downstairs in the church. Come and check us out.

We fundraise for the Stephen Lewis Foundation www.stephenlewisfoundation.org through our African Party (this year on Saturday Feb. 13), bake sales, our Mother's Day Weekend outdoor sales and more.



Your skills and time will be greatly valued. You will experience a sense of purpose, meaning and connection with grandmothers in Africa where the needs are great. To belong you do not have to be a grandmother nor do you have to bake or sew. There are many ways you can volunteer to help turn the tide of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Contact:
unitariangogos@gmail.com
Wendy Doyle, 613-824-7462
or Joan Turner, 613-721-0791

Unitarian Seniors' Program

January

The focus will be on "Colour". Attendees are asked to wear a plain top in one of the primary or secondary colours (red, blue, yellow, orange, green, purple).

Sheila King will use the colour wheel to help participants learn to play with colour in life, art, the garden, the way they dress and their home decor. Susan Tanner will lead the worship service.

When: Tuesday, January 26
Service: 1:00 p.m. Program: 1:30 p.m. Refreshments (\$3 or pay what you can): 2:30pm
Where: Worship/Fellowship Hall

RSVP (if you are not on the phone list): Maureen Sly at 613-728-7610, mmsly@rogers.com by Saturday, January 23.

February

Program TBA.
Joycelyn Loeffelholz-Rea will lead the worship service.

When: Wednesday, February 24
Service: 1:00 p.m. Program: 1:30 p.m. Refreshments (\$3 or pay what you can): 2:30 p.m.
Where: Worship/Fellowship Hall

RSVP (if you are not on the phone list): Maureen Sly at 613-728-7610, mmsly@rogers.com by Sunday, February 21.

Note: Earphones available in Worship and Fellowship Halls. Service and program

can be recorded on a CD (cost \$5) or be available as a broadcast from our website (free), provided permission for such has been given by the speaker(s).

Ottawa South Neighbourhood Group

January

When: Sunday, January 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Patricia (Trish) Paul-Carson will talk about "*The Challenges of Refugee Sponsorship.*"

Where: 108 Belmont Ave.

Contact: Trudy Kassner at 613-730-2823,

trudy@kassner.ca

All are welcome. Bring a small dessert (finger food) to share.

February

When: Sunday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Our intern minister, AJ Galazen, will talk about "*Finding the Sacred Vortex: An Outsider's Quest.*"

Where: 113 Sunnyside Avenue

Contact: Ann Denis at 613-730-0283,

adenis@uottawa.ca

All are welcome. Bring a small dessert (finger food) to share.

Please contact Ann Denis at adenis@uottawa.ca if you would like to be added to the e-mailing list for the group and receive notices of its activities.



Announcements cont...

Hospitality Hour

A Happy Winter Season to all! After 35+C. humidex on a Caribbean cruise over the holidays, I really don't mind a bit of cool weather. At time of writing, the cooler weather is tolerable though I know there is a cold snap coming and I may revise my opinion.

Come and keep warm by helping out in the kitchen. Volunteering 45 minutes of your time for set-up, or serve and clean-up, every 4 to 6 weeks would be most welcome. With snowbirds having flown south and some illnesses, there are fewer volunteers. Check the sign-up sheets for slots that suit your schedule.

Thank you.

~Tarrel Armstrong
Co-ordinator

Gentle Yoga

For health, vitality, strength, flexibility and mindful presence in a welcoming, friendly atmosphere, where everyone is encouraged to proceed at his or her own pace.

Call ahead, or just join us. Everyone welcome.

Date: Fridays from January 15 to March 18, 10:15-11:15 a.m.

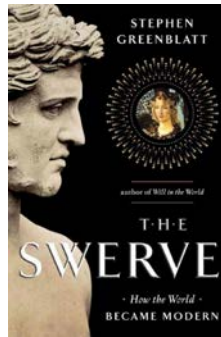
Where: Fellowship Hall

Cost: \$100 for 10 weeks or \$12 drop-in

Contact: Linda Percy, 613-729-8913, or adultlearning@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Reading for Growth

The Friday Reading for Growth group will meet in the Lounge on February 26 at 1:30 p.m. to discuss "*The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*" by Stephen Greenblatt. Newcomers are welcome.



Contact: Margot Clarke, 613-820-6596, mmclarke80@gmail.com

Discovery Groups

Since last fall, the church has offered Discovery Groups to provide small-group ministry to new and "old" congregants. Facilitators run weekly groups of up to 12 people, in a structured format that includes discussions based on the monthly themes of the Sunday worship services. Printed materials are provided on a weekly basis to support group discussion.

Contact: adultlearning@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Aboriginal Issues Focus



For further reading on this issue, three suggested books are:

- "*The Deserter*" by Paul Almond. A novel about a deserter from a British ship off the coast of the Gaspé who is befriended by the Micmac. It explores the way of life of the Micmac and their relationship with the settler.
- "*Indian Horse*" by Richard Wagamese. Details life in a residential school and the importance of hockey to the protagonist.
- "*Up Ghost River*" by Edmund Metatawabin. An autobiography including the horrors of Metatawabin's residential school life, through his alcoholism to his salvation through native spiritualism. He became a chief and is a healer of young people through taking them out on the land.





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