

THE PARKWAY *Spire*

Christmas Services at First Unitarian



Join us at First Unitarian as we celebrate Christmas
Saturday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

- 5:00 p.m. - Family Service for All Ages
- 6:15 p.m. - Light supper of soup, salad, and bread will be served
- 7:30 p.m. - Service of Readings and Carols
- 10:00 p.m. - La veille de Noel (French-language service of carols and readings)

Sunday, December 25 - Christmas Day
 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.,
 and Potluck Supper at 6:00 p.m.

Join us on Christmas Sunday for a service of togetherness and reflection. Whether you are with family or alone on this holiday, whether you are a Christmas fanatic or mistletoe-phobic, whether you need to be spiritually fed or you just need to get out of the house for a few hours, Come, Come, Whoever You Are! At 6:00 p.m. there will be a potluck dinner following the evening service, to which all are invited to share delicious food and warm company.

Help Reduce our Congregation's Deficit while Enjoying Your Holiday Feast!

During the holiday season Loblaws offers—not-for-profits the opportunity to sell cards that can be used like cash at all of their stores. They come in denominations of \$25, \$50, \$100 and \$250. They are also good for any discount promotions that happen in their stores. These cards never expire. The Congregation will receive 5% of the value of the cards.



Holly & Lace Bazaar Wrap Up

The 2011 Holly and Lace Bazaar shows all the signs of being the most successful one ever.

Check out page eight for photos and a wrap up of the Fall Fair.

(continued, page 8)



In the past we have offered the cards on a year round basis. Since the percentage offered is less during most of the year—we are planning to continue the sales only during the holiday season. We plan to purchase a large supply of the cards in December and will sell them until they run out. If you are interested in purchasing a large quantity please let the office know and we will order some especially for you.

The cards are available anytime at the church office.

Caring Committee Contacts for December

Judy Dunlop: 613-728-9242

Marianne Wood: 613-725-3452

*We listen, we phone, we
bake, we drive*

Minister's Levee

Sunday, January 1, 2012

hosted by

John Marsh and Alison Patrick

All ages are invited to the downstairs of the church to enjoy coffee, tea, mulled cider, popcorn and other light refreshments. The labyrinth will be lit by electric candlelight with meditation music playing for those who would like to begin the New Year with a silent inner journey. This will also be a time to renew old acquaintances and make new friendships—and speak of hopes and dreams for the coming year(s).

At 4:00 p.m. there will be a toast to the Queen.

HOSPITALITY HOUR

A big thank you to those who I see studying the Sign-up sheets, deciding when they can give of their time to assist with Hospitality Hour. The Voyager Mens' Group volunteered again on November 20 for set-up, serving and cleaning up. Thanks to Tom Rankin and his fellow members of the group as well as George and Gordon, for enthusiastically helping out. The Office Staff has stepped up to the plate and volunteered to cover Hospitality Hour on December 18. Great to have a new group involved in the process.

I appreciate that food containers were collected so promptly from the kitchen following the Fall Fair. Time for a reminder about cleaning up dishes (glasses, plates, cups, pots and pans, etc.) in Fellowship Hall and Volunteer Room kitchens during the week. Please rinse food off dishes and place them in the grey bins outside the kitchen. At times, items have been left in the sinks with food hardening on them which makes cleaning very difficult.

Christmas and New Year's Day fall on Sunday this year. The attendance may be smaller than regular services and thus hospitality hour may require less help. If you plan to attend services on these days, give a thought to signing up for a scaled down coffee hour.

- Tarrel Armstrong



The Parkway Spire

Contributors

Tarrel Armstrong, Sean Barron, Jen Brennan, Wendy Doyle, Sara Brooks, Jennifer Channin Katherine Gunn, John Marsh, Shannon Linton, Maureen Sly, Susan McEwen, Alataire Henderson, Maury Prevost, Barry Read, Renee De Vry, Margaret Linton, Eve Berringer and Kathy Yach

Production

Kevin McQuinn, Editor; Warren Scott, Arthur Palmer, Alataire Henderson, Claire Harrison, and Judy Lishman, Proofreaders

Submissions

The deadline for submissions to the January 2012 issue is Thursday, December 15. We welcome photographs or articles of 300 words or less that cover congregational events and activities. Contact publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

Subscriptions

Electronic subscriptions are free; contact publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca. For information on receiving the Spire via surface mail (cost \$12), contact the church office.



**First unitarian
congregation OF ottawa**

30 Cleary Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2A 4A1
Phone: 613-725-1066
Fax: 613-725-3259
E-mail: uoffice@firstunitarianottawa.ca
Web site: www.firstunitarianottawa.ca
Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.; Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

2010–2011 Board of Directors
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Members at Large: Alataire Henderson, Louise Lefort, Paul Ward and Ed Willer;
Youth Representative: Nic Smith

Program Staff

Rev. John Marsh, Minister
minister@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x225
Jennifer Channin, Intern Minister
intern@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x229
Susan McEwen, Director of Lifespan Learning
dll@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x234
Marie Gabe, Lifespan Learning Assistant
lla@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x226
Sara Brooks, Interim Music Director,
music@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x230
Kaley Duff, Interim Children's Choir Director
childrensmusic@firstunitarianottawa.ca
Ellen Bell, Spiritual Care Visitor
Rev. Brian Kopke, Rev. Liz Benjamin, and
Rev. David Pohl, Ministers Emeriti
Jane Perry, Music Director Emerita

Lay Chaplains

Bob Armstrong, Caroline Elson, Jan Glyde

Administrative Staff

Carolyn Turner, Director of Support Services
dss@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x228
Philip Downs, Custodian
custodians@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x224
or 613-898-1066 (cell)
Kevin McQuinn, Publications Officer
publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x223
Jen Brennan, Support Services Assistant
ssa@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x221
Mary Du, Accounting Officer
accounting@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x222



CAPITAL IDEAS

Some year's ago my friend and colleague, the late Clarke Wells, wrote "Twelve Rules for Keeping Sane in December". They are a reminder that this is a stressful as well as a joyous time and I share them with you:

Below are twelve rules to be followed faithfully from now through New Year's Day:

1. *Measure out your drinks in a jigger, keep track of them, and no sloshing over the rim. You may not stay sober, but at least you'll remember who's responsible.*
2. *Weigh in every morning, the greatest reality-check invented since the flu or jail.*
3. *Read Euripedes' "The Bacchae", it's a marvelous aversion-therapy for December disciples of frenzied celebration. (I won't give the plot away, but in one scene that takes place at a party, our hero, in a fit of glee, has his arms torn out of their sockets by his jubilant mother, much to her later distress, and presumably his).*
4. *Be a good listener for all your friends who will fall apart over the next few weeks.*
5. *When you wish people Merry Christmas and Happy New Year look them in the eye.*
6. *RSVP December party invitations with a request for a rain check in February, a month that needs all the help it can get.*
7. *Much of Xmas is a mass of clichés, best broken up by fresh collateral reading, for example, the New Testament accounts of the birth of Christ.*
8. *Avoid romantic entanglements during December. They are exhausting. And behind the clandestine candle-glow of the season's affair you will discover that your new saviour is a much a slob as your present husband or wife.*
9. *The next time you feel impossibly rushed, late with shopping, worried about money, gifts, sending cards, turn on and tune in Bach's Christmas Oratorio. Then lie back on the couch and disappoint the drug industry and Freudians everywhere.*
10. *Permit some Christmas lighting to stay on far into the night.*
11. *When I was a boy scout we were advised in the official manual to take cold hip baths to prevent sex from rearing its ugly head. It never worked, so I'm modest about offering counsel to those in inner turmoil, sexual or otherwise. But for those of you who get torn apart by holiday depressions or anxiety attacks, I commend long walks, looking at Christmas trees and then home for cocoa. Meantime we pray for shut-ins who can't walk out at Christmas and pray that they have devised other techniques for beating the devil, the holiday devil who has a genius for raising hell at the worst possible time.*
12. *And last, please don't feel too guilty about violating any of the above rules. Merry Christmas, Happy New year, and wink at a star in the night's dark sky.*

See you in church,

December Services

December 4

Thoughts on God

- John Marsh & Heidi Wright

Is there a place for God in the next century, and if so, where might that be?

December 11

United Nations Sunday

December 18 - 10:30 a.m.

Mitten Tree Service - Service For All Ages

There will be a telling of the story of "The Mitten" by Jan Brett and reflections on family and community by John Marsh and Susan McEwen.

Everyone is invited to bring mittens, scarves, hats, or snowsuits with which to decorate a big evergreen tree. We will sing "O Mitten Tree"! The clothing items will later be given to the Snowsuit Fund for distribution to needy children in the Ottawa community.

December 18 - 5:00 p.m.

Waiting

- John Marsh

Much of our lives is spent waiting. Yet, many of us are not that good at it. This will be an Advent reflection on both waiting and living fully in the moment. This will be a reprise of the Nov 27 10:30 a.m. service

December 24

Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. - Family Service for All Ages

6:15 p.m. - Light supper of soup, salad, and bread will be served

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Kathy Yach

On November 4th 2011 former Penn State University assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was indicted by a grand jury on forty counts of alleged sexual crimes against young boys between 1994 and 2009. While this is disturbing news, it is also an opportunity to effect change.

Sex abuse scandals continue to happen around the world on a daily basis. The Department of Justice publishes a "Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Youth Fact Sheet"

on their web site. It reports that in 2002, there were 8800 sexual assaults against children and youth reported to a subset of 94 police departments across Canada. This included 2863 sexual assaults against children and youth by family members.

As an Early Childhood Educator, I have had to report a number of suspected child abuse cases to the Children's Aid Society.

There have been times when I wished I could take a "magic wand" and made it "not to have happened". You look at the child and you know you can't imagine what they have gone through and you hope it will never happen to them again. You also are aware that their lives have changed forever. Nothing will ever be the same. You also wonder as you wait for the CAS and Police to arrive what will happen to the family and children in the future.

I am raising this issue at this time because we are all involved with children and youth. In our Religious Exploration (RE) and Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education (OWL) programs we have a special opportunity and responsibility to educate everyone about these matters. In our faith community's endeavours to create healthy and safe environments for people, of all ages, we have used the Canadian Unitarian Council's *Safe Congregation & Screening in Faith* resources to inform our work with young people. You can visit the Cuc's website (www.cuc.ca/safe/) to explore their resources and our own website (www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/learn/children-youth.html) to read our Children and Youth Ministry Handbooks. Our OWL programs offer children and families support in opening discussion and providing information about healthy sexuality. In our homes with our children and grandchildren we should also create the opportunities to discuss these matters in order to make the world a safer place.

If at any time you witness or are informed of a sexual assault within our congregation you have a mandated responsibility to report it to the Children's Aid Society and to the Minister or Board President immediately. If you do not report it you can be charged with failing to report.

We should take time to reflect on these recent events and seize the opportunity to learn from them and share our thoughts with others. As members of this Congregation, parents and grandparents should take the time to educate our children. As we create safe spaces for them, may we also nurture their sense of self-worth, belonging, and healthy boundaries, along with their awareness of the dangers of sexual abuse so that we may offer them protection from harmful situations and help them navigate their way safely through our complex world. .

Let us move forward as a congregation to help lead the way to a better world.

Respectfully submitted,

Splinters from the Board

- Dougherty and Associates have completed their first quarter as our investment advisors and would like to meet with the Board in the near future. At the present time our investment account is holding more than the planned \$25,000 in cash due to the tight cash flow pending revenues from the Fall Fair. It was decided to hold this cash until after the Fall Fair.
- It was reported that the well project in the Meditation Garden is making progress. We are on track to complete it in November and a celebration and ceremony will occur in the spring. The Friends of the Meditation Garden are hoping to raise the final cash needed for the project through cookie and calendar sales.
- The Campus Planning workshop is scheduled for Sunday, December 4, 2011
- A follow up to the workshop is scheduled for January 15, 2012.
- Fran Morrison has given a bequest of \$15,000 to the Congregation. The donation will go into the Internship Fund. This money, plus the traditional fundraising for the Internship Fund, should put us in a good position to continue with intern ministers shared between us and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa for at least five years.
- Louise LeFort confirmed that Sean Neil Barron and Chuck Shields are willing to stand for election to the Nominating Committee.
- Ed Willer, as the Board liaison to the Social Responsibility Council, will contact Michael Cassidy and Mary Duncan of the WG and the Chair (Ron Wilson) and Financial Officer (David Hudson) of the Social Responsibility.
- The Steering Committee (SRSC) will facilitate discussions with the objective of clarifying their respective mandates, responsibilities and relationships in the future and report back to the Board.

PONDERING THE FUTURE



As the third month of my internship in the Ottawa UU community comes to a close, I have the feeling that it is going by too quickly. People are already talking about Christmas, and I haven't even

gotten around to unpacking all my books! It amazes me how easily Ottawa and these two Congregations have come to feel like home to me. This is a strong testament to the strength of the liberal religious community here.

More than a few people have asked me whether I plan to stay in Ottawa after my internship ends in June. While I don't yet know my plans for next year, the likelihood of me staying close by is small. The nature of an internship is that, for one year, I get to experience as much of ministerial life as I can in one community before I move on to work in another. Your congregations, likewise, benefit from the fresh ideas and skills of an intern minister and then you get a new intern with fresh ideas and different skills.

Perhaps an added benefit, for both intern and congregation, is that an internship is an exercise in non-attachment. Some people think that the Buddhist ideal of non-attachment means we should be cold and unemotional towards things are impermanent (and everything is impermanent). This is meant to support the idea that if you don't let yourself love something, then it won't hurt so much when that thing goes away. While I am no expert on Buddhism, I think this is a mistaken interpretation. Of course we should feel love and other emotions towards people, places, and things. To never have these feelings would make for a bleak life indeed. But we do not need to possess things and keep them the same to love them. In fact, we discover that the beauty the world is intensified when we accept

that things will change. I recently saw the gorgeous calendar created from photographs of the Meditation Garden at First Unitarian taken throughout the year. Seeing the changes that occur in the garden from season to season is a lovely lesson on impermanence.

As much as a religious community is about growing roots and providing stability (this is why we invest in buildings and nurture our next generations), religious community is also about guiding each other through life's changes and losses. A congregation or a minister who cannot handle change and loss is ill-prepared to meet the spiritual needs of individuals, or the social needs of broader society. So far, my internship here has exceeded my expectations, and it is with a growing feeling of love that I look forward to the coming months that I have with you here.

With warm regards in these chilly months,

- Jennifer Channin

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Channin".

December Services

(continued from page 3)

December 25, 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Day

Jennifer Channin & Alex Campbell
Potluck Supper 6:00 p.m.

Join us on Christmas Sunday for a service of togetherness and reflection. Whether you are with family or alone on this holiday, whether you are a Christmas fanatic or mistletoe-phobic, whether you need to be spiritually fed or you just need to get out of the house for a few hours, Come, Come, Whoever You Are! At 6:00 p.m. there will be a potluck dinner following the evening service, to which all are invited to share delicious food and warm company.

January 1, 2012

"My Banjo is Broken"

Joe Cleveland, Guest Speaker

Our guest this morning is a renowned folk musician who is preparing for the Unitarian Universalist ministry. His sermon this morning stems from his discovery that (horrors!) the banjo is really not suitable for all occasions. But then, how is that different from anything or anyone else preparing for a new year.

Fellowship News

Thank you to the members of First Congregation for their enthusiasm and support in helping us to Realize Our Dream of having a home of our own. Bill Van Iterson, Bob Armstrong and Maury Prevost have been invaluable in their dedication to this goal. This is a long-held dream which is getting closer to reality thanks to the generous donations from many members at First.

Coming out of this campaign, one of the most exciting developments for members of our Fellowship has been the expansion of contact on the working level and the personal level with the members of First. We enjoyed our visits to services on Oct. 9 and Oct. 23, as a chance to meet and renew acquaintance with our west end colleagues. Of course, visitors from First are likewise always welcome at the UUFO.

The retreat to work towards a mission statement for the Fellowship was held on Nov. 19, with help from Valerie Cousins. Jennifer Channin's evening course on "What Moves Us" has had a regular attendance by a group of members appreciative of this opportunity to explore the foundations of their faith. A theme in our services this Fall has been compassion. Speakers have explored both philosophical dimensions of the concept of compassion and a wide range of its applications.

A high level of effort, trust and mutual compassion has made possible a very active and productive autumn.

MUSICALIA

by Interim Music Director Sara Brooks



The Choirs of First Unitarian Present – Winter Lights – A Choral Celebration of the Season.

Join our five vocal ensembles, on Saturday, December 3 at 4:00 p.m. in Worship Hall, for their annual musical celebration of the winter season! Our ensembles include the Chalice Choir, Chamber Choir, Gospel Choir, and both the Intermediate and Junior Children's Choirs, under the direction of Interim Children's music director, Kaley Duff. A reception will follow – don't miss out!

Tickets: \$15 Adult, \$10 Student/Senior, or pay what you can at the door. Tickets are available at the church office or The Leading Note, 370 Elgin Street.

Children's Choirs News

Don't miss our special Mitten Tree service, December 18 at 10:30 a.m. Our Junior and Intermediate Children's choirs present music for this much-anticipated Sunday morning service!

New Youth Choir set to begin in January!

Our Children's Music director, Shannon Linton, will be kicking off the New Year with a new Youth Choir, Ages 13+. Rehearsals will take place Sundays from 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. in the NOW Room, with the first rehearsal set for January 8, 2012. This exciting ensemble will participate in several evening services throughout the year, and will tackle a variety of musical styles, including gospel, African, folk, and classical. Don't miss out on this chance to join an exciting musical community! Sign up today! Via email: childrensmusic@firstunitarianottawa.ca, or on the music bulletin board.

"Standing Room Only Big Band" at First Unitarian!

Mark your calendars for Friday, January 20, 2012 as we are joined by this fabulous fifteen piece band "Standing Room Only" composed of members from the Almonte area and Ottawa. This group routinely presents Sunday afternoon Tea Dances during the winter months at the Almonte Old Town Hall, as well as a variety of public and private functions such as the Friday evening dances of the Ottawa Swing Dance Society. For more information on this great group, check out their video at: www.sroteadances.org/srodrupal/content/video-gallery.

Chalice Choir Special Event: Open Rehearsal!

Ever wonder what really goes on at a Thursday night choir rehearsal? Good fun, that's what! Often referred to as "Choir Night in Canada", a large percentage of Church Choirs in Ottawa, rehearse Thursday evenings. Stop wondering what it's all about, and come check us out!

On Thursday, January 26, 2012 we open up our rehearsal space to visitors! Bring friends, family, work colleagues – refreshments and fellowship offered. No music or choral experience required – join in, or simply observe the fun!

December Guest artists at 5:00 p.m. services!

Don't miss these fabulous artists at our special 5:00 p.m. services in December.

December 4: Diana Lam, Flute

December 11: Avery Vine, Piano

December 18: Phyllis Knox, Soprano



Search Begins for New Music Director

A search committee has been formed to select a permanent Music Director at First Unitarian to fill the position held by Jane Perry for the past 11 years. The committee began its work in early November and is hoping to find Jane's successor by the spring of 2012.

Sara Brooks, the interim music director, will continue with First until the summer and the new director will begin work in August. Under the process mapped out by the church board and the committee, Sara will be the first candidate considered for the permanent appointment if she wishes to apply. If a wider search is required, it will begin early in the New Year.

The committee is now engaged in updating the music director's job description and reflecting on the criteria it will apply in recommending a candidate. Their recommendation will be subject to review by Rev. Marsh and staff members Susan McEwen (Lifespan Learning) and Shannon Linton (Children's Choir).

The Search Committee members are Jan Andrews, Joan Auden, Kate Kirkwood, Mike Cassidy, and Jenny Rae. All are members of one or more of the church choirs. The committee has decided to have rotating chairpersons. It will report its progress through the Spire and Sunday church bulletins.

Church members wishing to comment or make suggestions are invited to speak to a committee member or to e-mail the committee at: MDsearch@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

Religious Education

Sharing a Moment with Susan



“Isn't it funny that at Christmas something in you gets lonely for – I don't know what exactly, but it's something that you don't mind so much not having at other times.”

-Kate L. Boshier

Stapling the sign-up sheets for the Mitten Tree Service and the Christmas Pageant on the bulletin board, I wondered how it is that families, whose schedules are already busy with school, work, lessons, household tasks, and social commitments, find space in their lives to participate in the events and activities in our faith community. I often reflect on the balancing act required to create opportunities for sharing, connection, learning,

and service that are meaningful but yet accessible to families who are doing their best to tend to many responsibilities.

For me, this reflection has increased my awareness of the importance of such meaningful opportunities. And if they are important in the midst of our everyday lives, they are especially so at a time of year that is laden with emotional intensity for many. In our diverse faith community, we have varying experiences of and intentions for “the Holiday Season.” Some of us may question the consumerism and the use of resources we see at this time of year, while others contemplate what spiritual meaning is present for them and their families. The dynamics of extended family gatherings may be a source both of joy and sadness, contentment and anxiety. Our feelings and reactions may be heightened due to additional time and financial commitments, memories of holidays past, and the suggestion we see everywhere that this is a happy, jolly time for all.

My friend Prema Mayi says, “We all want connection. The soul in this material world is in a foreign land; therefore, we always have a sensation of not belonging.” To me it seems that our faith community offers us a place to connect just as we are: joyful, sad, content, anxious, hurried, peaceful, and everything in between. It gives us a place to belong, to bear witness, to serve others, to create meaning, to look more deeply into the stories of our hearts and to listen to those of others. This December, our church is home to many wonderful, beautiful opportunities to share, connect, learn, and serve. It may be that making space for these special moments in our lives is one of the greatest gifts we can give our families and ourselves. Whether you join us at the front of the sanctuary or in the pews, we welcome you to be with us just as you are.

Susan



Get Your Mittens for the Mitten Tree!

The Crafty Crafters – Knitters will have lots of warm, hand-made mitts, hats and scarves for sale.

When: Sunday, December 18, 2011 from 9:30 a.m. on

Where: the West Lobby”



DECEMBER EVENTS

Sunday, December 4

Children's Worship (God)

**Friday, December 9 – Sunday,
December 11**

Senior High OWL weekend
workshops

(Our Whole Lives Sexuality
Education for 15-20 year olds)

Sunday, December 11

Night Tree Event
(a Family Ministry activity during
R.E. time)

Sunday, December 18

Mitten Tree All Ages Service
(remember to bring mittens and other
warm winter outdoor wear for those in
need!)



Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Family Service and
Pageant

Sunday, December 25

no R.E. activities today

2011 Fall Fair Finale

Congratulations to us all on the successful Holly and Lace Bazaar.

This event aims to create community, raise money for operational expenses and provide community outreach. The community experience was heart-warming as people connected and reconnected over cups of tea and shared tasks and laughter rippled through the rooms. The financial success was the best yet, with an over 10% increase from last year. The amount and quality of goods still being delivered to community outreach organizations is remarkable.

This success can be attributed to the weather(!), promotion by you to your friends and colleagues, the high quality of goods donated, and to the infinite patience, reliability and flexibility of our volunteers and staff.

The key players in this event are those who stepped up and volunteered for a leadership role. Their commitment, collaborative skills and groundedness are just a few of their fine attributes.

Please find an opportunity to let them know what you enjoyed about the Fall Fair.

Site Manager – Ron Wilson

- Parking – Bert Curtis and Dave Luck
- Deployment Plans – Scott Drennan
- Signage – David Hudson

Site Services – Katherine Gunn

Volunteer Coordinator – Ellen Smith with Isabel Burrows

Finance – David Black with Bob Armstrong

Food Services Department – Prue Craib

- International Café – Ed Cuyllits, Joan Auden
- Lunch Room – Sue Wheeler and Elisabeth Morrison
- Baked Goods, Candy, Jams, Pickles, Cookbooks – Prue Craib and Pat Hill
- Volunteer Room – Prue Craib, Isabel Burrows, Evelyn Algar
- Outdoor Coffee – Wendy Tomlinson

Finer Objects Department – Paula Theetge

- Silent Auction – Lorraine Yorke,
- Knitting/Crafts – Rosemary Bonyun
- Christmas – Gerry Woelfert
- Jewellery – Ria Heynen
- Linens – Carolyn McAndrew and Lise Lavoie
- Gift Shop – Marg Lee and Elizabeth Waechter
- Stamps and Coins – Barry Read
- Timeless Treasures – Paula Theetge, Gail Scagnetti

Clothing Department – Jen Brennan with Joyce Turnbull

- Boutique (women's) – Angela Beale
- Accessories – Nona Mackenzie
- Women's/Youth Clothing – Janet Clayton
- Convenors: Men's Wear – Robert Gordon

Books, bytes, beats & bric-a-brac – Kerri Timoffee

- Flea Market – Diane Van Oostdam and Michael Cassidy
- Children's Toys, Games and Puzzles – Meghan Dunn
- Music – Gerald Boucher and Stephen Gabe
- Book Room – Carol Card and Sharon Reeves
- Better Books – Mabel Ong
- Large Outdoor Items – Ian Gorman
- Electronics/Computers – John Turnbull

Communication – Andy Church

Fall Fair Director – Margaret Linton

- First Aid – Jane Arbique
- Sound Support – Carl Sonnen



THANK YOU! MERCI! GRACIAS!

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

- Our Religious Explorations (R.E.) Leaders, Coming of Age Mentors, and Youth Advisors for your contributions to our ministry with children and youth this fall.
- The Fall Fair succeeds only because of its many dedicated volunteers; this particular thank you is for the mentoring work of many long time organizers.
 - ◇ Isabel Burrows for ensuring volunteer coordination will go on without her;
 - ◇ Bert Curtis whose parking expertise is hard to surpass after 11+ years;
 - ◇ Joyce Turnbull the clothing sorting process expert;
 - ◇ Suzanne Ahlers for handing off the Silent Auction to a new convenor so successfully;
 - ◇ David Hudson and Ernie Criddle for sharing the mysteries of site management with a new team;
 - ◇ The years of Lunch Room Coordinators who have made managing their team of 100 plus look easy – the most recent of whom have been Karen Swinburne, Marilyn Prevost, Sue Wheeler.
- Ted Elliott for his repairs to the kitchen stove just in time for Fall Fair.
- Meg Gourlay for coming back to serve as PA announcer at the Fall Fair.
- Our R.E. Committee - Mary Jo Murdock, Jennifer Murakami, Karen Blakely, Alison Harvey, and Susan Odle - for your dedication to and support of our program, volunteers, and families.
- Colleen Glass and Jan Andrews for their hard and excellent work on putting together a beautiful 2012 calendar for use as a fundraiser for the Meditation Gardens!
- Ellen Smith for graciously hosting our Coming of Age fall retreat at her Bed & Breakfast home.

Maury Prevost is the editor of this column. You can submit items by sending an email to mmprevost@sympatico.ca or by calling 613-231-7391 at least 48 hours before the Parkway Spire deadline.

NEWS FROM NEPAL

At the time of this writing, I have been living at Child Haven Nepal for a little over one month. The children, the scenery, and the exotic surroundings are all wonderful, but I am especially impressed by the amazing staff. I would like to tell you about one of the Child Haven “didis”.

There is an outdoor tap in the back courtyard where Usha-didi washes all the big cooking pots from the kitchen. With so many people to feed, she is doing dishes all day long just outside the little cottage which houses volunteers. She is very kind and friendly, but she has a hard job and long hours. It is usually after 8 p.m. before Usha finishes scrubbing. It is very hard on her hands. Usha has a 10-year-old son named Aasish. He attends Green Tara School and is a hard-working student. Usha and Ashish do not live at the Child Haven



home, but in a small house nearby. They share the house with another Child Haven didi and her child.

When Usha gave birth to Ashish he was very small, and she was not able to nurse him. Her husband abandoned them. Child Haven took

them in and hired a wet nurse for the baby. Usha is a very good mother, and it means everything to her to provide a good life for her son. Aasish sits and waits for his mother to finish her work in the evenings, then they walk home together. They pass the time singing and talking while Usha finishes her cleaning.

Usha loves the two dogs who live at this home. She feeds and cares for them. Unlike the other didis she is often alone, so she appreciates the company of the dogs. Despite the difficulty of her job, she seems to be very grateful for the opportunity it has given her to raise and educate her son in a good environment. Usha shows great courage, grace, and dignity in a life that has not always been easy.

Susan Bowers, from First Unitarian, has recently taken on the challenge of working as a volunteer at Child Haven in Nepal. She has kindly agreed to send us periodic news of her experiences.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Social Responsibility Council Activities

Sunday, December 3 10:30 a.m.

Project TEMBO Luncheon

Sunday December 11, 11:45 a.m.

Granny Squares and Fair Trade Sales

Sunday December 11, 5:00 p.m. -

Welcoming Congregation potluck (off-site)

Thursday December 15, 4:00 p.m. -
Unitarian Gogos

Sunday December 18, 11:45 a.m. -
Fair Trade Sales

Poverty Awareness Christmas Boxes

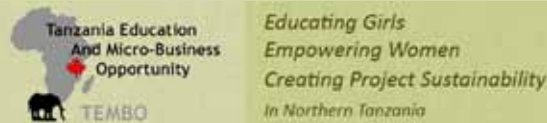
It's time to prepare Christmas boxes! The Poverty Awareness Working Group delivers boxes of seasonal decorations and small gifts for women and children who have moved on from the Aboriginal Women's Shelter with our assistance over the past year. Your donations for this project will be very welcome by Sunday, December 6, including any size of artificial Christmas tree. Look for a drop-off box in the Volunteer Centre/ Apartment or contact Katherine Gunn: at 613-729-0504 or klgunn@magma.ca.

UN Sunday Service December 11

The UN Working Group is proud to announce that Kathryn White, CEO of United Nations Association Canada will speak on Sunday, December 11 on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines gender equality. December 10 is the anniversary of the signing of the declaration in 1948.

Occupy Park Protesters

Occupy The Park protesters Lisa Marie Trudel and others will be present on Sunday, December 11 at 12:15 p.m. in the Now Room to tell us about Occupy Ottawa.



Project TEMBO

The Project TEMBO Annual Luncheon on Saturday, December 3 is a fundraiser for Tanzania Education and Micro-Business Opportunities (TEMBO). Funds help girls and women in two small villages in east Africa. The event is sponsored by the Unitarian GoGos.

The Luncheon will feature:

- A presentation entitled "Saving Mothers: Preventing Maternal Deaths in Rural Tanzania" by Dr. Gail Webber, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, University of Ottawa
- African Marketplace
- Silent Auction & Raffles
- Delicious Lunch featuring Tanzanian Dishes

Tickets are \$45.00 each (includes a \$25.00 tax receipt) and are available by calling 613-569-0599 or by email at info@projectembo.org.

Welcoming Congregation Working Group

A Working Group pot luck supper will be at the home of Prue Craib and Pat Hill, at 5.00 p.m. on Sunday, December 11.

Any new LGBTQ people connected to the congregation are most welcome. Call 613-719-7786 for information.

UNICEF cards are great!

This year the UN Working group will not be selling UNICEF cards but we heartily encourage the Congregation to continue sending these cards, available at IKEA, Pier 1 and Ten Thousand Villages, as well as at most Hallmark stores and other retailers that carry Hallmark products, such as Loblaws and Walmart.

The Environmental Working Group—at a Crossroads

At its November 6 meeting, members of the Environmental Working Group (EWG) brainstormed as to how we could change our way of operating to make the EWG more visible and effective, and evaluate how well the changes work, before considering the prospect of disbanding.

A review of the 2010–2011 annual report indicated several areas we want to continue or develop:

- to support the congregational CSA (community-shared agriculture arrangement in 2012 - now in its third season);
- to work with the Congregation's Adult Learning Committee to bring in speakers;
- to become primarily an email group but to hold bimonthly or quarterly meetings;
- to develop closer connections with the Global Justice Working Group;
- to seek the Minister's "take" on environmental issues and actions for our congregation,
- to collaborate with other local environmental organizations, attend public actions, co-sponsor educational events.

For the first half of 2012, our bimonthly meetings will be held on Sundays: January 15, March 18, and May 20. We'll reassess at the May meeting how well this has worked.

Reading for Growth

There are three active Reading For Growth Groups which explore and learn about relevant issues through the reading of thought-provoking books. One group meets every second Monday afternoon of the month. On December 12, it will be discussing "Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World" by Margaret MacMillan from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Lounge

The other group meets on the last Friday afternoon of the month.

The RFG Fiction Group will hold its next meeting on December 6 at 1:00 p.m. in the Lounge. We will be discussing "The Elegance of the Hedgehog" by Muriel Barbery. Anyone who would like to join us is welcome.

If you are interested in joining one of these groups or would like to attend as a visitor, please contact Katharine Elliott at 613-270-8308 or e-mail katharine.elliott@opera.ncf.ca.

Mental Illness Working Group Card Sale

The Mental Illness Working group is selling Christmas and greeting cards in fellowship Hall for the next few Sundays after the morning services.

The cards are in aid of Ancoura a supportive housing project for people with mental illness. Ancoura has just opened its new home on Henry Farm Drive. Besides financial support, it is also looking for volunteers to help the residents on a casual basis.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please speak to a member of the MIWG for further information, or contact Katharine Elliott at 613-270-8308 or e-mail me at katharine.elliott@opera.ncf.ca.

Deadline for the January issue of the Parkway Spire is Thursday, December 15.

LIFESPAN LEARNING

Mental Illness Working Group

The MIWG Working Group (MIWG) will next be meeting on Sunday, January 9 at 12:15 p.m.

Our mandate states that the Mental Illness Working Group (MIWG) is formed to support the Ancoura supportive housing initiative for people living with mental illness. The MIWG also works to bring greater awareness of the problems faced by people living with a mental illness.

At this meeting we will be discussing our projects for the coming year.

Anyone who has an interest in the topic of mental illness is encouraged to join us at our meeting.

For more information contact: Katharine Elliott at 613-270-8308 or katharine.elliott@opera.ncf.ca.

Introductory Sessions on Buddhism

The Adult Learning Committee is pleased to announce that Mihaela Andronic* will be offering two sessions on Buddhism. The first class will give a historical perspective. Mihaela will touch on the Indian brahmanical and 'renouncer' tradition, the historical Buddha, the legend of the Buddha and "what" is a Buddha.

In the second session, Mihaela will speak of the Buddha's path teaching: the "Four Noble Truths"; for example why do we suffer and how can we alleviate suffering.

When: Wednesday, January 11, 18, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Lifespan Learning Guides

The new Winter/Spring edition will be available in early January. Pick up your copy at the back of the church, or on bulletin boards around the church.

The Lifespan Learning Guide is also available on the Congregation's website, firstunitarianottawa.ca, in the Learn, Grow and Enjoy section.

Instruction of Mindfulness Meditation

Lise-Andree Payette** will give practical instructions on how to meditate, specifically using the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MSSR) program as taught by Jon Kabat-Zinn. No previous experience is necessary. All are welcome.

When: Wednesday, January 25; Sunday, February 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

If there is an interest in developing this practice, the Mindfulness Meditation sessions will continue on Wednesday evenings.

* Mihaela Andronic is a telecommunications engineer, who recently graduated with an MA, magna cum laude, in a three year Buddhist Studies Masters Degree program from the University of Sunderland, in England. Mihaela studied with Dr. Peter Harvey, a world-renowned expert on Buddhist ethics and in 2007, she was ordained as a lay member in Thich Nhat Hahn's Order of Interbeing.

** Lise-Andree Payette has a Masters in Social Work, has completed the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction program studying with Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn among other meditation teachers. She recently co-facilitated the MBSR program at the Centretown Community Health Centre.

Contact: Wendy Doyle at adultlearning@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Womens' Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group is next meeting for a ritual or chant workshop in January, date and meeting information to be announced. Stay tuned!

Contact: Laurie 613-728-1916 or email: fosterm@bell.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTERFAITH WORLD AIDS DAY SERVICE

“It is critical that we continue to gather as community on World AIDS Day in order to remember, through music and silence, those lost to HIV/AIDS as well as recommit ourselves to be vigilant in addressing both the spread of HIV/AIDS and the need for accessible treatment in both Canada and around the world. This liturgy is also important in offering support in efforts to challenge the stigmatism experienced by those living with HIV/AIDS.”

Our own Rev. John Marsh will offer a prayer.

When: December 1, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

Where: All Saints Anglican and First United, 347 Richmond Road

FAIR TRADE

You will have two opportunities to do your Fair Trade Christmas shopping.

Fair trade, organic chocolate and coffee products as well as Zatoun Xtra Virgin Olive oil and spices will be sold in Fellowship Hall after the service on Sunday 11 and 18.

Support the small farmers and their communities: Buy Fair Trade. (A small profit will be made on some products, which will be donated to environmental and justice organizations such as USC, Ecology Ottawa, Seeds for Diversity).

ARTSPACE EXHIBIT SCHEDULE:

December: Joan Devine Artspace is in the Lounge. New artists who are interested in exhibiting can please contact Laurie.

Contact: Laurie Foster-MacLeod: 613-728-1916

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING, ANYONE?

Friends of the Meditation Gardens have produced a gorgeous, full colour 2012 calendar illustrating the beauty of our congregational gardens in all four seasons. We will be selling them on Sundays after the service in Fellowship Hall: December 4, 11 and 18. Pick up a few as Christmas gifts for friends and relatives!

Also, on December 18, the Friends will be selling home baked Christmas goodies (3-5 kinds) as plates or singly. Delicious at home, or take them as hostess gifts to holiday gatherings.

FALL FAIR CONVENOR FEEDBACK

All Fall Fair convenors are invited to attend a feedback meeting on Sunday, December 11 at 12:30 p.m. in Room 5.



Anusha Khare at the child naming ceremony in November

PARKDALE FOOD CENTRE DONATIONS

The Parkdale Food Centre is very grateful for the donations received from our congregation. However, there is still a pressing need for food items. Also, The ONLY containers they will accept are the 750 gram size (large yogurt containers). Egg cartons are also accepted. A big thank you to those who make donations to the food centre!

UU ROUND TABLE LUNCH

Open to all UUs and guests. Lively discussions take place among members of the group, who have diverse interests and experiences. Our meeting location changes every three months.

When: Friday, December 16, 1:00 p.m.

Where: Biagio's 1349 Richmond Road

RSVP: Tudy McLaine 613-745-8074, mclaine2d@hotmail.com, or Marjorie Daechsel, 613-596-1471 by Thursday, December 15.



Members and guests at the UU Round Table Lunch at Biagio's in November