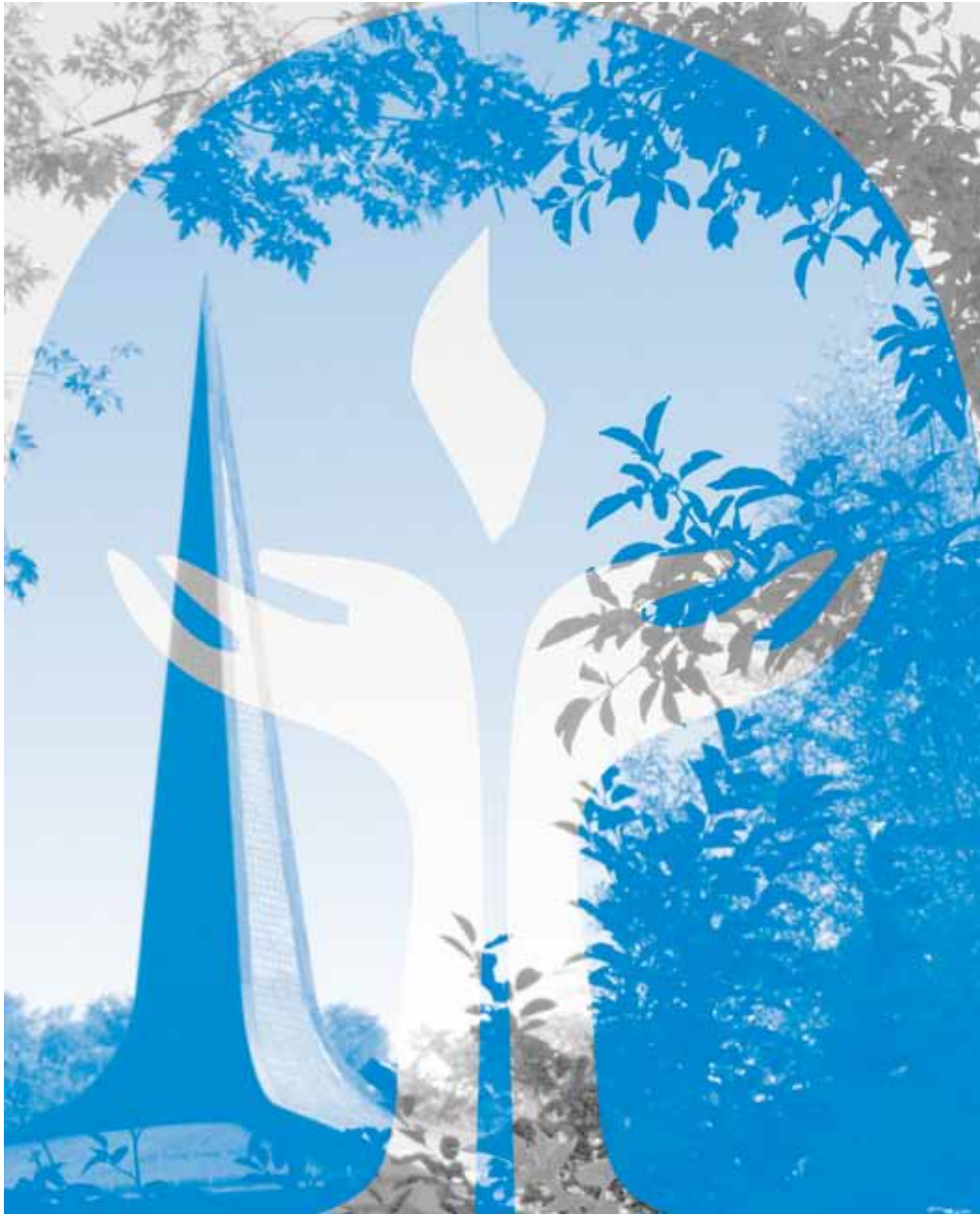
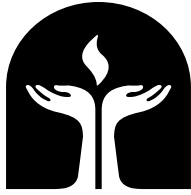


FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA



**ANNUAL REPORT
2010 - 2011**



First unitarian congregation of ottawa

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Kim Elmer, Vice-President

Eleonore Benesch, Treasurer

Scott Drennan, Secretary

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Paul Ward and Ed Willer;

Youth Representative: Keagan Eskritt

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In Memoriam

People who have passed away.

“In the rising of the sun, and in its going down,
we will remember them.”

2010

Keith Crowe - May 16
Ruth Haythorne - June 4
Ed Cuylits - November 16
Art Read - November 26
Molly Brooke - December 8

2011

George Wilson - April 13
John McFadden - April 14
H. Llyn Seymour - April 15
Frances Morrison - April 29
Brigitta Griffiths - May 7

Highlights from last year include:

Our Intergenerational Services:

At the end of 2009-2010 Nicky Duenkel and I made a conscientious decision to decrease the number of intergenerational services. Instead of seven, we would have only four. We would put time and energy into making these services extraordinary and memorable. The four services were: the Unitarian Service Committee service in October featuring the story of "Toad's Garden," the Hanukkah service which included the story of "The Latke that Could not Stop Screaming," the winter service that told the story of "Owl Moon" and finally our Earth Day Service entitled "The Refuge of Three Rivers." Judging from the response of many of you, we succeeded.

I will miss Nicky's creative imagination and organizing ability as we go forward with next year's intergenerational services. I am grateful for our shared success in setting the bar high.

The Naming of two New Emeriti.

This year your Board of Directors, on behalf of the congregation, named the Reverend David Pohl as a new Minister Emeritus. Reverend Pohl served the congregation from 1961 to 1971. It was during his tenure that the congregation relocated from a small sanctuary in central Ottawa to a six acre campus on the west side of downtown Ottawa, with a much larger sanctuary and enough land to eventually locate an apartment complex for seniors and a day care centre for pre-schoolers.

Reverend Pohl served the congregation as a dynamic preacher, able administrator, and beloved pastor. Having David and his wife Martha return to Ottawa on May 7 and 8 was a wonderful milestone for our congregation.

Although it was a bittersweet occasion, our farewell to Jane Perry was a magnificent celebration of her time here. Honouring her with the distinction of Director of Music Emerita is a testament to the health of the music program that has grown under her leadership. Many thanks to Chip Shambare for organizing Jane's farewell service.

Our Board of Directors

Working with this year's Board has been an honour and a pleasure. They have worked hard to deal with the pressures of the moment, and have been visionary in looking forward. For most of the year they have been meeting twice a month in order to initiate a new style of governance for the Congregation. Special appreciation to Kathy Yach, who serves as our Board President, and to Kim Elmer the incoming Vice-President.

Growth:

Through all of the changes of the last six years the membership of the congregation has remained around 500 and the attendance at Sunday services has remained around 200 (not including the children, youth and their adult facilitators whose total numbers have ranged from 40 to 80).

Given that our coffee hour reception area only holds 163 people, our parking lot is usually near capacity, our sanctuary seats are also near capacity, we are unlikely to grow numerically without adding a second weekly service.

Studies for parking lots say that if you are 80% full then people will perceive you as being full and will stay away. It is much the same for church seating except that age plays a factor. Individuals 30 and under are more comfortable being jammed together. Those 40 and older like to enjoy more personal space. With those 25 and under, you can exceed 100 per cent capacity, with folks 40 and older, 70% is considered full. It is not simply that people cannot find a seat, although that certainly happened some Sundays last year, but as one consultant put it: "over time people become less faithful (about attendance). They will begin to think that if they cannot get to church early or on time, they may as



well not go. They will also shy away from inviting new people out of fear that they may not be able to sit with them.

By the time this report is being read we will have started a second service at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoons. For those people who want things to stay the same, adding a 5:00 p.m. service will mean minimal change to our 10:30 a.m. service. It would also allow those who enjoy weekend recreations, such as skiing or visiting the cottage, another opportunity to join in our congregational life. Most importantly, it will give us space to grow.

Staff:

It is said that turnover in a workplace is a measure of overall happiness therein. By this indicator I should be a most unhappy fellow. And indeed, I wish fewer people hadn't left our staff this year. There were days when I felt like the Uncle Albert character in *Mary Poppins* who declares the departure of his friends to be "the saddest thing" he ever heard. "Must you really go? You know, people come to see me all the time. And, we have such a lovely time, and then they have to go home. And, and I'm very, very sad about the whole thing."

This year we endured the resignations of: Annie MacTavish (Publications), Magdalene Albert (Director of Support Services), Jane Perry (Music Director), Nicky Duenkel (Director of Lifespan Learning), Sylvia Furman (Administrative Officer) and Paul Hudson (assistant custodian).

Many thanks to Jen Brennan and Marie Gabe who, once again, helped our congregation through a time of transition. We are also fortunate in the good work that has been done by our staff team who made great contributions to our congregational life and moved us forward as a community.

I am also heartened by the new staff with which we will be starting our fall: Carolyn Turner (Director of Support Services), Kevin McQuinn (Publications), Sara Brooks (Interim Music Director), Mary Du (Bookkeeper & Administrative Officer), Jennifer Channin (Intern Minister) and Susan McEwen (Director of Lifespan Learning). Also thanks and appreciation to our ongoing custodians: Phil Downs, Kevin Quinn and Gareth Auden-Hole. I have already begun to appreciate the new energy and ideas they are bringing to us.

Also, truth to tell, I am very happy to be here and I love you—the people of this congregation. I expect, Goddess willing, to be here for another eight years. I have moments (OK, days) of experiencing my own version of the blue funk, but that does not alter my gratefulness for being allowed to serve as your minister. I feel that this congregation, as much as any I have ever been a part of, is fulfilling the ideal of the church as described by James Luther Adams:

"I call that church free which enters into a covenant with the ultimate source of existence. It binds together families and generations, protecting against the idolatry of any human claim to absolute truth or authority...It is a pilgrim church, a servant church, on an adventure of the spirit."

Onward,

Rev. John N. Marsh, Minister

It has been a very busy and successful year for our congregation. Here are some of the highlights.

- At the end of September a retreat was held for Board members and senior staff. We decided, as a Board, to move ahead to review and enact governance changes that will define the future role of the staff, Board and Congregation. Part of this process would be to update our by-laws and governance policies. It was also decided that we would move to two Sunday services in the fall of 2011. As part of the Board's decision to review its governance policies, two committees were created.

One committee collated information from earlier surveys and led small group discussions about the vision and future direction of First Unitarian. Their findings were tabled before the Board in the spring as a "Draft Strategic Plan with Ends, Strategic Intent and Outcomes". With a few changes this plan was adopted by the Board and then shared with the Congregation at our annual congregational meeting in May.

The second committee is reviewing our by-laws and policies. Its findings will be reviewed by the Board this fall. We have already completed the initial step of retaining a lawyer to update our by-laws.

- On November 13, 2010 we held another successful Holly and Lace Bazaar. Thanks to all of the 400 volunteers who made it a success.
- In February our Neighbour to Neighbour pledge campaign was launched. This year neighbourhood team captains distributed red pledge tote bags to individual members. Thanks to everyone involved with this to make the campaign such a success.
- The Board approved the hiring of a new student minister Jennifer Channin. She started with us in September, 2011.
- On April 13, we conferred the honour of Minister Emeritus on the Reverend David Pohl who had been our minister when we moved from Elgin Street to Cleary Avenue.
- On June 5, we conferred the honour of Director of Music Emerita on Jane Perry. She has been our Music Director for the past eleven years. She left us in July to move out west.



Spring brought a number of staff changes. Magdalene Albert (Director of Support Services), Annie MacTavish (Publications Officer), Cindy Flynn (Bookkeeper), Jane Perry (Musical Director), Nicky Duenkel (Director of Lifespan Learning) and Sylvia Furman (Administrative Services Officer) all departed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of them for the work they have done for our congregation over the years and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

I would like to welcome the following staff to their new positions: Carolyn Turner (Director of Support Serves), Mary Du (Accounting Officer), Sara Brooks (Interim Music Director), Susan McEwen (Director of Lifespan Learning) and Kevin McQuinn (Publications Officer). We are looking forward to working with each of you.

In June the Board approved a new five-year contract for Reverend John Marsh after he received a positive evaluation of his first year with us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Roberta Engel for her hard work as a Board member over the past two years and we welcome Kim Elmer as incoming Vice-President.

Finally, I would like take this opportunity to thank all the members of our congregation who volunteer so many hours to make First Unitarian Ottawa a success.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Yach, President

Groups and Committees

Arts Night Committee

Arts Night holds public events every last Friday of the month in September, October, November and again from January to June. The general purpose of each event is to offer three artists (a writer, a visual artist and a musician) a chance to present their work. At the same time we provide a social activity for members of the Congregation and the community at large.

The artists freely offer their talents. They are either from the congregation or the community at large. Each artist has 20 minutes to present their work. Many bring samples of their art and musicians present a mini recital. They all begin by telling a little about themselves. Each presentation is followed by the artist answering questions from the audience.

Our evenings usually begin with a series of five minute presentations from individual members of the audience. Some read their poems or short stories, others play an instrument or sing. There is always a wonderful “coffee house” atmosphere. Refreshments are served throughout the evening. No two evenings are ever the same.

Admission is a mere \$5 and most of the income goes to the General Fund of the Congregation. This past year the Arts Night Committee contributed \$1257 to the Fund. Over the past eight years the average attendance has risen from 30 to 32 people.

Arts Night is probably the church’s best kept secret. We don’t want to keep it this way, and so I encourage everybody to come out and join us this fall.

Joycelyn Loeffelholz is the main force behind the Arts Night Core Committee.

Respectfully submitted by Elisabeth Morrison

Bridge Group

Individual players attending our bridge sessions are charged \$5 per session or \$25 for the year (\$30 for non members). This year we had eight sessions (September to November and January to May). Our average attendance was sixteen.

We have few expenses as participants bring snacks. Expenses incurred are for heat, lighting and the custodian who sets up the room. Often we play on a night when there is another activity in the church so his time is shared.

Revenue for the year from September, 2010 to May, 2011 was \$670. We expect no projected expenses for this year other than for the use of the church.

Respectfully submitted by Tarrel Armstrong, UU Bridge Chairperson

Caring Committee Executive

The Caring Committee Executive supports the caring network of the Congregation. It assigns two “Caring Contact” persons each month, maintains a volunteer list, arranges occasional workshops, and coordinates memorial service receptions.

Close cooperation with the Spiritual Care Council was maintained through our representative, Lyn Gerley. Coordination identifies and helps members of the Congregation who may need assistance beyond the scope of our committee or who may require help on a continuing basis.

By the numbers, the Contacts arranged eight visits, nine drives, twenty-four telephone visits, and seventy-seven Caring Cards. Seven Memorial receptions were held over this reporting year, with thanks for the assistance of Isabel Burrows, Coordinator, and several convenors.

In early March, 2011 we arranged a very well-received and helpful presentation by Dr. Cate McBurney. Her topic was “The Art of Dying”. She emphasized our “journey” towards death, integrating our personal values in the process. Her background and work in medical ethics informed the

Groups and Committees

talk which included such topics as: euthanasia, living wills, assisted suicide and attitudes toward death in our Western society. Dr. McBurney emphasized the need for early discussion and preparation with family and friends for our end-of-life journey.

The Executive held their “thank you” breakfast for monthly contacts in April. New contacts were welcomed this year, and some who had volunteered as Caring Contacts for many years, such as Joan Kabayama and Bette Stern, retired. The job of the Contacts is vital and is mainly a job done at home, with the exception of tending the Sunday Caring Table. Each contact serves for one month with a partner. Ria Heynen has continued to coordinate the Contacts and welcomes potential newcomers to our roster. As a group, we helped at coffee hour twice.

The Executive included Angela Beale, Margot Clarke, Mary Lou Curtis, Christine Deane, Alexandra Devine, Lyn Gerley, Ria Heynen and Marianne Wood. Welcomed newcomers Barbara Brown and Helen Wells. We mourned the loss of a long-time member, Molly Brooke, who died in December, 2010.

Respectfully submitted by Alexandra Devine

Crafty Crafters-Knitters

The Crafty Crafters - Knitters continued to meet every Wednesday throughout the year. We number over a dozen, but attendance varied, depending on the health of individual members and other commitments. For perhaps the first time ever, we cancelled one meeting because of a major snow storm.

We continued to share the enjoyment and creativity of knitting and crocheting together, comparing ideas and techniques and admiring each other’s creations. We had many friendly discussions of current events, and provided a support group where we shared our personal joys, sorrows and milestones.

The financial results for the past year were generally satisfying. Our room made around \$2,000 at the Fall Fair and we turned over an additional \$1571 to the Congregation’s operating budget. This was raised by a sale on Mitten Tree Sunday, a pre-Christmas sale at Unitarian House, a Christmas sale after the Sunday service, and a clearance sale in February, as well as various informal sales to members and friends.

One innovation this year was the inclusion of Christmas decorations at the Fall Fair and other December sales, thanks to the talent of Gerry Taylor-Woelfert and friends. This is something we plan to continue in future and hope to increase sales with better publicity.

Another first for the year was the wedding of one of our members, which we celebrated with a pot luck lunch in the Lounge.

Our biggest change was the shift of meeting room from the Lounge to Room 3. The move in early summer, 2011 involved the transfer from the attic (“Heaven”) of many boxes of yarn, patterns, etc. The reorganization is not yet complete, but those who were not comfortable climbing the attic ladder are happy to be able to examine our yarn supply first-hand. We look forward to another year, in our new location, supporting each other and supporting the Congregation’s financial needs.

Respectfully submitted by Rosemary Bonyun



Groups and Committees

Denominational Affairs Committee

2010-11 Chair: Carol Anne Deneka

Members: Elizabeth Bowen, Margaret Linton, Nancy Lauder, Paula Patton, Peter Patton

The Denominational Affairs Committee meets on the evening of the first Wednesday of each month, with the exception of July and August.

DAC Objectives

- To make members of First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa more aware of denominational concerns by developing and using appropriate channels of communication.
- To convey the views of the Congregation to denominational organizations and conferences (regionally, nationally and internationally), by nominating and briefing delegates. The Board appoints the delegates.

DAC Action Areas and Challenges

- Maintain a list of denominational events by compiling information from various sources. We also inform the Congregation through electronic and printed media about forthcoming denominational events.
- Identify potential congregational delegates to denominational events, submit list of delegates to the board for appointment and notify the delegates of their appointment by the Board.
- Manage the cheque exchange process for delegates and attendees to denominational events. The Board approves cheque exchanges.
- Brief the delegates about congregational affairs prior to denominational events and receive reports from delegates after denomination events.
- Promote participation in Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) initiatives at worship, through workshops or by other means.

In 2009-2010, DAC recommended the following delegates to the 2010 Annual Conference and Meeting of the Canadian Unitarian Council:

Rev. John Marsh	Don Fraser
Carol Anne Deneka	Ellen Smith
Margaret Linton	Nancy Lauder
David Hudson	Elizabeth Bowen

These delegates represented the Congregation at the CUC Business meetings in Toronto in May, 2011 during which an important resolution was debated and passed. This resolution has important ramifications for any member who is considering putting forward a resolution at an upcoming CUC Business Meeting. If you would like more information on the new process and the support mechanisms now in place to help guide you through the resolution process, please contact any member of the DAC.

Members are encouraged to contact a DAC member if they are interested in having their names put forward as potential 2013 ACM delegates when the annual business meeting is held in May in Calgary, Alberta.

Note: the CUC does not plan to organize an ACM in 2012 but will propose a symposium. Information on the theme and format of the symposium will be forthcoming soon.

In preparation for the CUC 2011 ACM, the DAC reviewed the proposed resolutions and presented them to the Board of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa for feedback. All 2011 delegates were informed of the resolutions prior to the meeting so they were able to come prepared to present their suggestions and feedback in their role as representatives of our congregation.

Throughout the year, the DAC worked with staff and other volunteers to raise awareness among Congregation members on the array of initiatives and activities undertaken by our regional, national

Groups and Committees

and international partners. The DAC prepared a variety of informative Spire articles, posted information on the DAC bulletin boards in Fellowship Hall and the West Lobby, and submitted e-UU and Communiqué updates to keep Members informed of CUC, IARF and ICUU activities.

The DAC looks forward to working with our regional colleagues to promote the Fall Eastern Regional Gathering which will take place on October 14 to October 16 in Fredericton. Please keep an eye out for information on the DAC bulletin board on this wonderful opportunity to meet new friends in our Region. As well, we will work with our Calgary colleagues to promote the 2013 ACM.

If you are interested in joining the DAC or providing your feedback about DAC activities, please feel free to contact Carol Anne Deneka at deneka8031@rogers.com.

Respectfully submitted by Carol Anne Deneka, Chair, DAC

Fiction Reading Group

This year a new fiction reading group was started in February. We now have six members and are hoping to attract more people in the fall. We have a very sociable time discussing literature, including the style, the characters and the issues that each work presents.

So far we have read the following books: *Latitudes of Melt* by Joan Clarke, *Secret Daughter* by Shilpi Smaya Gowda, *The Help* by Kathryn Stockette, *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay, and *Three Day Road* by Joseph Boyden.

Respectfully submitted by Katharine Elliott

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is one of the four Standing Committees appointed by and accountable to the Board. The Finance Committee is responsible for advising the Board on financial policy and all financial matters affecting the Congregation.

The Committee is made up of some half dozen individuals with various backgrounds but with a common interest in assisting the Treasurer with overseeing the Congregation's finances. The present Chair of the Committee is Barry Read and the Recording Secretary is David Hudson. David Black keeps the Committee regularly advised on the current status of our investments held with Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Dominion Securities. Other members fully participate in discussions.

At each meeting the Treasurer tables reports on the monthly and year-to-date revenues and expenditures against our approved current Annual Operations Budget. Specifically we looked at the progress of donations and fundraising campaigns and the financial activities of our investments. Each year, with input from the Committee, the Treasurer submits to the Board a draft new year Annual Operating Budget for approval by the Congregation at the Fall meeting.

Over the past program year the Committee has addressed a number of significant issues brought before it. The most pressing issue was the current state of our investments with RBC and the substantial line of credit we drew upon to pay for the major capital renovations to the building. An investments review subcommittee, chaired by David Black, studied the situation at a number of meetings before recommending to the Board that we 1) move our investments from RBC to Doherty, a financial management company here in Ottawa, and 2) pay off the line of credit when doing so.

After intensive discussions and interviews with a number of companies, the Committee also recommended to the Board that we change auditors from Collins Barrow to Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT) LLP. RCGT carried out the 2010 annual audit and prepared the 2010 Financial Statements which were submitted at the Congregation's AGM.

Anyone interested or concerned with our congregational finances is invited to review the minutes of the Finance Committee and to attend its monthly meetings by contacting the Chair for dates.

Respectfully submitted by Barry Read

Groups and Committees

Glebe/Centretown/Ottawa South Neighbourhood Group

As one of the oldest Neighbourhood Groups, we continued to enjoy gatherings in members' homes, usually on the last Sunday evening of the month. We began and ended the year (September and June, respectively) with a pot-luck dinner and in between met monthly, except in December. Topics and speakers through the year included:

- A police sergeant from the Diversity and Race Relations Section of the Ottawa Police Service
- A researcher from Carleton University to talk about alternative accommodation for seniors
- A volunteer with an organization that helps provide wheelchairs for disabled people in Uganda
- Katherine Gunn, from the Congregation, to talk about her work with aboriginal people
- A discussion of David Chernushenko's video "Powerful: Energy for Everyone"
- A travelogue by two of our members who had recently visited Sweden

All members and friends of the First Unitarian Congregation living in the Glebe, Centretown or Old Ottawa South sections of the city theoretically belong to this Neighbourhood Group, but in actual fact the numbers attending our gatherings were relatively small. We would be happy to have more people from these or nearby sections of the city join us for good food, interesting speakers and discussions, and the fellowship of their Unitarian neighbours.

Respectfully submitted by Rosemary Bonyun

Holly and Lace Bazaar (a.k.a. the Fall Fair)

Our annual Fall Fair, the Holly and Lace Bazaar, is the largest single activity in our church year. The focus each year is on the overall goal of a well-run, enjoyable, and successful community service...that also happens to raise a considerable chunk of money for the Congregation!

A success on many levels, the 2010 event was no exception. Over twenty-five sales areas and booths were set up. Over forty convenors and over 350 volunteers (many of them first time volunteers) worked over the lead-up week and sale day. Many hundreds of visitors from the broader Ottawa community attended our widely-known event. Each year we try to reduce our impact on the environment while increasing our support for others in the broader community. The goods we did not sell were donated to charities and community groups after the Bazaar. The distribution of these leftovers allows us to support a number of agencies and to build collaboration with their leadership.

Thanks to the office staff members (who carry out their usual tasks in the midst of this extensive disruption to their environment) and to the many enthusiastic people who each year give their time, their ideas and dynamism, and their critical donations.

Thank you, also, to the members of the organizing committee for their work in making the Bazaar so successful again this year. It is worth mentioning that some key coordinators and volunteers work through much of year to make the Fall Fair possible. Their contributions are invaluable.

In 2009–2010, the committee comprised: Isabel Burrows, David Black, Prue Craib, Scott Drennan, Meg Gourlay, Katherine Gunn, David Hudson, Margaret Linton, Paula Theetge, and Joyce Turnbull.

Respectfully submitted by Meg Gourlay and Margaret Linton



Groups and Committees

Hospitality Hour Committee

A full year has passed for me as co-ordinator of Sunday Hospitality Hour. It's smooth running is the result of the volunteers who give of their time and effort. I would like to thank all those who have helped in this respect. I appreciate that people do not mind being asked to help out if we are short-handed.

Improvements occurred to the "taste and feel" of the gathering. Our two old workhorse coffee urns were replaced with a dependable one. Betty Campbell, who is in charge of purchasing and preparing the coffee packets, suggested a stronger roast which seems to have been well received. Serving coffee at the north table from a thirty cup urn instead of metal jugs has simplified the tasks of the serving volunteers.

Susan Bowers' suggestion to add seasonal colour to the Bulletin Board brightens an otherwise dull corner.

A scaled-down version of Summer Hospitality Hour was intended to let congregants enjoy their tea, coffee, juice and snacks. Thank you to Elizabeth Morrison for volunteering many Sundays during the summer.

We are appreciative of those Committees and groups who volunteered to cover all aspects of preparing, serving and clean-up. Their homemade baking is so delicious. A closer relationship developed with Religious Education over the year. Nicky Duenkel developed good lines of communication as some of these were first time events.

Volunteers helped with beverage preparation when special events occurred such as the chocolate feast for Valentine's Day. I especially enjoyed working with Jill Burns and Mary Jo Murdock on these occasions. I am looking forward to another busy but rewarding year, organizing "a good space" for congregants to gather.

Respectfully submitted by Tarrel Armstrong

Meditation Gardens

Summer and fall of 2010 were quite busy with the completion of a number of projects and the start of new ones. These included the creation of a "Place of Rest" Ashes Garden and the completion of the first of the new retaining walls for the south garden. The Meditation Gardens Committee decided to move to a more native plant oriented landscape and our first pamphlet on the gardens was printed. Finally, a 380 foot well was drilled and capped.

Planning for the creation of our future "off the grid" powered water source kept us busy all winter.

Spring of 2011 brought the completion of the retaining walls along the briar and a new cutout and bench were installed under the shade of the memorial Malcolm Stevenson oak. Our plant sale, in cooperation with the Go Go Grannies, sold off many of our exotic plants and raised over \$500 towards the purchase of new native species.

One of our resident ducks nested in the planter between the upper church doors and eventually waddled away with a brood of six shiny ducklings.

The repaving of our parking lot in July brought many changes to the north gardens. One of these was the new curb which will prevent muddy runoff. A work party and the contribution of many voluntary hours by Pierre Bedard and Richard Day allowed us to complete the soil and gravel backfill.

The solar array and pump for the well have been ordered and the south entrance archway has been precut and made ready for assembly. One bench was refurbished and other benches were painted and returned to the south garden.

The north garden is in the process of being dug up to provide periwinkle-free zones for the introduction of native plants.

Plants are being moved in the south garden to prepare for the backhoe work that is required for the installation of the peripherals related to the well project.

All in all, a very busy year for the Friends of the Meditation Gardens!

Respectfully submitted by Renée De Vry

Groups and Committees

Monday Reading for Growth

The Monday afternoon RFG group had a very successful year. We have ten very active members who gained a good deal of knowledge from a wide variety of nonfiction titles. We have also had the opportunity to think about and discuss a number of issues from politics, to the food we eat and to spiritual topics.

Our members seem to be about the right number of people to have in a group but we will always welcome visitors for any particular session.

Some of the books we have read this year were:

The Discovery of the Individual by Greta Vosper

A Life You Can Save: Acting Now to Solve World Poverty by Peter Singer

The Armageddon Factor by Marci McDonald

The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values by Sam Harris

Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating by Jane Goodall

Mrs. King: The Life and Times of Isabel Mackenzie King by Charlotte Gray

The Trouble with Billionaires by Linda McQuaig and Neil Brooks

Respectfully submitted by Katharine Elliott

Nominating Committee

The 2010-2011 Nominating Committee comprised returning members Margot Clarke, Roberta Engel, and Maury Prevost (Chair) as well as new members Arthur Palmer, Bob Staveley, and Sue Williams.

At the Annual General Meeting in March we nominated, and the congregation elected the following Board for 2011-2012:

- Kim Elmer (new) as Vice-President, to succeed Kathy Yach as President in 2012.
- Paul Ward for a second three-year term (now Member at Large).
- Returning members Kathy Yach (President for a 3rd year), Scott Drennan (now Secretary), Eleonore Benesch (Treasurer), Alastaire Henderson, Louise Lefort, and Ed Willer (Members at Large).
- The Youth Group elected Keagan Eskritt as their representative.

At the time of writing (summer 2011), the committee is also involved in:

- Nominating the Search Committee (five people) for the next permanent Music Director, to be elected at the Fall Congregational Meeting.
- Nominating the Congregation's appointed representative to the Unitarian House Board of Governors, to replace Tom Dent after eleven years of service.

In addition to its nominating tasks, the Nominating Committee continues to undertake some other leadership development related activities, specifically:

- Updating some documents of Board member duties and ethics.
- Conducting exit interviews with members who have recently left the Board.
- Identifying current and emerging leaders in the Congregation to attend the Canadian Unitarian Universalist Leadership (CU*UL) School. In the end nobody from our congregation went to the 2011 CU*UL School in Halifax in July.

I thank my fellow members of the Nominating Committee for all of their contributions. It was a pleasure to serve with them.

Respectfully submitted by Maury Prevost, Chair

Groups and Committees

30s and 40s Group

In 2010-2011 several members of the Congregation got together to create the 30s and 40s Group to provide a space so that congregants within this age range could get to know one another better and foster each other's spiritual growth within a social and family-friendly environment. The 30s and 40s Group meets approximately once a month. Meetings generally consist of a potluck family-style meal followed by topic-specific discussion. Previous discussion topics have included "mindfulness", "letting go/holding on", "covenant building" and many more. In 2010-2011 the group also organized several outdoor activities, including skating on the canal and a nature walk/hike followed by a BBQ. Whenever possible, the group tries to ensure that its events and discussions are family-friendly. Events are usually posted in the Communiqué in advance and new members are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted by Heidi Wright

Time and Talent Auction

The 2011 Time and Talent Auction, an annual fund raiser for the Congregation, was held in May this year, raising a total of \$8,729.75.

Congregants donated seventy-seven items (time, talent, goods and/or services). Bidding sheets were laid out before and after services for three consecutive Sundays (April 24, May 1 and May 8). On the final Sunday these sheets were collected and a list of winning bidders was compiled. Half-price bidding was offered the following week for items that didn't receive any bids during the official auction dates. Within a week, winning bidders were invoiced and donors were told who had won their donated item or service. Notices and invoices were sent by e-mail, where possible. A collection table was set up the following three Sundays, after service to receive payment from the winning bidders. All the money raised has now been received.

New this year was a decision by the Board Executive to exclude legal and accounting services from auction donations. A notice was also printed at the bottom of each bidding sheet, disclaiming congregational responsibility for any damages, representations or warranties with respect to items made available through the auction.

Many good recommendations for next year's auction were discussed at a final committee meeting, held in June. Look for earlier start dates (last bidding day will be April 22, 2012), a clearer description of the event for newer members, lots of suggestions for possible donation items or services, and perhaps even a name change to "Silent Auction".

Thanks to the many generous congregants and bidders, for offers and bids on a wide variety of goods and services. Thanks also to Auction Committee members Joan Auden, H el ene Lamb, Ruth Lantree, Rose Mary Murphy, Asha Philar, and Jenny Rae for their much needed assistance.

Respectfully submitted by Marg Lee



Groups and Committees

UU Writers' Group

You don't have to be a writer to enjoy the UU Writers' Group. Each biweekly evening session, held throughout the year (on alternate Tuesdays, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.) begins with a warm-up exercise that everyone enjoys. A stimulating excerpt is read out, and each member writes their own response that doesn't have to be in the same vein as the original passage. After fifteen or twenty minutes of writing, each member reads what they have written and then the fun and free-wheeling discussion begins. Believe it or not, no two responses are ever alike! The writers are also encouraged to submit work which they have written at home, but this is not essential to the success of each meeting.

At the present time we have an average of about six participants, including long-time regulars. The group is open to all who are interested in the art of writing, and there is no need to call beforehand: simply turn up!

For additional information phone: Joycelyn Loeffelholz or Chuck Rea at 613-224-9880

Respectfully submitted by Chuck Rea

Women's Personal Growth Group

Exploring, growing and also taking care of our inner selves is what the Women's Personal Growth Group is all about. We welcome all women to our meetings, held the first Monday of each month (Tuesday if Monday is a holiday) at 7:15 p.m. Our new venue is on the lower level, and this change has given the group renewed vigour. We had two potluck dinners this past year.

The WPGG has an informal agenda. Check in happens as we prepare tea and snacks. Then we may discuss a planned topic based on readings distributed prior to the meeting. Sometimes an idea or book, that a member mentions, takes hold and off we go to in-depth talk. Some evenings we start the "Question Game (getting to know you)" with its 170 questions on topics such as creativity, freedom, sex, your potential, health, spiritual trust, relationships, balanced lives and joy. We explore resources, share our experiences and learn from one another. Having developed a deep trust, we are comfortable sharing our joys and concerns.

In such a large congregation the Women's Personal Growth Group allows us to get to know each other on a personal level, and support one another.

Please feel free to join us. No membership required. We would love to see you and help nurture your emotional and spiritual side.

Respectfully submitted by Evelyn Algar



Groups and Committees

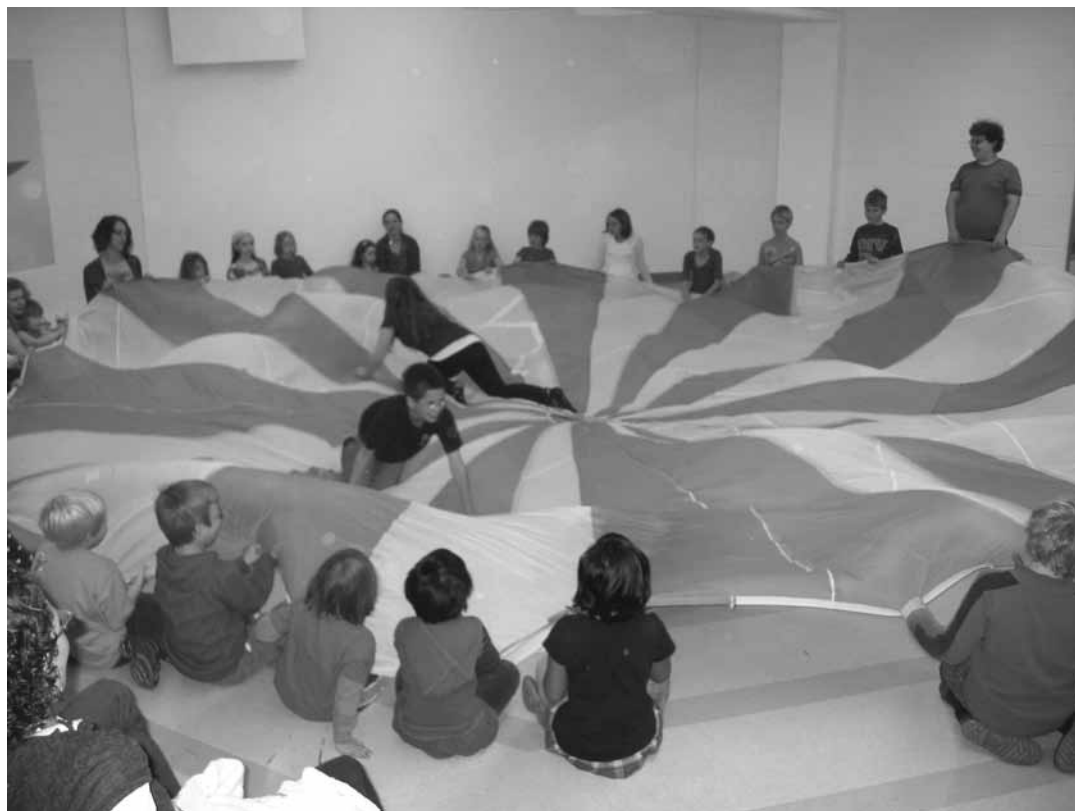
Worship Associates

The Worship Associates assist the Minister in planning and delivering Sunday morning services and preach the sermon when the Minister is away. In September, 2010 the WA team comprised Alex Campbell, Becky Hogue, Susan Howard Lynch, Kathleen Hughes, Sharmila Khare, Susan Mackenzie, Sean Neil-Barron, Barry Read, Chipo Shambare, and Paula Theetge. We have had a good year working with our Minister and Director of Lifespan Learning.

Once again the Worship Associates organized and led a series of summer services in July and August of 2011. We welcomed to the pulpit guests from within our congregation (Ellen Bell, Asha Philar, Mo Gabe, and Sean Neil-Barron), former members of our congregation (Curtis Murphy, and Rodrigo Emilio Solano-Quesnel) and guests from further afield (Mike Nickerson, a guest of the Environmental Working Group; Dr. Monia Mazigh, a guest of the Global Justice Committee; Kirstin McKeown and Chris Miller). Music for summer services was provided by Jane Perry, who played her last service at Ottawa First on July 17, Elisabeth Morrison, Sam Clemann, Michael Cloud and Sara Brooks, who played her first service with us on September 5. Summer Worship Associates were Becky Hogue, Susan Howard Lynch, Susan Mackenzie, Sean Neil-Barron, Asha Philar and Chipo Shambare. We are grateful to all who helped to make our summer services successful.

During the 2010-2011 church year Becky, Kathleen, and Sharmila left the Worship Associate team for personal reasons and Chipo, Paula, and Susan finished their terms. We will miss working with them and seeing them in the pulpit on Sunday mornings. Over the summer Heidi Wright joined the Worship Associate team. We are pleased to welcome her to the group.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Mackenzie



Lifespan Learning

Adult Learning Committee

We again had a very active and successful adult learning program. During the past year we continued to offer a wide range of programs, from special events like the “Awakening the Dreamer Symposium”, to our core courses such as Introducing Ourselves, Mapmaking and Building your Own Theology, as well as a number of regular enrichment programs that range from Yoga to Reading for Growth. This past year, we’ve also had a very active OWL (Our Whole Lives sexuality education) program, with one Young Adult OWL and three Adult OWL weekends. Evaluations of our programs have been very positive and have provided useful feedback which will enable us to continue to improve our offerings.

In the spring, a congregational survey of adult learning experiences and interests was undertaken to obtain input which will help determine the future direction for our adult learning program. Fifty-one surveys were completed. Overall, our current adult learning program rated well, with 57% of respondents rating it as very good or excellent and another 20% rating it as good. There was strong interest expressed about participating in future adult learning activities, with 55% of respondents indicating interest in discussion groups such as the Integral Philosophy Group. There was also strong interest in our regular enrichment programs (for example: Reading for Growth groups, Yoga, etc.) as well as in our core curriculum courses (Articulating your UU Faith , Building your Own Theology). The top three priorities for special presentations or courses among the congregation were: spirituality, including spiritual practices and exploring spiritual paths; social justice issues; and environmental issues. These priorities will help determine our adult learning program over the next few years.

As I often tell people, it would be impossible to fill the shoes of our former committee chair, Joan Turner, without significant help from others. I’d like to thank the members of our ALC Committee: Wendy Doyle, our Co-ordinator of Adult Learning; Mike Wood, our committee secretary; Bert Curtis and Joan Turner who continued on the committee until the spring; former committee member, Bill Davis; and our new member, Colleen Glass. And a special thanks as well to all those who helped us plan, organize, promote and deliver our various adult learning activities throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted by Eva Berringer



Children's Ministry

Statistics

100 children registered
19 youth registered
Number of families: 73

Breakdown of RE sessions by age

First Steps – toddlers to 2 year olds
Celebrating Me & My World – 3 & 4 year olds
Spirit Play – 5 & 6 year olds
Moral Tales/Faithful Journeys – 7 & 8 year olds
Toolbox of Faith/Windows & Mirrors– 9 & 10 year olds
Amazing Grace/Riddle & Mystery – 11 & 12 year olds
Jr. High OWL -- 13 year olds
Youth Group – 14 to 20 year old high school youth

Program Highlights

The Religious Exploration year began at the Baxter Conservation Area with our Fall RE Leaders Retreat. This was intended as an opportunity to get to know one another better as an RE community, to have fun and to bond, spend time in our smaller leadership teams, as well as work to bring forward the focus of our coming year together. This year I chose to guide us in our continuing efforts to learn how to articulate our own faith while at the same time increasing our understanding of the stages of faith development over the life cycle. We also discussed some great new activities planned for child care. I might also add that we really enjoyed the location. It is wonderful to both support and be supported by a congregational member and our host, Peter Goddard, who donated his time and this place. I expect many will return there on their own.

Our monthly Children's Worship services once again allowed children of all ages (and their adult friends) to come together as a mixed age group and to have their own child-focused worship experience, complete with a time to share joys and sorrows. The somewhat parallel format helps familiarize the children with services in Worship Hall so that they can recognize some of the elements and hopefully this will serve as an anchor and point of engagement for them when they participate in services upstairs. Children's Worship services incorporated songs, stories, meditations, activities, and rituals that focused on the monthly theme, that was also being explored simultaneously in the adult services. This provided the opportunity to delve further into these ideas within family and generational settings. Themes covered this year included: "Unity", "Peace", "Compassion", "Prayer", "Letting Go", "Grace", and "Truth". The older Children's Choir also led us in song during a couple of these services!

This year's addition of the Children's Choirs led by the Children's Choir Director, Shannon Linton, has added tremendously to the overall energy and offerings within our program. While this is the purview of the Music Director, it definitely extends the opportunities to make connections across the age ranges within RE and also helps bring the children into the full Congregation. In particular, it was wonderful to have these choirs perform at our newly revised series of Services for All Ages.

We offered five Services for All Ages: USC Sunday (focused on seeds), The Mitten Tree (and the Screaming Lake!), Christmas Eve (involving a new pageant for us: "Would you Like to Hold the Baby?"), Winter (and Owl Moon), and finally, our Earth Day choral extravaganza with giant puppets called "The Refuge of Three Rivers". Each of these services had a very different tone and involved the weaving of story, song (often by our children's choirs!), performance, and short reflections throughout. Children, youth, and adults worked and played together in order to offer these engaging services to the

Congregation. Attendance was stellar and included many more RE families than has been typical for Services for All Ages in this congregation.

Jr. High OWL was once again offered this year (we currently alternate yearly between this program and Coming of Age). A consistent group of fourteen children participated in Sunday morning sessions as well as a church sleep-over early on in the new year.

Four new Tapestry of Faith curricula were introduced into RE programming this year. We look forward to continuing to explore these engaging and pertinent topics and how to best integrate them into the work we do in Religious Education.

Special Events

This year we introduced the concept of Family Ministry Teams. Their intention was to permit the parents of each age group to join together to organize and lead one special event. In doing so they provided a wonderful opportunity for parents to meet each other and work together, strengthening the bonds of friendship within our faith community, while also ensuring that the work of organizing special events was supported by many, rather than a few. Events included a Halloween Procession & UNICEF collection, the Night Tree celebration, a congregation-wide Art Project that focused on the Charter of Compassion, a Chocolate Dessert RE Fundraiser, and the Heritage Feast. Many of these events created opportunities for cross-generational interaction and sharing.

We moved our Mystery Pals event, which traditionally took place in the spring, to November, and had a record number of participants with eighty-two. Each week the downstairs buzzed with activity as clues and small gifts were deposited and retrieved. As was traditional, the month of secret exchanges culminated with a Discovery Breakfast in which pals met face to face. The theme chosen for this year, "Child Friendly Music", was meant both to honour and support our new children's choirs.

Social Action Sundays (SAS) were another new addition to Religious Education. These sessions sometimes bridged to the congregation as a whole. They were conceived as a way to manifest, through action, some of the UU principles in a way that children would both understand and feel a part of. They also offered an opportunity for children to learn about an issue and then do something to raise the awareness of others, or alternatively, do something that made a direct impact on the issue itself. We had a total of four SAS's. The first of these included learning about watersheds, the impact which human made toxins had on watersheds, and the making of non-toxic cleaners. The latter were then sold and the funds raised were donated to Ottawa Riverkeeper. In the second SAS, which took place around Christmas, children explored the concept of homelessness and created gift bags for indigenous women staying at a local shelter. In the third SAS, children gained some knowledge about the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike and took part in an educational campaign to inform others in the Congregation about this endangered bird. Finally, we had a morning session centered on children's rights and a letter writing campaign that focused on the rights of indigenous children in particular.

As Director of Lifespan Learning, I facilitated a leadership development session in late January. This event enabled leaders to come together and share the experiences they had gained within their various RE groups. It also served as a means to revisit our autumn discussions about the stages of faith development and how they related to their recent experiences. This discussion session was immediately followed by one entitled "Parenting Beyond Belief". This event, facilitated by myself and the Rev. John Marsh (and supported by the RE Committee), was intended to explore ways through which we can raise informed, caring, independent and open-minded children. It featured a video lecture by Dr. Dale McGowan followed by small and large group discussions. Over thirty-five parents were in attendance!

Our RE programming year ended with the All Church Picnic and "fantabulous" Treasure Hunt organized by John Marsh and supported by many wonderful volunteers.

Religious Education Committee Update

This year's RE Committee worked hard to support many of our special events, including the Fall Leaders' Development Retreat, the Mystery Pal Discovery Breakfast, the Parenting Beyond Belief Session, and the Leaders Appreciation Breakfast. The Committee also had a regular presence downstairs on Sunday mornings helping with orienting new families and preparing snacks for the children. In addition, each committee member served as a liaison to a Family Ministry team. They often played a key role in the interpretation of what was intended and in the organization of activities, since many of the ideas and events were new to our congregation. This work contributed significantly to the success of RE events.

As a committee we also spent time during each of our monthly meetings focusing on how lay leadership could become a form of spiritual practice. This served to deepen our relationships with one another and made these meetings more genuinely meaningful. I believe we all really looked forward to our time together. The majority of this year's committee membership will remain in place for next year, other than Jill Burns who has recently stepped down as chair after many years of wonderful service. Our new Chair, Mary Jo Murdock, is in place and one new member will be joining the committee in the fall.

Moving Forward

Next year we'll be continuing with our Family Ministry teams and Social Action Sundays. The Coming of Age program will once again be offered to 12 & 13 year olds. In the spring of 2012 Gr. K-1 and Gr. 4-6 OWL will also be offered. Two new curricula will also be incorporated into our rotation system.

After serious consideration I have resigned from my position as DLL as of June 20, 2011. I know that I am leaving the programming on solid ground and the upcoming year is ready for delivery with an experienced RE committee and leaders, and the curricula are set to go. I have such gratitude for these two years of meaningful engagement with the Congregation as a whole, and particularly towards the children, parents and the program staff. May we serve the same principles wherever we are and until we meet again.

Respectfully submitted by Nicky Duenkel

Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry this past year was truly inspiring for everyone involved. We hosted many coffee hours and really became better connected in the congregational community.

In December we helped sell Christmas cards at the UNICEF table as a fundraiser for the church's UU-UNO (Unitarian Unilateralist United Nations Office) group. In honour of First Unitarian's active participation in the UU-UNO, seven youth and two wonderfully energetic advisers travelled to the UN headquarters in New York City to attend the annual spring seminar. This year's topic was "Empowering Women for a Better World". The youth who attended were very excited to share what they learned at First Unitarian's next UN Sunday.

In April, the youth group hosted a CON (conference) for youth from the Eastern Region. The theme was "cultural differences and everyday stereotypes of culture". We had around twenty-five people in attendance, including representatives from as far away as New Brunswick.

In May we travelled to Toronto for the ACM where we took part in CanUuddle. We made nationwide connections and friendships with the youth and adults we met at the youth-led worship and on intergen day.

As the end of the year approaches, we can reflect on what a wonderful year this was and think about what we want to do for social action and community building in the near future.

Respectfully submitted by Arden Hody

Music Program

Prelude

The 2010-2011 music program year was about broadening foundations, celebrating community, and embracing change. Thanks to all of the choristers, music volunteers, and audience members who helped make 2010-2011 the best season yet.

Worship Service Music

Our five choirs took turns providing the morning anthem, while I served as pianist for most services. We also enjoyed the musical offerings of longtime church pianist Elisabeth Morrison, pianist Graeme Jones, singer/songwriter Tony Turner, soprano Phyllis Knox, flutist Sam Clemann, and others.

Choirs

Our five church choirs had four opportunities to sing together this season. The first was the wildly-successful Christmas concert “Sing We of Joy!” on December 4, 2010. The second was at the March 26, 2011 concert entitled “Gimme That Old Time Religion”, a musical exploration of Christian church music from a Unitarian perspective. The third, and one of the season highlights for the choral program, was the April 17 Sunday-morning service: “The Refuge of Three Rivers”. This was a multimedia production that included shape-note choral music, puppetry, and narration, with much of the prose and lyrics provided by Rev. John Marsh, and directed by the American puppeteer and artistic director of Open Hand Theater, Geoffrey Navias. Finally, the choirs sang together under the direction of Maestro Laurence Ewashko at the “Here’s to Jane” Sunday morning service on June 5. Thanks to Chip Shambare, Rev. John Marsh, guest musicians (Tony Turner, oboist Angela Casagrande, and pianist Dina Namer), the organizing team, all of the choristers, and speakers for putting together such a joyful and touching tribute to my eleven years here as your Music Director.

The Chalice Choir

The Chalice Choir maintained a joyful membership of fifty-five singers this season. When rehearsal pianist Elisabeth Morrison announced that she would retire at the end of the season, after twenty-one years of service, the Chalice Choir decided to make a gift of a newly commissioned work to honour Elisabeth. On April 30, the choir, with Elisabeth at the piano, gave the world premiere performance of “When Our Inner Light Goes Out”, by the young Canadian composer Cassandra Luftspring. The concert included Tone Cluster (quite a queer choir!) and the Kingston Chamber Choir (the latter employs Cassandra as their pianist). A chorus of thanks to Elisabeth, for all she has done and continues to do to support the musical life of this church. Also this season, I created a small vocal ensemble that borrowed its members from the Chalice Choir’s soprano and alto sections. The Three Rivers Singers, as they became known, first sang together at the April 17 “Refuge of Three Rivers” production and then found themselves singing at worship services both here at First Unitarian and on May 29 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Ottawa’s east end.

The Gospel Choir

The Gospel Choir enjoyed a steady membership of twenty singers this season. We were saddened by the death of tenor George Wilson in the spring. We will miss George’s full-throated singing and his enthusiasm for all things musical.

The Chamber Choir

The Chamber Choir's twenty-three singers put in their first full season as an ensemble in 2010-2011. The choristers learned a repertoire that ranged from Renaissance madrigals to modern spirituals, as well as new compositions and, for the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service, carols in four languages.

The Children's Choir

The Children's Choir program started as a successful experiment in spring 2010. In autumn 2010, we welcomed Shannon Linton to the program staff as Children's Choir Director. Under Shannon's remarkable leadership, the Children's Choirs have grown and blossomed, much to the delight of parents, congregants, and the young singers themselves! Choir I (ages 4 to 8) and Choir II (ages 9 to 14) participated in Sunday services and choral concerts this year, gaining valuable singing experience and contributing to the life of the congregation. Congratulations to Shannon and to all of the singers, on a fantastic first season.

Chamber Music

Chamber Music on Cleary Avenue took its final bow at the end of its eleventh season, due to growing financial constraints. The series held its last-ever concert on May 29, 2011, with a performance by flutist Sara Traficante and cellist Kirk Starkey. The concert was followed by a coffee-and-dessert reception, where loyal audience members mingled with the musicians. Chamber Music on Cleary Avenue put our church on the musical map of Ottawa. It attracted classical musicians from as far away as Texas, Belgium and Germany. The series, along with our now-famous Steinway grand piano, established our church as a musical destination in this city. Thanks to all of the musicians and concert volunteers who helped to create such musical magic here. A complete listing of the 2010-2011 Chamber Music on Cleary Avenue concert season (thirteen concerts in all) can be found in the series archives in the music office.

Postlude

In March, 2011 I tendered my resignation as this church's Music Director, after eleven years in the position. I am grateful for the lessons I have learned here, for the friendships I have made, for the warm embrace I received from this community, for the great love of music that is part of this church's fabric, and especially for the relationships established with each and every chorister who has ever entrusted their musical self to my leadership. Thank you all for the privilege of being part of this community. I am confident that you will enjoy the leadership of your Interim Music Director, Sara Brooks. She brings with her a great love of choral music and a beautiful sense of how to do church. I look forward to my new role as Music Director at the Unitarian Church of Calgary. And I will miss you all.

Respectfully submitted by Music Director Jane Perry



Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility Council

The Social Responsibility Council (SRC) comprises eleven Working Groups. Their individual annual reports follow. The Council is responsible for guiding and coordinating the Working Groups which spend the Social Responsibility budget, set at 4% of the Congregation's annual pledges.

The Social Responsibility Steering Committee assigns and administers the annual allocation. In that regard, we are developing a manual which will explain the responsibilities and obligations of the SRC, the Working Groups and the Steering Committee. The manual will enhance accountability, transparency and ease administrative difficulties.

This spring I joined the Steering Committee and accepted the position of chair. As a new member I felt honoured. The past chair, Debra Mair, is to be thanked for her fine work.

As I read the annual reports of the Working Groups, I was taken by the scope of this congregation's commitment to social responsibility. Please take the time to read the reports for more details about the congregational activities that your pledges support.

Fundraising by our Working Groups has raised many thousands of dollars. The Congregation has generously allowed the use of its facilities for free or at a minimal cost to facilitate these events. I thank you on their behalf.

I look forward to next year and working with the SRC.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Wilson, Chair, Social Responsibility Steering Committee

Canada-Nepal Working Group

The Canada-Nepal Working Group (formerly The Canada-Nepal Solidarity for Peace Working Group) assists Nepali immigrants and refugees in Ottawa, and supports the Women's Foundation of Nepal (WFN)

WFN is a not-for-profit NGO established in 1988 by Nepalese female professionals with the intention of addressing the problems of women in Nepal. Tara Upreti, now of our congregation, was one of these women. WFN advocates for economic and social development among marginalized Nepali women, and supports women through direct social work among families and by supporting practical programs in the areas of vocational and academic training, and counselling.

Fundraising: The Canada-Nepal Working Group (CNWG) organizes an annual Nepali Gala, and was very pleased to raise \$4600 this year for the WFN. Handmade products produced by the women in the WFN's shelter in Nepal are sold at CNWG's events.

Immigrant and refugee support: The group draws on and coordinates volunteers from the Nepali community in Ottawa in its efforts to provide practical assistance to Nepali refugees in Ottawa (especially those in crisis situations) as well as in their efforts to help refugees integrate into Canadian society.

Activities: The CNWG supports inter-generational informal sports (soccer, volleyball, swimming), a cultural event which includes folk dancing led by a professional Nepali instructor and personal support services such as clinical counseling, educational support, legal and social service referrals. We also assist in arranging access to necessary health and social services. The Group also provides interpreters for unilingual, illiterate Nepali, assists in initial intervention when domestic violence erupts in refugee families and provides assistance in accessing police, child welfare and legal services.

Volunteers attended refugee hearings at the Immigration and Refugee Board, and helped refugees by ensuring that their English writing was correct on their Personal Information Forms.

We refer to other organizations according to clients' needs, for example, by arranging ESL classes, job searches, career training and so on. To maintain community liaison, Tara attended meetings of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

Respectfully submitted by Tara Upreti, Chair

Social Responsibility

Child Haven Working Group

The Child Haven Working Group supports Child Haven International (CHI) and its children's homes in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Tibet.

The Working Group:

1. educates the Congregation about the ongoing work of Child Haven through bulletin board and table displays, talks to UU groups such as the Youth Group, Adult Learning and Religious Education programs. CHI founder Fred Cappuccino presents an annual Sunday service at First Unitarian.
2. raises funds for CHI's homes, through events such as concerts, guest speakers, slide shows as well as publicizing and selling tickets to the CHI's major annual fundraising events: the Spring Dinner and the Fall Evening Fest. Funds support libraries, Montessori programs, etc.
3. encourages volunteering overseas at children's homes, at CHI's Ottawa office and at fundraising events.
4. involves UU youth in fundraising events, and helps them in their efforts on behalf of Child Haven.

Respectfully submitted by Leslie Baird, Chair

Environmental Working Group

In partnership with Adult Learning, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) arranged a screening of David Chernushenko's new film, "Powerful: Energy for Everyone", on September 28, 2010. The event was open to the wider community as well as the Congregation.

EWG members participated in an Religious Education event to make and sell non-toxic household cleansers.

We lobbied the Senate to support Bill C-311, the "Climate Change Accountability Act", which had already passed the House of Commons but which became stalled in the Senate.

In preparation for the second season of the congregational Community Supported Agriculture project with Saffire Farms, the EWG liaised with the farmer and publicized the project within the Congregation through posters and articles in the Parkway Spire. Deliveries of produce began in late June.

On April 3, 2011, the EWG, along with Adult Learning, invited the Ottawa Riverkeeper, Meredith Brown, to give a well-attended talk on the health of, and environmental issues affecting the Ottawa River. Her talk was followed by a Question and Answer session.

EWG endorsed and participated in the E-Waste Collection Day held at First Unitarian on May 7.

Over the past year, the EWG financially supported the garden well project, as well as Ecology Ottawa, Seeds of Diversity (USC), and the Peace and Environment Resource Centre.

For the EWG summer service on July 24, Mike Nickerson, local sustainability educator and author, spoke on "Living on Earth as if we want to stay."

Respectfully submitted by Alastaire Henderson, Chair



Social Responsibility

Global Justice Working Group

During the past year we have been fortunate to have the assistance of several members of our national organization, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, including Frances Deverell, Debra Mair and Bob Staveley. Our year got off to a fine start with an award to the GJWG from Pathways to Education, a local social action organization.

Pathways to Education is a program run by our local Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre. The program involves mentoring and tutoring high school students. This year we began assisting in this program and were recognized with an award. Kathleen Hughes, Ria Heynen and Anita McLean were involved in this project.

Meetings to educate the Congregation have been held on a variety of topics. They included a presentation on human rights in China and A Journey Through the West Bank, about the visit of three individuals from Ottawa to the Palestinian Territories last summer. The latter was organized through the work of Independent Jewish Voices.

In addition, our working group was able to financially assist the United Nations Association with a presentation about Alternatives to Nuclear Strategy, Amnesty International, KAIROS, and several social justice projects in El Salvador. In May, 2011 several members of our group promoted the Tulipathon which raises funds for Multi Faith Housing Initiatives.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Stevenson, Chair

Mental Illness Working Group

The Mental Illness Working Group raises awareness, among members of our congregation and the wider community, of the tragedy of mental illness. We work closely with Ancoura, a not-for-profit Ottawa organization that provides housing and a supportive community for adults living with mental illness. We are actively involved in raising funds for Ancoura.

Fundraising: The worship service in October, 2010 raised about \$2,000. Our annual sale of greeting cards also raised about \$2,000. The beautiful card designs came from “The Art Studio”, a program for artists with mental illness. This group received a share of the profits. The sale raised awareness of the need for supportive housing among those living with mental illness. Thanks to Marie Andrews for spearheading this project. We also donated \$500 to Ancoura through the Social Responsibility budget.

Worship Service Kit: We developed an outreach kit containing the Order of Service and a CD of our August, 2009 service. We are offering the kit (along with an accompanying offer of hands-on assistance) to other faith groups who plan services on mental illness. Thanks to John Gall, Ted Elliott and Richard Haughian for their work on this project. Following our first outreach service in February at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa, the Fellowship raised \$900 for Ancoura.

Ancoura Homes: We welcomed volunteers to help at the two current Ancoura residences, and some of our congregation have taken the Ancoura training. A third residence is expected to open in the fall of 2011.

Canadian Unitarian Council Workshop: Our group and Ancoura worked with L'Abri en Ville on a workshop for the 2011 Annual Conference and Meeting. Unfortunately low registration meant the workshop was cancelled, but we hope to present it in the future.

Respectfully submitted by Katharine Elliott, Chair

Poverty Awareness Working Group

The Poverty Awareness Working Group (PAWG) provided financial and other support to the following organisations:

The Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI), composed of faith groups including our congregation, is concerned with providing affordable housing in Ottawa. We hosted MHI's AGM and in the annual Tulipathon fund-raising walk, Unitarians raised \$2,382. Werner Daechsel of PAWG sits on MHI's development committee.

The Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services (PQHCS) provides a variety of health, community and social services particularly to the most vulnerable, in areas to the west of the church.

Pathways to Education, whose mission is to encourage young people from at-risk and/or economically disadvantaged communities to stay in high school and to continue on to post-secondary education. Members of the PAWG volunteer as tutors for the students, and we attended the ceremony in June, 2011 for the first graduates of the program. Many of those students are continuing their education at post-secondary levels.

The Minwaashin Aboriginal Women's Support Centre and its shelter Oshi Kisis. Our Aboriginal Women's Shelter project collects donated household goods, rents storage space, and delivers donations to women as they move on from the shelter. In 2010-2011 we supplied 20 women (and 18 children), with enough furnishings and household goods to settle into new homes. PAWG joined other congregational and community groups in Indigenous rights activities, such as lobbying and information campaigns.

Other activities: Out of concern about the insufficiency of affordable Ottawa housing for vulnerable people, a sub-committee developed a proposal for housing on our campus, similar to the Somerset Gardens Protocol, which also provided a financial return to St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church. The sub-committee became the Site Stewardship Initiative and it moved at the Congregation's AGM that the Board and Campus Planning Committee hold facilitated congregational meetings in the Fall of 2011 to consider a campus site plan.

Respectfully submitted by Mike Wheeler, Co-chair

Ottawa West Community Support

Over the past thirty-five years the Ottawa West Community Support (OWCS) has continued, through numerous programs, to provide the practical assistance for seniors to continue living at home.

The Aging in Place Project (AIP - a partnership between OWCS and the Champlain Community Care Access Centre, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) and the Ottawa Public Health Department) has concluded its initial three year term and will continue to fill an essential support role at eleven OCH facilities, that house over 2000 seniors, across the city.

In November, 2010 the OWCS initiated a new Assisted Living Services (ALS) program for high risk seniors. It targets those who are hospitalized or at risk of hospitalization and is aimed at reducing pressure on hospitals. This also involves maintaining a collaborative network with the Champlain Local Integrated Health Networks and other ALS providers in eastern Ontario. The support of a number of west-end churches was very much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted by Margot Clarke, Liaison

Social Responsibility

Refugee Working Group

After almost four years of waiting, two young Ethiopian men, Engadasew Asfaw and his cousin Brooke, have arrived in Ottawa. Both spent over five years in a refugee camp in Uganda. We agreed to sponsor them in September, 2007 and they have resettled at the home of Engadasew's sister. Engadasew is the brother of Tadyose, the refugee who we sponsored in 2001 and 2002 and who worked in our building as a custodian. Tadyose recently visited Ottawa from his home in Edmonton and brought us up to date on his situation. He is married, has two children and has just secured his Heavy Equipment Mechanics License. Tadyose is presently working at a provincial government facility. His is a real success story.

Meanwhile we will be assisting his brother and cousin for the next year. They have already met many members of the Ethiopian community and are striving to gain their independence and follow in the footsteps of Engadasew's older brother.

Our Committee appreciates the financial support provided by the Congregation and our Social Responsibility Council which made this all possible. At the moment our Committee has no sponsorships on hand. If you are willing to undertake such work please contact us.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Stevenson, Chair

Sanctuary Committee

The Sanctuary committee continues to assist our former refugees Samsu Mia and Shree Kumar Rai and their families with their settlement needs. Many in the Congregation contributed their time and labour to assist in this work. The major contribution provided during the past year was in the area of tutoring (in subjects such as English, Math, Accounting and Chemistry). Both families are presently doing very well academically. Members of both households are now also working part-time. Other major volunteer support activities over the past year included driving members of the families to and from our services and providing assistance in negotiating the health care and education systems.

Tragically, Samsu's wife Doly became a victim of a cancer that aggressive surgical and oncological care could not arrest. Doly died July 5, 2011.

The committee assisted another wrongfully rejected refugee, Anisur Rahman, in documenting his application for acceptance under the humanitarian and compassionate grounds section of the law. Many members of the Congregation materially assisted by writing letters in support of his application. In January, 2011 his application was accepted and he and his wife Nusrath are now permanent residents.

We hosted Prof. Peter Showler's (Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa) lecture on the pending revisions to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and Regulations. This new law will probably be proclaimed December, 2011. Mr. Showler pointed out the many flaws which will continue to invalidate legitimate asylum seekers. The lack of proper judicial review procedures of wrongful rejections remains a grave problem.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Duncan



Unitarian GoGos

The Unitarian GoGos raise funds as well as awareness for the grandmothers and the orphans they are supporting in sub-Saharan Africa through the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. Approximately thirty members of our group meet on a monthly basis.

Three African grandmother-granddaughter pairs travelled from Newfoundland to British Columbia in the 2010 Stephen Lewis Foundation AfriGrand Caravan. While in Ottawa they spoke to high school students and to a public gathering on Parliament Hill. Across Canada, the Caravan raised the profile of the Stephen Lewis Foundation by showcasing the strengths along with the dire needs of African grandmothers and their families.

Peggy Edwards, one of our local Stephen Lewis Foundation Grandmother leaders, presented her research on the Grandmothers movement at the First Unitarian. A special GoGos musical event for local grandmothers, grandchildren and others became part of a documentary film that addresses the need to fight for better third world access to medicines.

In national advocacy campaigns, the GoGos joined a Rally on Parliament Hill and attended deliberations of both the House of Commons Industry Committee and the Senate to support passage of improved Canadian Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR). Many others lobbied by mail and petitioned their MPs.

In terms of fundraising activities, the group hosted ninety-nine guests at the Dare to Dine Dinner in Fellowship Hall. The GoGos cooked and served a wonderful three-course African meal. Diners enjoyed the accompaniment of live dinner music. The event raised over \$6000. A huge Plant and Garden Sale at First Unitarian raised over \$2000. Shoppers could buy plants grown at the Meditation Gardens as well as our plants and accessories. Monthly sales of homemade Grannie Squares on Sundays raised over \$3000. Our total for the program year of 2010 was \$24,000. Since we began in 2007 we have raised over \$70,000. The GoGos donate \$200 annually to the Congregation and sincerely appreciate the Congregation's support and encouragement.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy Doyle

United Nations Working Group

The UN Working Group organized a very successful Holtom Lecture in the fall of 2010, with Dr. Michael Byers presenting "Who owns the Arctic?" He lectured on the topic of international law and cooperation in the Arctic in the context of the prospect of melting ice and the new economic opportunities connected to global warming.

In February, 2011, the UN WG collaborated with members of the UU Fellowship of Ottawa in hosting Bruce Knotts, Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO). The highlight for us of his weekend visit was a workshop panel on "Canadian Unitarian Universalist Perspectives on UN Issues". On the dais along with Bruce were Katherine White of the UN Association of Canada and a panel of Unitarians that included David Chernushenko, Heidi Wright, Susan Tanner, Ed Willer, Katherine Gunn. The panel discussion was moderated by Mike Cassidy. Panelists and participants identified the UN related issues they considered important and developed possible options for action.

The UN Working Group organized UN Sunday in October, with Rev. John Marsh delivering the sermon. The Group sold UNICEF cards in November and December and sponsored the attendance of seven youth and two advisors at the UU-UNO Spring Seminar in New York City in April. The seminar focused on the economic, political and social situation of women and their potential to contribute to society, the economy and environment.

The UN WG followed closely the restructuring of the UU-UNO as it worked to rejoin the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and is looking forward to contributing to the reorganization of Canadian UU-UNO supporters under the leadership of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC).

Respectfully submitted by Katrin Nagelschmitz, Past Chair

Social Responsibility

Welcoming Congregation Working Group

The Welcoming Congregation Working Group (WCWG) is responsible for overseeing the implementation and integration of the Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation Program, and promotes inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) people within the church. We have seen notable progress in three key areas:

- 1) fostering relationships amongst GLBT congregants;
- 2) developing outreach to the wider GLBT community; and
- 3) formalizing the group's congregational role.

To foster relationships (1), the WCWG organized social events such as potlucks with an open invitation to all GLBT members, and with a team of GLBT congregants and allies organized a worship service celebrating "Courageous Love." In the area of outreach (2), the group made contacts within Ottawa's GLBT community, particularly with individuals and groups that are investigating the prospect of bringing Ugandan GLBT refugees to Canada.

The WCWG expanded their congregation's presence during the August, 2011 Ottawa Pride festivities and the Pride Fair. It is developing relationships with other groups in the church, notably the Lay Chaplaincy and Membership Committees. To formalize the Welcoming Congregation Program (3), the group has become a Working Group within the Social Responsibility Council. This will allow the WCWG to further integrate its activities with congregational life and become more involved in GLBT activism. In this latter area, the group completed a three-year strategic vision to outline the GLBT activism it will explore in the years ahead.

We are proud that in October, 2010 First Unitarian was recertified as a Welcoming Congregation by the Canadian Unitarian Council (original certification was in 1998), and "transgender" was added to the certification plaque in recognition of consciousness-raising activities by the group, as noted in the 2009-2010 report.

Respectfully submitted by Heidi Anderson



Best of luck to Jane and Nicky



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