

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA

This document will help you connect with any of the groups and activities in our Congregation.

Please Note: Most groups/activities invite you to drop in to see if they might be right for you. However, some (**marked with ***) have prior requirements or need pre-registration, and ask you to call the contact before you attend.



This document is prepared and maintained by volunteers like you. To request an electronic copy or to give updates and corrections, please contact: gettingconnected@FirstUnitarianOttawa.com

An Activity for Everyone

Why might you consider volunteering or getting involved in groups or activities within our Congregation? Your motivations are as unique and personal as your spiritual beliefs and practices, but one of the great strengths of our religion is that the diversity of member motivations is matched by the opportunities available for members to find what is valuable for them.

Your very personal needs or desires might lead you to look for groups or activities that foster:

- a sense of belonging,
- opportunities for spiritual growth,
- positive action to better our communities, country, and the world,
- personal sharing and close relationships with others,
- active sharing through music, work parties, or organization of events,
- intellectual growth through study, reading, discussion, meditation, or lectures,
- the development of new friendships,
- chances to truly make a difference in the world we all share.

If any of these hit a chord, please look through the wide and varied opportunities described in this brochure. You may be surprised at the depth and breadth of what goes on in our Congregation outside of Sunday worship. Don't hesitate to make contact and find out more – there's never any obligation and you may find a perfect match for your personal journey.

How to Find a Group or Activity

Our groups and activities fall into nine general categories. Although any group may, in fact, fit well into more than one category, we've chosen what we believe is the best fit to simplify this listing. The categories are:

Fundraising
Internal Service
Liaison
Music
Operations
Outreach
Self-improvement
Social.

On Page 2 is an **index** of all the groups and activities within each of the **categories**. The **descriptions** of the groups and activities are listed alphabetically within each category starting on Page 3. The **contacts** are available from the office or by contacting gettingconnected@FirstUnitarianOttawa.com



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September 2009

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Fundraising

Fall Fair (Holly and Lace Bazaar)

This is the largest single fundraiser for our Congregation each year. We need people to collect materials, organize, publicize the event, set up, sort, bake, price, make, serve, sell, and clean up. Most of the work is done the week before the Fair.

Service Auction (Time and Talent)

Members and Friends of the Congregation offer their time, talent, or interests in an annual auction to raise money for the Congregation.

Internal Services

Artspace

Artspace arranges for Members and Friends to display their art works in the Lounge for specific periods.

BookShelf

Select, obtain, and sell a wide range of books appropriate to our UU Principles. There is an organizing committee of 8 and over 40 volunteers who staff the BookShelf.

Caring Committee*

We encourage and nurture a caring network in the Congregation. Our volunteers provide occasional transportation, phone or make personal visits to people who are ill or house bound; send caring cards; prepare casseroles for people in emergencies; and organize memorial receptions for Members and Friends.

Green Mug Table (Sunday)

Visitors and newcomers are invited to join us for coffee after worship and to use a green mug so Members and Friends will recognize them as new and greet them. Our volunteers staff the Green Mug Table, offer friendly conversation, and look for others to whom the visitors may be introduced.

Greeters (Sunday)

Four people are needed for each Sunday service to prepare the handout materials, greet people as they arrive for worship, act as ushers, and provide a tour of the facility. Training is available.

Hospitality Hour (Sunday)

We recruit volunteers for Hospitality Hour; maintain and distribute how-to information; publish a schedule of volunteers; monitor and mentor Sunday Hospitality Hour activities; and stock supplies, including Fair Trade beverages and sugar. Our volunteers lay out tables and prepare beverages and snacks in Fellowship Hall before Sunday service; bring perishable supplies and baking or other snacks; serve refreshments following the service; and clean up and tidy the kitchen following Hospitality Hour.

Memorial Receptions

The Caring Committee will occasionally provide a reception after a Memorial Service for a Member or Friend of our congregation. The food may be catered or we may provide sandwiches, baking, fruit or vegetable trays, and beverages. Volunteers help in setting up, serving, and cleaning up Fellowship Hall. We call on our helpers only a few times a year, but their assistance is truly appreciated.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Facilitation Committee

The Our Whole Lives (OWL) Facilitation Committee meets monthly from September through June to ensure that the OWL program is an ongoing part of the church's ministry. The

Committee is responsible for seeking, supporting, recognizing and appreciating OWL volunteers, for advocating on behalf of the Our Whole Lives program and for obtaining and caring for OWL books and supplies.

Religious Exploration (RE)

The RE program, under the leadership of the Director of Lifespan Learning, Nicky Duenkel, is looking for additional innovative and engaged participants. If you are interested in pursuing your own spiritual growth through a role in the RE program please contact us.

Volunteer Lay Spiritual Care Visitors*

Volunteer Lay Spiritual Care Visitors visit members and Friends of the Congregation who ask for or who are thought to need support. They help people to make their own decisions and clarify their own choices. They are not professional counsellors but may make referrals to the Spiritual Care Coordinator and to the ministerial staff. Volunteer Lay Spiritual Care visitors are Members of the Congregation who have completed the Spiritual Care Visitor training.

Worship Associates

The Worship Associates program offers Members an opportunity to participate in shaping and delivering a worship experience. Each Associate works with the minister to develop and participate in several services during the church year. Worship Associates' participation during Sunday worship is a testimony to our community's commitment to direct congregational involvement in the worship and the liturgy of the church through preaching, readings, story telling, drama, dance, and music.

Youth-Programming Committee*

The Youth Programming Committee is responsible for guiding and supporting the youth program in the church. This guidance comes through support for the activities of the Youth group, through advisors and allies; and by enhancing communication between the youth and the congregation.

Liaison

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice Liaison

CUSJ provides opportunities for Unitarians to apply their religious values to social action aimed at the relief of: 1) poverty and economic injustice; 2) discrimination based on religious, racial or other grounds; 3) abuses of human rights; and 4) abuses of the democratic process. See www.cusj.org for more information.

Ottawa West Community Support Liaison

Ottawa West Community Support is a non-profit organization founded and supported by a number of west-end churches. It provides services to assist the elderly and the handicapped to remain in their own homes.

River Parkway Pre-School Centre Liaison

River Parkway Pre-school Centre is a non-profit child care centre, providing care to toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. The Centre was founded by First Unitarian Congregation, and operated in our ground floor classrooms from 1968 to 2007. In November 2007, it will move/moved to its new building on our campus.

Unitarian House Liaison

Unitarian House is the seniors' residence on our campus.

Music

Chalice Choir

The Chalice Choir is a group of 45 choristers. We sing twice a month in Sunday services, perform two annual church-fundraising concerts, and act as a musical outreach team to the larger community. Repertoire includes hymns, classical music, and tuneful new choral works. No audition required. Rehearsals: Thursday, 7:30pm to 9:30pm in Worship Hall, September to mid-May.

Chamber Music Series (CMS) Team

This group supports the Chamber Music on Cleary Avenue concert series by producing series brochures, concert posters and concert programmes; publicizing the series through brochure/poster distribution and press releases; and providing and managing concert tickets and subscriptions. We need people who enjoy graphic design and/or can drop off posters and brochures to local libraries, coffee shops, etc.

Friends of the Music Program

Friends of the Music Program is a group of music-loving volunteers who assist at church-sponsored concerts with ticket sales, stage managing, and post-concert receptions (set-up and clean-up). In exchange for their time, volunteers gain free admission to the concert at which they volunteer.

Gospel Choir

The Gospel Choir is a multigenerational group of 25 choristers. We sing at two Sunday services each month, and participate in the two annual church-fundraising concerts. Repertoire includes traditional spiritual and gospel music, with a smattering of world music. No audition required. Rehearsals: Sundays, 9:30am to 10am in Worship Hall, September through mid-May.

Operations

Administrative Support Team (VSOP)

Working half or whole day shifts weekly or once, twice or more times per month this hardy group devotes their diverse skills to supporting the smooth running of the office team; faxing, emailing, copying and offering friendly reception to callers and visitors on a daily basis. If you enjoy meeting congregation members, talking about your faith, and being in the center of the day to day life of the congregation please contact us.

Archives

A new project has been undertaken to ensure complete and proper archiving of the church historical materials. Guidelines will be provided. Volunteers who may be available during the day or on weekends are encouraged to contact us.

Board of Directors

The Board is elected annually by the Congregation to provide leadership in all aspects of the church community. New members for the Board are proposed by the Nominating Committee. Any Congregation Member may attend a Board meeting except for the portions of meetings that may be in-camera.

Campus Planning Committee

This Committee focuses on issues affecting the long-term development of the Church campus. New members interested in participating on the committee or on a specific project or issue are welcome. Examples of working groups include: community zoning and development issues; campus site plan review and

revision; River Parkway Pre-school new building. Meetings are held on an ad hoc basis..

Communication Committee

The Communications Committee develops policy, assists in developing written and online materials for committees, and is responsible for the development of the congregational website, display spaces, online bulletin board discussions, brochures, flyers and advertising.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, a Standing Committee of the Board, in co-operation with the Treasurer, oversees the financial affairs of the Congregation. Congregation Members may attend all its meetings and those interested in financial issues are welcome as committee members or as participants in ad hoc task groups addressing such issues as the Annual Budget or the performance of the Congregation's investments.

Lay Chaplaincy Committee

The Committee on Chaplaincy is responsible for overseeing the Lay Chaplaincy program; serving as the selection committee for lay chaplains; maintaining communication with the CUC regarding our Lay Chaplaincy program; ensuring that an annual review of chaplains is conducted; ensuring that chaplains reflect UU principles in their contact with the public; and providing support to the Lay Chaplains. The committee meets two or three times per year or more often if needed.

Library

This project of the Adult Learning program is headed by the new Director of Lifespan Learning. A team is needed to implement directions, enter and maintain the book and periodical resources of the congregation.

Lifespan Learning Council

Our shared vision is to promote learning for all ages as a fundamental spiritual practice in our community, with intention, willingness and forethought. The Council meets 3 or 4 times a year to carry the church's vision, to learn about developments in the church, to communicate and share information, to collaborate and to plan.

Membership Committee

We welcome visitors and newcomers to the Congregation, provide information, and assist people in becoming connected to the Congregation. We assist in maintaining membership records, staff the Welcome Table on Sunday mornings, follow up on applications from new Friends and Members, and organize New Member Recognition Services several times per year. Meetings: Monthly, except July and August.

Nominating Committee*

Find and nominate Congregation Members for Board positions and assist in recruiting Members as chairs for major committees. Facilitate leadership development. Committee members, elected at the Fall Congregational Meeting, serve 2-year terms.

Personnel Committee*

The Personnel Committee serves to assist and advise the Board on approaches, policies and issues relating to organization structure and staff, including: job descriptions, working conditions, compensation, discipline, and interpersonal relations. Committee and project meetings are held as needed.

Planned Giving Committee

Purpose: To work with the Stewardship Team to encourage people to think beyond their annual pledge and donation to plan a deferred gift of long-term benefit to the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. We provide information how to plan

giving through wills, life insurance, estate management, the duties of trustees, and more. Join our group or ask for information on leaving a legacy.

Property Committee*

We oversee the operation of the Major Maintenance Fund, which involves expenditures of more than \$1,000 as part of our mandate to keep our building and campus functional, safe, and beautiful. There are always opportunities for individuals to take on small projects such as minor repairs. Meetings: Monthly, September-June.

Safe Congregation Committee

The committee is developing safe practices for our congregation.

Sound Booth Operators*

This group operates the church's sound system for Sunday worship and congregational memorial services. Training will be provided.

Stewardship Team

We develop and implement the annual stewardship pledge campaign, act as a resource for other congregational fundraising activities, and build on the Planned Giving program. The annual campaign requires volunteers.

Technical Advisory Group

We are undertaking the short term maintenance of the existing technical infrastructure of computers and networks and the analysis for future needs. If you have appropriate interests and skills, please contact us.

Outreach

Ancoura

Ancoura is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to establish stable, affordable housing within supportive communities for persons living with a mental illness. Ancoura is supported by local faith communities including First Unitarian. The Ancoura Working Group sponsors congregational activities and provides information and education to increase awareness about mental illness. We promote healthy attitudes to remove the stigma of mental illness and advocate for specific actions that promote societal change on mental health issues. We hope to sponsor the opening of an apartment for three residents.

Canada-Nepal Solidarity for Peace

We are a group of people who work together to promote peace, equality and social justice in Nepal (www.cnsp.ca) and to inform and educate citizens of both Canada and Nepal about the need to support democracy and human rights in Nepal. We also provide counselling and advocacy for Nepalese immigrants and refugees in Canada and raise funds for The Women's Foundation of Nepal to assist them in their work (www.womenepal.org)

Child Haven Working Group

Child Haven International (CHI) is a local charity formed in 1985 by Bonnie and Fred Cappuccino of this Congregation. Child Haven has 9 projects for over 1000 destitute and orphaned children and women in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Tibet. See www.childhaven.ca for more information. Our Working Group organizes fundraising and cultural events, helps during the newsletter mail outs at the CHI Maxville office, and promotes the work of Child Haven.

Denominational Affairs Committee

We make members of the Congregation more aware of Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) and other denominational activities and issues by encouraging participation in CUC committees/task

forces and in national/regional conferences and meetings and by recruiting delegates to represent the Congregation at the CUC Annual Conference and Meeting.

Environmental Working Group

We educate and lobby on environmental issues. We have been working with the UUA -- and now the CUC -- toward making our congregation, its building and grounds a "green sanctuary". We provide fact sheets, speakers and movie nights; collect petitions and letters to governments; contribute to Sunday services and Religious Exploration; sell organic items (including chocolate) as fundraisers; maintain the "Green Board" in Fellowship Hall; and lobby City Council on local environmental issues. Meetings: second Wednesday evening of each month.

Global Justice Working Group

We encourage our Congregation to deliberate on issues of social justice, advocate for social change, and join with other people of faith and goodwill. Individuals are encouraged to bring their social justice concerns to the group for discussion and action.

Parkdale Food Centre

The Centre provides a 2 to 3 day emergency supply of food to those in need. Our Congregation makes weekly donations of food collected at services and events. Members of the Congregation and the Social Responsibilities Committee Grants Panel make regular monetary contributions to the Parkdale Food Centre. Members can also volunteer to take food from the church to the Centre and to help sort and package foods at the Parkdale site.

Peace Watch Working Group

We bring peace and disarmament issues/events to the attention of the Congregation; keep in touch with the minister on issues, co-ordinate events with sermons, etc; keep contact with larger groups; participate in local events; sponsor congregational activities such as letter writing, petitions, speakers, slide shows, and pot-lucks; consider important, urgent local and/or worldwide issues as they arise; and organize a summer service on a topical issue. Meetings: Monthly September-May, usually the last Sunday, after the service.

Poverty Awareness Working Group

We create awareness in the Congregation and take action on poverty and affordable housing issues. Specific actions include liaison with the Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI), Pathways to education and the Parkdale Food Centre. We are also working on possible opportunities to provide affordable housing on our property.

Refugee Working Group

We facilitate the settlement of individual refugees and/or families. The tasks are many and include arrangements for housing, banking, schooling and health issues. Other activities can include arranging social activities, day camp registration, and securing furnishings for the families.

Social Responsibilities Steering Committee

This committee is a steering group responsible for administrative and coordination functions, with representation from each of the designated Social Responsibilities working groups. We evaluate the funding requests from the working groups, and award funds. Any group of persons in the Congregation, at least six in number and in keeping with the principles and aims of social responsibility, may initiate a new group and become part of the SRC family.

Unitarian GoGos

This group works to raise awareness and funds in support of grassroots initiatives of grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa, who are raising millions for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. We are composed of congregants of the First Unitarian Congregation and other community members. The GoGos range in age from 30 to 80 and welcome new members - men too!

UU-United Nations Office Working Group

We assist our congregation to learn about and participate in major United Nations issues such as: human rights, peace, equity, and the environment. We interact with the UU-United Nations Office (UU-UNO) in New York; participate in the UU-UNO's annual intergenerational Spring seminar, encouraging participation and financially assisting youth attendees; encourage UN curriculum in our RE program; write articles for The Parkway Spire; undertake fundraising for international development projects and sell UNICEF cards and support UN Sunday services and denominational action programs. Meetings: Monthly, first Sunday.

Self-improvement

Adult Learning Committee

Adult Learning Committee meets monthly except for July to consider proposals for courses, speakers and workshops and to plan, implement, promote and evaluate adult learning programs for the congregation. For program information see Lifespan Learning Guides available in September and January. The Committee is represented on the Lifespan Learning Council and is directly responsible to the Director of Lifespan Learning.

Arts Night

A monthly event from September to June (excluding December), on the last Friday, where guest artists present their particular art forms followed by Q and A sessions. Committee members organize and MC the events.

Empower Dance*

The Empower Dance Group meets each Wednesday night at 7:30 to 9pm. We encourage our members to bring any genre of music that they wish to share with the group. We put on the music and dance free style, stretch or just meditate to the "beat".

Painters' Circle

We are a very friendly group of varied talents in different media, meeting on Tuesday mornings. We paint, look at each others work and encourage, no heavy critiquing, but if advice is asked for we discuss and come up with ideas. Some people have a lot of experience and exhibit, others are beginners. Coffee and tea are available and we also chat and get to know each other. This isn't a class; there's no tuition. It is for community building, so that you get to know painters within the larger community.

Reading for Growth

There are two Reading for Growth Groups. Both meet monthly in the afternoon - one on the second Monday, the other on the last Friday. Each group chooses its own book to review for each month. The books cover a wide range of topics such as politics, social issues, spiritual and religious thought and current events. The discussions are lively and informative.

Spiritual Karate

Spiritual Karate is about bringing the spirit back to Martial Arts. We do light workouts and always end with a discussion on a great many topic: when to walk, when to fight, what is the nature of fear, and the like. All ages and abilities are welcome.

Unitarian Women's Group

This is a group for women who want to learn more and talk about varied subjects such as travel and different cultures, women's issues around the world, fascinating and admirable women, women in religion, and issues of environment, money, politics, health, religion, and ethics. Programs include guest speakers, story telling (including some jokes), discussion, and an end-of-season lunch. The group's motto is: "We treasure our fellowship and common purpose". Meetings: biweekly, Thursday mornings, September-June.

UU Writers' Groups

These groups provide forums for writers to share their work with other writers, encouraging each other to write with praise and insightful, constructive criticism. There are no obligations. The groups encompass radically different writing styles and life concerns. What we read to each other is usually intensely personal and quite spiritual. Groups meet on alternate Tuesdays.

Women's Personal Growth Group

Taking care of the inner self is what this group is all about, to nurture the emotional and spiritual growth of participants. Sitting in a circle, we explore resources related to topics of interest, share our own experiences and learn from one another. The wonderful thing about this group is that we're informal, never stay strictly on-topic, and can trust that anything we share will stay within our group. Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month (Tuesday if Monday is a holiday).

Yoga*

Keep and improve your flexibility. Everyone welcome.

Social

Bridge Group

This is social bridge for members and friends from September to May. We have players from beginner to expert - everyone is welcome.

Crafty Crafters - Knitters

This group welcomes knitters and crocheters who want to share their enthusiasm for the needle arts, have great discussions, and join occasional field trips. We learn new techniques, experiment with new materials and share our experiences. We knit, crochet, needlepoint, and embroider interesting, fashionable, and useful items for the Fall Fair, for occasional special sales and for donations to meet community needs. Meetings: Wednesdays 10am to 2pm. We bring our lunches and make tea.

Men's Group #4*

Purpose: To discuss issues in our lives of a personal nature and other issues that affect us as men. Two-hour meetings. Currently the group would welcome several new members of similar interests. Meetings: Biweekly, Thursdays.

Neighbourhood Group: Centretown /Glebe /Ottawa South

Monthly, usually the last Sunday of the month. Meets at participants' homes for coffee and dessert and to hear a guest speaker with discussion afterwards. We also have a pot-luck dinner in September and May or June.

Neighbourhood Group: Riverside Park

We explore topics relevant to the interests and purposes of a Unitarian congregation, e.g. other religions, social justice issues, etc. Guest speakers bring specific knowledge and experience to each topic. Many meetings involve a guest speaker, usually followed by a question and answer period.

Unitarian Seniors' Lunch Program

This is a monthly service, lunch, and planned program for the seniors of the church and their friends. Help with the events is always appreciated.

Voyageurs Men's Group*

A support group for men looking to develop their full emotional and spiritual potential. We have regular four hour meetings and semi-annual weekend retreats. Open by invitation only.

Meetings: biweekly, Wednesdays.

Young Adults (aka The Noble Birds)

We're a growing group for 18-30-something-year-olds who want to meet and explore spirituality and have fun with other young adults. We've done many things in the past including: a Soulful Sundown service(a form of young adult led alternative UU worship), monthly Sunday night potlucks for our members, a picnic/beach day, helped at many church events (mostly kitchen help), and a summer service, "The Passion of The Principles."

Youth Group

The Congregation has a very active youth group for Grades 9 to 12 who participate regularly. One past event was an end-of-year retreat with camping and everyone had a great time. Through the year, we attend youth conferences in Eastern Ontario, Quebec, and New York State. Meetings: Sunday, usually during the service.