

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, February 6, 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, February 8, 2026

[Online](#) and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



Is It True? Is It Kind? Is It Necessary?

Reverend Lara Cowtan

The great Sufi poet, Rumi, believed that before we speak, our words should pass through three gates. Each gate asks a simple question, yet each one carries weight. Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? These poignant questions aren't meant to restrain us, but to become invitations to awaken and grow conscious of what we release into the world.

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 January, our Sunday collections, unless marked towards your pledge, will be split 50/50 with our community partner, [Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services](#).

An innovative, community-based, multi-service center, [Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services](#) strives to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve. They work in partnership with individuals, families and communities to achieve their full potential, paying particular attention to those facing barriers to access, including those who are most vulnerable and at risk.



CENTRE DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRE
PINECREST-QUEENSWAY
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



Children's Religious Exploration

This Sunday, after Time for All Ages, we'll head downstairs for the Our Unitarian Gifts program. Through stories, games, and creative activities. **Our focus this week is on justice and equity, explored through the gift of building better relationships, with activities inspired by Valentines' day.**

We will be continuing this week with just 2 rooms.

- Rainbow room - Ages 6 and under with Rita
- Chalice room - Ages 6 and up - With Jodi

Caring Contacts for February

[Evelyn Algar](#) - 613-728-5761

[Agnes Davis](#) - 613-737-6527

Caring Cards for January: Ken E, Jennifer E, Carmen C, Nikki C, and Fred C.

We are all interconnected, interdependent and minister to each other in many ways. Our monthly Caring Contacts take your phone calls and emails when you wish to alert us to a need or a concern or have a joy to celebrate. We try to ensure no one is forgotten and that appropriate help is provided when requested.

In February the Caring Network Executive hosts a hospitality hour near Valentine's Day in honour of "Heart Month" and Caring. We look forward to hosting Hospitality Hour after the service this Sunday, February 8, when we will have some special treats to enjoy while we chat and catch up with each other. We appreciate the continuing commitment and thoughtful work by so many to keep our Caring Network strong. Caring is for everyone!



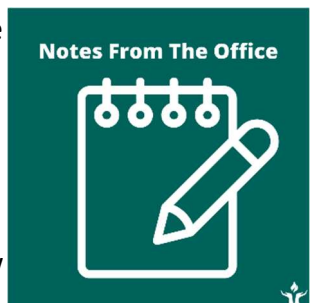
Passages

Michael John Bacon (Max) left this world January 13, 2026 from his home at Billings Lodge. He was 97 years old. He was known for his enthusiasm, energy and unstoppable character. He was also a careful thinker open to new ideas, a teacher and mentor to many. He is survived by his wife Jill McFarlane, a past member of FirstU Ottawa, and many other beloved family members and friends. You can read his [full obituary here](#).

eUU Submissions: Best Practices

It's a new year, and FirstU has a number of new members and friends! With that in mind, here are some Best Practices to incorporate when submitting items to the eUU for publication:

- **Stick to the submission deadline.** Send your items in between Monday morning and the deadline of **Wednesday at noon**, of the week you want your item to be published. The deadline allows staff to plan their time, helping them help us.
- **Avoid using acronyms where possible.** Yes, there's a hard word-count limit of 60 words per item for the eUU, but there are ways to be succinct that don't leave new friends floundering.
- **Regarding Events: Allow adequate lead time when scheduling.** Ensure that you give yourself time to finalize the details of your event, book rooms or zooms, and get your event into the FirstU monthly calendar, **before** submitting it for publication in the eUU.
- **Offer links to external information sources** - particularly the pages of our own website. Webpages like Adult Learning and Growth, the Members' Page, Volunteer With Us, and Make Friends can offer additional information allowing you to stay within the allotted word count.



Thanks so much for keeping these best practices in mind!



Featured Volunteer Opportunity

Time & Talent Auction

Time & Talent 2025 was such a success, we're bringing it back! Look for a call for items in the coming weeks, and expect a late-April 2026 date for the week of bidding.

Want to volunteer? Coordinator David Chernushenko is looking to share the load. Could you assist this year with the thought of taking over next year, or just helping this year? Contact david@davidc.ca to learn more.

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

Calling all Spire contributors!

Your articles, photos, poems are due on February 15. Please send them in to spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca. Your community is calling!

Lay Chaplaincy - Is It For You?

Lay Chaplains perform an important service for the wider community by conducting rites of passage, including child dedications, celebrations of life, and weddings. FirstU and our friends, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa, will be looking to appoint new shared lay chaplains in the coming months. Interested in learning more about lay chaplaincy and the selection process? [Contact Sharmila Khare to find out more!](#)

2025 Tax Receipts Available

2025 tax receipts are ready for pickup. They are available in the church office during the week and at the back table during Sunday services. Please give your name to the volunteer and they will find it for you. If it's missing or you have questions reach out to Michelle at fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca. Any remaining receipts after Feb 15th will be mailed on Feb 16th, 2026.

Our Whole Lives Facilitators Wanted

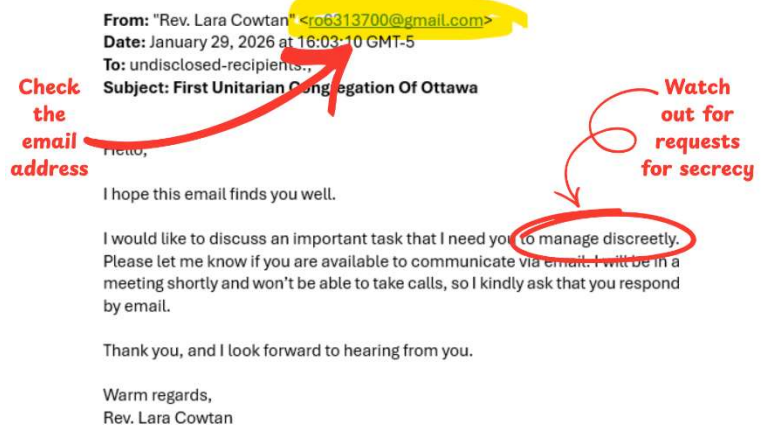
Have you heard about OWL? It is our lifespan Sexuality Education program called [Our Whole Lives](#). We are looking for someone to help facilitate our upcoming Kindergarten - Grade 1 curriculum. This would require an **interview with Jodi** and an online **facilitator training in March**. We will be offering the **eight-week program from April to June**. If you are interested and would like more information, please [email Jodi](#).

Religious Exploration Volunteers Wanted

Our [Religious Exploration for Children and Youth](#) (RE) programs are growing, and we want you to grow with us! Please [contact Jodi](#) if you'd like to learn more about how you can support our UU Kids, and our RE Staff, by volunteering with us.

Watch Out for Fraud

CHURCH STAFF WILL NOT send unexpected emails, texts or phone calls requesting favours, money, gift cards, etc. Please delete anything of this nature that reaches you, or hang up if you receive a suspicious phone call. An sample scam email is to the right, and you can find further details on how to spot a scam [here](#).



Report on the Special Congregational Meeting

On Sunday, January 25, members of the congregation met to consider a motion to allow the board to use the congregation's land to secure a mortgage. The mortgage would be part of the strategy to raise funds to increase our equity in Aspire Riverview Homes. After extensive discussion, the motion passed with 83 votes in favour, 4 votes against and no abstentions. [A recording of the meeting is available here.](#)

Journey Groups

In-person: First and third Tuesdays, 2:00pm in Room 6

Online: Second and fourth Sundays, 6:30pm via Zoom

February Topic: Discerning Truth

For more information [contact Amalilly](#).

Think Before You Print

As you've likely noticed, costs are rising across the board—and that includes keeping the FirstU supply closet stocked. Copy paper prices alone have increased by more than 40% since COVID, so we're asking everyone to be mindful when printing at the office. To help reduce waste, please consider the following:

- **Adjust your margins:** When formatting documents, choose narrow margins to fit more content on each page.
- **Tweak spacing and font size:** Small changes here can significantly reduce page count. (We've all had that frustrating moment when page 2 prints with a single line on it!)
- **Print double-sided:** Make good use of all that white space on the backs of pages, by choosing double-sided printing in Settings
- **Do a test print:** A quick test page ensures everything looks right before printing in larger quantities.

Something New: Flowers for Sunday Services

You now have the opportunity to provide flowers for the service—whether to honour a loved one or celebrate a special occasion. Your contribution will be acknowledged in the Order of Service. The choice of flowers is entirely yours! A sign-up sheet will be available in the office for each Sunday. Reserve your Sunday now!

Journey Groups

In-person: 1st & 3rd Tuesday's 2pm in Room 6 (next Feb 3rd)

Online: 2nd and 4th Sunday's 6:30pm via Zoom (next Feb 8th)

February Topic: Discerning Truth

For more information contact Amalilly at JourneyGroupAS@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Recurring Event Topics and Updates

- [Click HERE](#) for a full list of our recurring events, plus zoom links for those that occur online.
- **February 13 - The Men's Breakfast Group** will meet at **8:00am** in Fellowship Hall for breakfast and an engaging talk followed by a discussion. Register by Monday, February 9 by [filling out this form](#).
- **February 16 - Our monthly online Trivia Quiz** takes place on zoom at **7:00pm**. [Click here to find the link](#).
- **February 19 - Virtual Discussion Circle - 1:30pm** on zoom. [Click here to find the zoom link](#). This session's discussion topic is "**Guilt and Shame**".
- **February 20 - Drumming Spires**: Come find your rhythm connection in this recreational community drum circle, **11:00am on the third Friday of every month**, in Fellowship Hall. Please bring a small drum, coffee canister or percussion instrument. No experience needed. Please accompany children who attend. For information and to RSVP, email: FridaySpires@mail.com
- **February 26 – Thursday Evening Reading for Growth – 7:00pm**. This month's book is *Who We Are: Four questions for a Life and a Nation*, by Murray Sinclair. [Contact Ken](#) for the zoom link.
- **February 27 – Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth – 1:30pm**. [Contact Clea](#) for the zoom link and this month's book selection.
- **March 4 - Drop-In Euchre - 6:30pm** in Fellowship Hall.



Upcoming Events

UU Pride Group Presents: PAL-entines Day – *This Sunday*, February 8 – 12:30pm – Fellowship Hall

Join 2SLGBTQIA+ friends, their chosen family, and allies from the UU community after service for snacks and fun activities. No registration is required; kids are welcome to attend with caregivers (no childcare is available).

Please feel free to bring your own favourite board game!

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>



Save the Date

Bridge and Branch Homeschool Spring Season Begins – March 3 - April 21 - Tuesdays - 10:30am to 2:30pm - Downstairs

Run by FirstU, in partnership with the parents, Bridge and Branch offers opportunities for homeschool families of different backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities to connect, and grow. For further details and registration information, please visit: <https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/bridge-and-branch.html>



Unitarian Universalist nUUs

Reciprocal Annual Mentorship Program (RAMP!)

If you've ever wondered where you belong in this community right now, if you've ever felt called to deeper connection, if you've ever suspected that wisdom grows when it's shared...

RAMP! may already be inviting you. A four-month national pilot offering two ways to learn and connect within the Unitarian Universalist movement, RAMP offers pathways connect Unitarian Universalists across generations to build skills, share wisdom, and strengthen our communities for the future.

Whether you participate closely, join a workshop, or engage through other aligned CUC programming, this journey is about all of us, turning toward one another and facing the future together. [Full details HERE](#).

[Apply for the Mentorship Cohort by Feb 15](#) or register for a [Public Workshop](#).

Pilgrimages in Transylvania - Various Dates in 2026-2027

Over the next year there are four planned pilgrimages hosted by the Hungarian Unitarian Church (HUC). Click the embedded links for details.

- [2026 Spring Pilgrimage](#) (Mar 19 - Mar 30, 2026)
- [2026 Via Unitariana Walking Camp](#) (Jun 28 - Jul 4, 2026)
- [2026 Autumn Pilgrimage](#) (Sept 8 - Sept 19, 2026)
- [2027 Spring Pilgrimage](#) (Mar 11 - Mar 22, 2027)

If any of these interest you, please [fill out the HUC's interest form](#).

If you are interested in creating a pilgrimage with your congregation or small group, please [write to pilgrimage@unitarius.org](mailto:pilgrimage@unitarius.org).

Unitarian Beginnings and History in Poland - May 20-26, 2026

Led by UU ministers Roger Jones, Kevin Tarsa, and Jay Atkinson for pilgrimage to historic Polish Brethren sites in late May. Tour leaders will supplement our site visits with background commentary on the history, theology, congregational life, and social philosophy of the Polish Brethren and how their ideas influenced their contemporaries and still live on in modern Unitarian Universalism. In addition, we will provide tour registrants with suggestions for background reading. [Read the details HERE](#).

Multi-Congregation Pilgrimage in Transylvania - June 23 - July 3, 2026

Rev. Andrew Weber, UUA Ambassador to the Hungarian Unitarian Church (HUC) is hosting a multi-congregation pilgrimage June 23 - July 3, 2026, in partnership with the HUC. Experience the birthplace of Unitarianism and be part of ongoing international partnership with the Unitarian communities of Transylvania. This is a transformational opportunity to make deep personal and faith connections. There will be opportunities for spiritual growth in addition to historical education. [Read the details HERE](#).

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