

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, September 11, 2026

We acknowledge that our campus is located on traditional, unsundered and unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg Territory; and that the work of reconciliation is a responsibility of our congregation, and of all Canadians.

Sunday, September 13, 2026

Online and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



Gathering at the Well: Ingathering and Water Ceremony

Reverend Lara Cowtan

Join in this multi-generational service as we begin our program year with a UU Water Ceremony. Please bring a small amount of sacred water (by your own definition) to share in our ritual.

SEPTEMBER OFFERING

Each month, we share our undesignated Sunday offertory 50/50 with a community



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partner. In September, our offerings support the Ottawa Network for Education Children's Breakfast Program. ONFE's School Breakfast Program provides nutritious breakfasts and snacks every school day. Together, our community ensures that students in the region have the energy they need for physical and intellectual growth.

[School Breakfast Program - Ottawa Network for Education](#)

Sunday Service Announcements

If you would like an announcement made during the livestreamed Sunday Service, please email the Board of Directors at boardannouncements@firstunitarianottawa.ca by Friday at 10am. Do allow for time in case there are questions with regard to the announcement. Also note that announcements may need to be edited for length and that time-sensitive announcements may be prioritized.



Children's Religious Exploration

This Sunday, our UU Kids will be upstairs in Worship Hall for our multigenerational Ingathering Service! Bring a small amount of water that is special to you and your family to share during our Water Ceremony!

Sundays, September 20 and 27: Join us for whole group "Welcome to RE" activities. Our new thematic RE program "Woven Faith" will start on Sunday, October 4th.



FirstU's Caring Team

We are all interconnected, interdependent and minister to each other in many ways.

Caring Contacts are monthly volunteers who receive phone calls and emails when you wish to alert us to a need, a grief or a concern, or have a joy to celebrate. They prepare cards to be signed on Sundays, and try to ensure no one is forgotten, connecting people with appropriate help when requested.

Caring Contacts for September

Margaret DeCorte - [Email](#) - 613-722-1424

Carmen Contreras - [Email](#) - 613-565-3613

Caring Visitors are specially trained and certified FirstU Members, available to provide spiritual care and deep listening for those who seek support during a transition or challenging time. Visits can be by phone/zoom, a walk, coffee shop, in home, hospital, hospice, or wherever is comfortable.

Caring Visitors: caringvisitors@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Settled Minister Discernment Process



Key dates to share your thoughts and hopes as we discern whether to call Reverend Lara as our settled long-term minister:

- September 10 - Launch of online [Discernment Survey](#)
- September 15 - Congregational Consultation over Zoom at 7:00pm.
[Click here to join](#)
- September 20 - In Person Congregational Consultation, at 12:30pm, in the NOW Room
- September 27 - Hybrid Fire Side Chat with Rev. Lara, at 12:30pm, in Worship Hall
- October 18 - Special Congregational Meeting on whether to call Rev Lara as our settled long-term Minister will take place after the service

As part of our ongoing discernment about whether to call Rev. Lara Cowtan as our Settled Minister, the Settled Minister Discernment Task Force is inviting members of the congregation to share their perspectives. The survey is brief and provides an opportunity to indicate where you are in your discernment, as well as to share any questions, hopes or considerations you would like the Task Force to hear. Please take a few minutes to [participate by clicking here](#).

Thank you for adding your voice to this important congregational conversation.

Your Discernment Task Force: Lisa Boulay, Alex Campbell, Ally Hobson, Erin Keene, and Lee Rose

Featured Volunteer Opportunity

Help Make Our Sundays Run Smoothly

Each Sunday morning, it takes a team of about ten volunteers to run our service. Volunteers act as Worship Associates, singing in the choirs, sell books and do other fundraising. We need people to help with coffee hour, operate the elevator, support our children's programming, and act as greeters. There's a place for everyone and we'd love to have you join us.

Please [contact Lisa S](#) if you are interested.

Lisa Sharp, Volunteer Coordinator - volunteers@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Read All About It

Become a FirstU Member

Have you been engaging for at least three months with FirstU? Do you have questions about the membership process and benefits? Want to vote at our upcoming congregational meetings? The Welcome and Membership team would love to chat with you. Drop a line to welcome@firstunitarianottawa.ca or stop by the Welcome Table on a Sunday.

Save the Date! Holtom Lecture with the Honourable Bob Rae

Mark your calendars. This year's Holtom Lecture will be held on **Tuesday, November 3 at 7:30pm**, in Worship Hall, and will feature the Honourable Bob Rae speaking on the subject "What is the Direction for Canada post DAVOS?"

Find FirstU on Social Media

Did you know that FirstU has a Facebook page AND an Instagram account? Click the embedded links to give us a follow, and help spread the word about events happening at FirstU.

Public Service Announcement: Microsoft Publisher to be Discontinued!

If you have any documents in this format, please note that support for it will end on October 1. To keep your documents accessible, you'll need to convert them to another format.

A Facebook Group for Congregants

Unlike FirstU's Facebook page, the community group is for social interaction, not church business. If you're looking for a place to share memes, thoughts, and personal milestones with fellow FirstU congregants, consider joining the FirstU Ottawa Community Group on Facebook.

After-Service Conversations Return

Interested in sharing some of your insights from the morning's service and hearing what others think about it? Our weekly after-service conversations are back again beginning next Sunday, September 20th. Grab some food from Mia's Indian Cuisine (cash preferred) in Fellowship Hall, then join us in the Lounge (near the office) for a good conversation. Coffee will be available.

Jewellery for Fall Fair

Please drop off your donations of jewellery for the Fall Fair in the main office anytime. We are already collecting donations for sorting, repairing, and cleaning. So please bring your donations in sooner rather than later.

FirstU Children's Choir

Interested in our new FirstU Children's Choir for ages six and up? Children's choir will run on Wednesdays from 5:00pm-6:00pm, September 16 to December 2. Registration is \$40. [Full details and registration HERE](#). Contact [Jenn](#) with any questions or concerns!

News from the June and August Board Meetings

- Refugee Sponsorships - the board approved FirstU sponsoring refugees under the Blended Visa Office - Referred Program, with the final selection of refugees to be made by the Refugee Support Action Group (RSAG)
- Campus Development - Kindred Credit Union has approved a loan of \$1.1 million to FirstU, to be used toward purchasing equity in Aspire and repaying personal loans made to purchase equity.
- Org Chart - An updated FirstU organizational chart was approved, and has been posted on the Members' Page of the website, as well as in the lobby outside the church office.
- Board committee appointments - Maury Prevost as liaison to the Generosity Committee (overseeing various fundraising / stewardship efforts) and the Nominations Committee; Chuck Triemstra as a member of the Governance Committee; Chuck Shields as a member of the Nominations Committee, pending approval at the Fall Congregational Meeting.
- Property - Board approved using a portion of the \$100K that FirstU will receive from Aspire towards urgent property projects. (The \$100K is for the donation of a portion of our land near the Continental for use by the city for parkland).

For questions, contact president@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

Call to Action: Preventing Gender-Based Violence

Provided by the Men’s Breakfast Group Compassion-to-Action Initiative

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In 2023, Ottawa declared gender-based violence (GBV) an epidemic. Ottawa Police (OPS) recorded a 9 percent increase from 2025 to 2026 in calls related to intimate partner violence. By August 2026, OPS recorded sexual violations up 24 per cent over same period in 2025. [Ottawa has a community safety plan that calls for prevention of GBV](#). How can we get mayoral candidates to commit to adequate investment in evidence-based prevention with men and boys to achieve significant reductions in GBV by 2030?



Upcoming Events

Congregational BBQ – Sunday, September 13 – 11:30am – Fellowship Hall

Join us for a Welcome Back barbiecue after our Ingathering service! Bring a salad or a dessert to share. Please register by Friday, September 4, by calling the office at: 613-725-1066

Congregational Consultation – Tuesday, September 15 – 7:00pm – Online

Join the Discernment Task Force for a consultation regarding Rev Lara and our Discernment Process.

[ZOOM LINK](#) Meeting ID: **860 0862 5082** Passcode: **064621**

Online Congregational Consultation – Tuesday, September 15 – 7:00pm – Online

Join the Discernment Task Force for a consultation regarding Rev Lara and our Discernment Process.

[ZOOM LINK](#) Meeting ID: **860 0862 5082** Passcode: **064621**

Unitarian GoGos Meeting – Thursday, September 17 – 1:30pm – The Lounge

The Unitarian GoGos are actively seeking new members. We raise funds and awareness for Grandmothers supporting children and others living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Come get to know us! [Contact the office](#) for more information: 613-725-1066.

In Person Congregational Consultation – Sunday, September 20 – 12:30pm – NOW Room

Join the Discernment Task Force for a consultation regarding Rev Lara and our Discernment Process. If you are planning to participate in the Black History Bus Tour, please make sure you attend the Online Congregation Consult on Tuesday, September 15 (see above).

Black History Bus Tour – Sunday, September 20 – 12:30pm to 2:15pm – \$20

We have contacted Black History Ottawa to arrange a guided bus tour of Ottawa to celebrate Black Canadians, their accomplishments and enduring legacies, whether you are a history enthusiast, cultural connoisseur, or curious to learn more. Departure is from 30 Cleary Ave. There are twenty seats available, so visit the office to get your ticket now. Please Note: The bus is not equipped with mobility devices.

Women's Inclusive Pagan Circle Autumn Equinox Ritual – Tuesday, September 22 – 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Fellowship Hall – \$5 Suggested

Trans women, cis women, and non-binary folks are invited to take part in our Autumn Equinox Ritual. We will be inviting in Cybele, Great Mother — so often syncretized with other nurturers — to help us begin to bed down, to rest and grow through the winter. Bring finger foods to share after the ritual and anything seasonal you'd like to include on our altar.

Parents RE Meeting – Sunday, September 27 – 9:30am to 10:15am – NOW Room

Parents, please join us from 9:30 to 10:15am on Sunday September 27th in the NOW Room to discuss our new volunteer initiative and this year's thematic programming. You will also have an opportunity to fill out our 2026-2027 program registration. Kids' activities will be provided during the meeting.

Hybrid Fireside Chat with Reverend Lara – Sunday, September 27 – 12:30pm – Worship Hall and Online

Join the Discernment Task Force for a hybrid Fire Side Chat with Reverend Lara after the service in Worship Hall. Planning to join us online? Check our website's Welcome page on the 27th to find the livestream link under "Upcoming Events".

For weekly, biweekly, and monthly recurring events, visit our Make Friends page:

<https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/make-friends.html#recurring>

Visit our calendar for more upcoming events:

<https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/calendar.html>



Recurring Events: Topics and Changes

- September 15 - **Tuesday Tai Chi** - 1:00pm - Fellowship Hall - Improve your health and balance. Join us weekly to practice Tai Chi. Led by Friends of Taoist Tai Chi, Ottawa.
- September 16 - **Online Mindfulness Meditation** - 7:00pm - Online - Contact adultlearning@firstunitarianottawa.ca in advance to receive the zoom link.
- September 16 - **Drop-In Games Night** - 6:30pm - Room 3 - Drop-In Games Night happens on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Join us for euchre, chess, backgammon and other games.
- September 17 - **Thursday Tai Chi** - 10:00am - Fellowship Hall - Improve your health and balance. Join us weekly to practice Tai Chi. Led by Friends of Taoist Tai Chi, Ottawa.
- September 17 - **Virtual Discussion Circle** - Every other Thursday at 1:30pm on zoom. Discussion circles are held biweekly, with a different topic each time. No pre-registration is required, just drop in by clicking on the link. [Contact Andrew](#) with any questions. Our topic will be: "**Oceans or Mountains? Why?**"
- September 21 - **Virtual Trivia Night** - 7:00pm on the third Monday of every month. Join us for our monthly Trivia Quiz! All you need is a pen or pencil, paper and your "thinking cap". Play alone or team up with friends! [Contact Andrew](#) with any questions. [Click here to get the link.](#)
- September 22 – **Journey Group** – 2:00pm - Room 6 - Our Journey Group meets twice a month to discuss a monthly theme. September's theme is "**Beginnings**". Additional groups will form based on demand for time, type, and frequency. Starting in October, the group will meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month. [Contact Amalilly](#) for more information.
- September 24 - **Thursday Evening Reading for Growth** – 7:00pm on the fourth Thursday of the month. [Contact Ken](#) for the zoom link and our first book title of the year.

- September 25 - **Men's Breakfast Group** - 8:30am - Fellowship Hall - Gentlemen are invited to join the Men's Breakfast Group on Friday Sept 25, for coffee, socializing, and breakfast, followed by an informative and engaging talk and ensuing discussion. Register no later than September 21 by [submitting this form](#).
- September 25 - **Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth** – 1:30pm on the last Friday of the month. will be discussing ***Second Suns***, by David Relin, who spent a year with a Nepalese and an American eye surgeon as they cured blindness caused by cataracts in remote Himalayan villages. [Contact Clea](#) for the zoom link. New members are very welcome.

Need to check if a weekly, biweekly, or monthly event has been rescheduled? [Click here](#), or check our [month-at-a-glance calendar](#). Looking for a new social group to join, or need to confirm a zoom link or locate a registration form? [Click here](#) for a full list of our recurring events, plus zoom links for those that occur online.



Unitarian Universalist News

UUFO Presents: From the Fall of Kabul to the Fall of 2026: The Evacuation and Settlement of High-risk Afghan Women
This Wednesday, September 16 – 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Join special guests Shima Karimi and Laura Robinson to hear the story of evacuating high-risk women - those who worked for the rights of women, whose voices were courageously raised, and whose identities were frequently known by the Taliban - from Afghanistan after the fall of Kabul in August 2021.

2026 Mirth and Dignity Retreat: Moments of Joy and Moments of Peace

October 8-11 – Crieff Hills Retreat Centre (Guelph, ON) – From \$575 USD

Mirth & Dignity, the Canadian not-for-profit behind the wildly popular UU Hysterical Society, is holding a retreat this autumn in beautiful southern Ontario! Spend four days/three nights at the Crieff Hills retreat centre (just outside of Guelph, ON) laughing together, dedicating time to rest and recharging, and connecting with other UUs. Some of your favourite Canadian UUs are going to be there: UUHS founder Liz James, song leader Wendy Luella Perkins, storyteller Katharine Childs, and animator Amber Dawn Bellemare will lead the programming! [Full details and registration here.](#)



News from Our Friends

Van Drivers for Unitarian House

Unitarian House needs volunteer drivers to ferry residents to and from grocery stops along Carling Avenue, between Sherbourne and Pinecrest, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Arrive at UH to collect residents in the Unitarian House Van at 9am. Depart at 9:20am. Collect residents from the various drop-off points at 11:00am. If you have this two-hour window available on Tuesday or Thursday mornings, contact Ryley at activities@unitarianhouse.ca for details!

Together for Nature Tour – *This Tuesday, September 15 – 7:00pm* – St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church – \$30

Join Susan Aglukark, Terra Lightfoot, and representatives from Indigenous environmental protection organizations, on September 15, for an evening show to hear and learn from Indigenous artists, musicians and land protectors inspiring change. The Together for Nature Tour is an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples to come together to raise our voices for nature and all our relations. [Tickets available here.](#)

Unitarian House Fall Clothing and Jewellery Sale – *This Thursday, September 17 – 11:00am - 4:00pm* – 20 Cleary

Come choose from a wide selection of quality, gently used clothing donated by friends of Unitarian House as well as Reitman's, Northern Reflections, Cleo and Ricki's. All proceeds support Unitarian House Residents' Association. Unsold items will be distributed among local charities. **All sales are cash only.**

Seniors' Climate Witness – September 19-24

This September 19–24, Climate Caravans from both coasts will converge in Ottawa for a week of public witness and nonviolent action as Parliament returns. This includes our UU friends from the Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice. They need your help. **We're looking for people to: Billet travellers, Support or participate in nonviolent action, Help with outreach, Donate to make participation possible.** [Read more here and sign up to help](#) OR contact margaretELinton@gmail.com to offer a bed to a UU participant for 2-4 days. Make a new UU friend!

Get the eUU in your inbox: <https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/connect-with-us.html#nUUs>