

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, May 1, 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, May 3, 2026

Online and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



A Home for Everyone

With Guest Speakers from Multifaith Housing Initiative

"We are all longing to go home to some place [...] Someplace where we can be free."

~ Starhawk

This Sunday, we are joined by guest speakers Sheldon Leong and Sahada Alolo, the Director of Fund Development and the Director of Community Engagement, respectively, of Multifaith Housing Initiative.

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.

New: Information about Your Sunday Offering

The offerings collected each Sunday help us to live into our values within this congregation and in supporting many good works beyond our walls by highlighting a community partner organization each month to share with. **During the entire month of May, our Sunday collections, unless marked towards your pledge, will be split 50/50 with our community partner, Flaming Chalice International.**

Flaming Chalice International supports refugees in East Africa and community-led development in Burundi. Through education, community-building, and support for vulnerable families, FCI empowers people to shape their own futures. Your generosity directly supports community-led change and the building of hope, opportunity, and resilience.



Children's Religious Exploration

This Sunday, after Time for All Ages, we'll go downstairs to continue our new Spring programs.

- In the **Rainbow room** (ages 2-6) with Anusha, we will be reading "A Spring Walk" and exploring the gardens looking for spring blossoms.
- In the **Wonder room** (ages 6-12) with Esther, we will be learning about the Unitarian Sources and exploring our outdoor space.

Our Whole Lives

Registered OWL participants will be starting our second workshop, *Bodies and Gender*, at 10:30am in the Chalice Room.

Mystery Pals: The Garden

This May, we're planting a little mystery! Garden Mystery Pals pairs a child or youth with an adult to exchange notes, drawings, puzzles, or small gifts—just like planting seeds and watching something grow. Each week, messages are shared through the Mystery Pal Post Office, and identities stay hidden until our Mystery Pal Breakfast on June 7, when all will be joyfully revealed! If you'll be away one week, you can leave a note ahead

of time or email us and we'll deliver it for you. **Please make sure you can attend the June 14 breakfast—it's when the garden comes into full bloom!** Email dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca if you'd like the sign-up link.

Report from the 2026 Annual General Meeting

The 2026 AGM held on Sunday April 26 had almost 100 members represented in person or by proxy. Key notes from the AGM:



- Welcome to new FirstU board members Jane Lindsay (member-at-large) and Maury Prevost (Vice President)
- Thank you and farewell to Amy Bérubé (member-at-large) and Carl Sonnen (non-director Secretary)
- Mary Ella Keblusek moves into the role of President, while Chuck Shields transitions to Past President
- Continuing on the board are Guy Belleperche (Treasurer) and Members-at-Large Lisa Boulay, Carmen Contreras and John Emond
- The new Minister Call Discernment Task Force was approved: Lisa Boulay, Alex Campbell, Ally Hobson, Erin Keene and Lee Rose
- Rev. Mwibutsa Ndagijimanaburundi was affirmed as a Community Minister
- Lee Rose was appointed as a new Lay Chaplain, joining Lisa Boulay and Guy Belleperche
- The 2025 Audited Financial Statement was accepted; reports were provided from the Fall Fair Task Force and the Odayanhaway campus development project.

A recording of the AGM can be found on [the Member's Page](#) of the FirstU website.



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 May

Marilen Gerber - [Email](#) - 613-848-1688

Maury Prevost - [Email](#) - 613-231-7391

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

Featured Volunteer Opportunity

Pride Parade 2026

Would you love participating in the Pride Parade with FirstU?

We need someone to take the lead for our contingent, which includes:

- Registering our group and being a point person
- Organizing carpooling
- Going early for the parade to check in
- Marching on parade day with our contingent

Mentorship prior to the parade is available! For more information, contact diversity@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Want to let the congregation know about a volunteer opportunity? [Fill out this online form](#) to let people know!

Chuck Shields, Volunteer Coordinator - volunteers@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Read All About It

June Spire Open for Submissions

Calling all regular and new contributors to the Parkway Spire! The June issue is coming up fast. Please send your articles to spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca by Friday May 15. We welcome op-eds, poems, and reflections (max 400 words). We'd love to hear from you!

Parking Spaces Available

Roughly ten parking spaces have been restored to FirstU. The spots are at the southwest end of Unitarian House, in front of the first garden, [as shown in this picture, in orange](#). Please feel free to use these spaces!

A Welcome Poster for Sony

The Refugee Support Action Group is pleased to announce that our co-sponsored refugee Mekdelawit, who goes by "Sony", is arriving May 13th. A welcome poster is available at the back of Worship Hall this Sunday and next Sunday for you to sign your words of welcome. Sony has family in town but if you want to help in the future, please email us at refugees@firstunitarianottawa.ca

May 5 Red Dress Day

In recognition of the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, Friends of the Meditation Gardens will display a collection of red apparel in the gardens from May 1-6.

Remember *Spring Free from Plastic*? Get Ready for a New Challenge!

For the merry month of May, the EAG brings you **Spring Free from Plastic '26**. To the list of the **Five 'R's of Waste Management: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**, we add a sixth 'R': **Replace**. Starting May 3, join our plastics challenge, focusing on **Replace**. Visit our table in Fellowship Hall after each service to share **ideas, pictures** and **items** which you have found to successfully replace the many plastics in our lives. Further details on the last page!

Multifaith Housing Initiative Tulipathon 2026

The annual Tulipathon - a fundraiser for Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI), of which FirstU is a member - will be held on Sunday, May 24. All funds raised go toward rent subsidies for low-income MHI tenants. You can donate and/or join the FirstU team at <https://give.gofundme.com/firstu>. Two MHI staff will be speaking at our May 3 Service and providing information in Fellowship Hall afterward.

Ajashki Email Change

It has come to Ajashki's attention that many emails have been set up by previous individuals running the program. These emails are no longer actively used by the program and should be deleted. Ajashki has an official email address ajashki@firstunitarianottawa.ca this is the only **official** email address that is monitored by the Ajashki program. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle at fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

From the Office: Printing – Only If You Need It!

A box of copy paper (5000 sheets) now costs almost \$100, up from about \$60 before the pandemic. To save the trees and our budget, please:

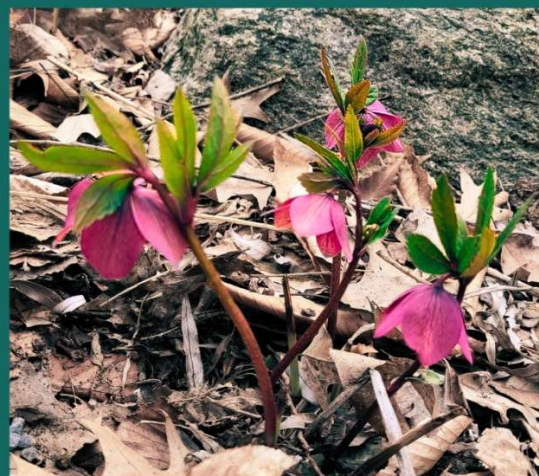
- Only print the minimal amount of copies that you need.
- Double-side your copies
- Extend your text to the outermost margins you can, so that fewer pages are needed when printing.
- Do a test copy and proofread it before you print multiple copies.

Prepping for the Unitarian GoGos Mother's Day Plant Sale

As the Unitarian GoGos prepare for their Annual Plant Sale in support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, they are seeking:

1. Plant donations. Plants can be delivered to 547 Redwood Ave anytime from April 24 to May 5.
2. Volunteer diggers to collect and repot plants between April 24 and May 5. [Contact Joan Turner](#), if you can help.
3. Medium sized pots, which can be dropped off at the North side of the church.

The Garden Begins to Bloom!



Photos courtesy of Margaret L



Upcoming Events

Monthly FirstU Building Tour

This Sunday, May 3

11:45am

The Monthly FirstU building tour is a casual tour of our building offered on the first Sunday of the month. This Sunday look for Brent, by the podium in Worship Hall, starting at 11:45am.

Biweekly Wednesday Community Dinner – Wednesday, May 6 – 5:00pm – \$10 suggested for adults (\$5 for kids)

Come join us every other Wednesday, for a community dinner. 5:00pm - 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall. To sign up [contact uuoffice@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:uuoffice@firstunitarianottawa.ca). By donation (\$10 adults, \$5 kids, suggested).

Unitarian GoGos Plant Sale – May 8-10 – FirstU Parking Lot

Mark your calendars for Unitarian GoGos Annual Mother's Day plant sale starting Friday, May 8, at 9:00am and ending Sunday, May 10, at 1:30pm. Plants, bulbs, jewellery, baking and homemade preserves for sale. All proceeds go to The Stephen Lewis Foundation. For more information or to donate or volunteer please [contact Sheila G.](#)

Introduction to Nature Journaling – Sundays, May 17, 24, and 31 – 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Join Laurie Foster-MacLeod for three Sunday afternoons in May, to explore nature around FirstU and to learn the fundamentals of nature journaling. Bring a small (8"x5" or 6" square) sketchbook - mixed Media paper recommended - plus pencils, pens, and your curiosity. **More details, including location, to follow.**

Empowering Upstanders Workshop with [Around the Rainbow](#) – Wednesday, May 20 – 6:30pm-9:00pm

In this free workshop you'll learn how you can intervene effectively without compromising your safety. Learn the "5Ds" of *Upstander Intervention* and how these strategies can be used to support the 2SLGBTQI+ community. This training will equip participants with the tools to safely and effectively intervene when they witness anti-2SLGBTQI+ hate, harassment, or discrimination! To attend, contact diversity@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Introducing Ourselves – Sunday May 24 – 12:00pm – NOW room

Are you feeling new? Introducing Ourselves is a casual meet-up for newcomers guided by Brent Nicolle and Rev. Lara Cowtan. Share what brought you to First Unitarian, ask about the basics of Unitarian Universalism, and learn about how to get connected. A light lunch will be served. Register at the Welcome Table or email welcome@firstunitarianottawa.ca

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

- May Journey Groups Topic: "Liberating Love". Email adultlearningAS@firstunitarianottawa.ca for details or to request the zoom link.
- May 8 - The Men's Breakfast Group will meet at 8:00am in Fellowship Hall for breakfast and an engaging talk by Kevin Girard, CFP, on **Financial Planning in Times of Uncertainty**, followed by a lively discussion. \$10 per person. Details and registration link [HERE](#).
- May 14 - Virtual Discussion Circle - 1:30pm on zoom. This session's discussion topic is **Grief and Loss**. [Click here to join the discussion.](#)
- May 18 - Our monthly online Trivia Quiz takes place on zoom at 7:00pm. [Click HERE to join the quiz!](#)
- May 28 – Thursday Evening Reading for Growth – 7:00pm. Our next book selection is *Cleopatra: A Life*, by Stacy Schiff. [Contact Ken](#) for the zoom link.
- May 29 – Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth – 1:30pm. Our next book selection is *Disorientation: Being Black in the World*, by Ian Williams. [Contact Clea](#) for the zoom link.

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.



Chez FirstU

Gil's Hootenanny: Last Hurrah – Tonight, May 1 – 7:00pm – Chez FirstU – \$20

The legendary Ken Whiteley, prolific songwriter, gifted and versatile musician and powerful singer, will headline the 17th, and last, annual [Gil's Hootenanny](#). Whiteley delights his audiences with his participatory humour, grace, and energy. His music communicates themes of freedom, love and social commentary, making him a perfect fit for the Gil's Hootenanny's sing-along concert format. [Tickets available here.](#)

Aella Choir Presents: In Good Company – Sunday, May 3 – 1:30pm – Chez FirstU – Pay What You Can

Aella Choir invites you to IN GOOD COMPANY, our tenth anniversary concert. With repertoire taken directly from the shows we've performed since 2016, IN GOOD COMPANY will feature some of our best-loved music -- electrifying, joyful, and moving, by turns. [Click HERE](#) for full details. [Get advance tickets HERE.](#)



Unitarian Universalist nUUs

Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC): Reciprocal Annual Mentorship Program (RAMP!)

RAMP! offers monthly Skill-Building workshops open to everyone interested. These public, online, 90-minute workshops align with the program's monthly themes and connect with other national programming such as Congregational Conversations and Dismantling Barriers. Upcoming workshops include:

- May 9, 1:00pm: [Navigating Conflict with Necessary Trouble Collective](#)
- June 27, 1:00pm: [Projects, Partnerships & Practical Wisdom from RAMP!](#)

Click the embedded links above to register for the workshop(s) of your choice!

Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC): Dismantling Barriers Series

Join the CUC online, on Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 7:00pm, for a workshop facilitated by Camellia Jahanshahi called Boundaries Are my Love Language. This session will differ from our usual Dismantling Barriers events in that Camellia will lead a workshop she designed specifically for activists, community workers, and artists on navigating and sustaining healthy boundaries. [Full details and registration HERE.](#) A final session will run [on June 25.](#)



News from Our Friends

Unitarian House Presents: Book Discussion with David Chernushenko – Wednesday, May 6 – 1:30pm – Founders Room

Join David Chernushenko for a discussion of his book *Standing with Underdogs: A family journey, personal quest & universal story*, which begins with his roots in Ukraine.



Spring Free from Plastic – Replacing Plastics in Our Daily Lives

Do you remember the year 2022, halfway through the **Climate Action Focus**? The successes, the challenges, the outright failures of **Spring Free from Plastic** - our attempt to defeat the plastic scourge? Back in '22 we were all familiar with the **3 Rs of Waste Management: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**, and we came to know that **Reduce** is the winning 'R'! **Recycle** was the mantra of plastics industry but should be the choice of last resort. **Plastic recycling just doesn't work that well.** Our congregational evaluation pointed us to the addition of two new **R's: Rethink** to differentiate between necessity and desire; and **Refuse**, the turning away of all things plastic, which is sometimes doable, but may be difficult, if not impossible, in some situations. This year, we've added a sixth 'R', **Replace!** The idea is to replace that unending supply of plastic with something more ecologically friendly. So, what better way to celebrate May Day than to offer you a new plastics challenge:

Spring Free from Plastic '26: Replacing Plastics in Our Daily Lives!

With that in mind, starting **May 3**, for the entire month, we will have a table set up in Fellowship Hall after service and we ask you to bring and share **ideas**. Feel free to bring post-it notes, photos, or—best of all—items you've discovered that **successfully replace and reduce the use of plastics in your daily life**. Come visit, compare, and enjoy a great conversation!



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