

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, April 17, 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, April 19, 2026

[Online](#) and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



A Tangled Web

Reverend Lara Cowtan

On the delicate balance and beauty of Nature, and our place within it.

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 April, our Sunday collections, unless marked towards your pledge, will be split 50/50 with our community partner, the Ajashki Project.

Ajashki is a land-based program hosted by the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa in collaboration with Indigenous communities in the city and region. Rooted in the recognition that FirstU's campus is on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg land, the program seeks to build relationships, practical skills, and cultural understanding through collaborative gardening, land relations, and environmental stewardship.



Children's Religious Exploration

This Sunday, after Time for All Ages, we'll go downstairs to do fun, whole group activities in the Rainbow Room!

Our Whole Lives: Kids participating in the OWL program, and their parents, will be meeting in the **NOW Room at 10:00am** for our parent-child orientation! Snacks will be provided.

FirstU Annual General Meeting

FirstU Finance Details Meetings

Meeting 1: Monday, April 20 - 10:00am - Online

Meeting 2: Wednesday, April 22 - 7:00pm - Online

As is our custom, there will be two Zoom meetings leading up to our AGM for those who would like a more detailed discussion of FirstU's finances, including the 2025 audited financial statements. The financial statements are available to download from the Members' Page, and we recommend reviewing them prior to attending these meetings.

- Click [HERE](#) to attend the April 20 meeting
- Click [HERE](#) to attend the April 22 meeting

The Zoom information for both meetings is the same: **Meeting ID:** 816 1265 3587 **Passcode:** 250676



FirstU Annual General Meeting - Sunday, April 26 - 12:30pm - Worship Hall

The 2026 AGM will be held on Sunday, April 26 at 12:30pm in Worship Hall. Notice of the AGM was sent by email on Thursday April 16 to all members. The agenda includes election of board members, approval of our financial statements, and selection of the Minister Call Discernment Task Force.

- Voter registration will begin at 12:00pm in Worship Hall.
- The meeting will also be viewable online by Zoom (but voting will only be available for those attending in person). [Click HERE to register for online viewing.](#)
- Meeting materials are now available on the [Members Page](#).
- If you know you can't attend in-person, a proxy form can be filled out and sent to the office by Friday April 24 or presented at the AGM. Click [HERE](#) to download your proxy form.
- Childcare will be available for ages 2 and older. To register, [contact Jodi at dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca).

Welcome New Members!

This Sunday, we'll formally welcome the following New Members to our FirstU community.



Bob Thomson

Although Bob hasn't considered himself to be a religious person, he shares the values of UUism. At the Men's Breakfast Group, he recently gave a talk about the fair-trade certification system, which he brought to Canada from Europe.

Elaine Hoskins

After volunteering at the Fall Fair for a number of years, Elaine began attending services over a year ago. She would like to see the introduction of a women's social group, perhaps based around sharing a meal together.

Gay Stinson

Gay came to the congregation about 15 years ago to sing in the choir. She is a retired public servant who worked in employment equity. Gay sings in two FirstU choirs and is a dedicated Fall Fair volunteer.

George Buchanan

George was ordained as a minister at First Unitarian Ottawa in 2006, then served several congregations in the US over a period of 16 years. He and his wife Carrie recently retired and moved back to Eastern Ontario.

Joe Duschinsky

A first-generation German-Hungarian Canadian, Joe was born in Chicago IL in 1979. He grew up internationally, but has lived in Ottawa for 30 years and has worked in finance and now the skilled trades.

John Goodwin

John loves his wife Shelagh, daughter Zoe (Calgary), other family and friends (new and old), birds/nature, canoeing, kayaking, rowing, skiing, cottage life, meditation, fun, and laughter. He is happy to have joined the FirstU community.

Jonathan Dench

Jonathan is the father of Hazel Dench and has delighted in engaging with the community through Mapmaking and volunteering (Fall Fair, Pride, property work, Wednesday Community Feasts, BBQs, Time & Talent Auction).

Shelagh Macdonald

Shelagh loves her life - her husband, children, grandchildren, friends, her work as a psychotherapist and with Amnesty International, kayaking, skiing, nature, their sangha. She is happy to be with this dynamic and caring community.

Nicole Forbes

Nicole, originally from Seattle, works as a microbiologist virologist at the Public Health Agency of Canada. Her two daughters, Alice (11) and Lucy (8), attend the RE program, where Nicole volunteers. She also volunteers actively with Girl Guides.

Nikki Diamond (or Diamond-Chris reflecting her husband's surname)

Nikki has been Unitarian-minded since 1989. She enjoys expressing human rights and philosophy through creative means in English and some French.

Olivia Gibbs

Olivia participated actively in our RE program, including OWL and youth group, from the ages of 5 to 18. She is helping with RE, including this spring's OWL program, and her career goal is to become a teacher.



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 April

Anne Nagy - [Email](#) - 613-614-6174

Marjorie Dunton - [Email](#) - 613-860-5571

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

Help Keep Our Gardens Growing and Blooming

Spring is in the air, which means work will be starting soon in the Meditation Gardens. Work can be done as part of work groups or independently and averages about two hours a week. If you would like to help tend the gardens, please [contact Margaret L](#) for more info.

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

Time & Talent Auction - Bidding Starts April 26!

Tick, tick, tick... Bidding starts April 26 for the [Time & Talent Auction](#).

Be sure you have created an account so you are ready to bid. [Take a peek at what's on offer](#), if you plan to offer an item, [contact David Chernushenko](#) before the April 20 deadline. Not sure how to create an account or bid? **Jonathan Dench** will help you after this Sunday's service.

House Band - Drop In and Join Us This Sunday

The House Band is a group of singers and instrumentalists who play for FirstU services on an occasional basis. No auditions; no commitments! This Sunday we'll be performing the anthem, Sing Now by Gunning & Cormier. If you'd like to join us, please familiarize yourself with the [Sing Now song video](#) and [song lyrics](#) and join us for rehearsal at 9:30am on Sunday, April 19, in Worship Hall. Contact houseband@firstunitarianottawa.ca for questions.

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.

Shelving Needed

The Food Cupboard is looking for some additional shelving that is 4 foot - 6 foot high. If you have a shelf you could donate, please contact Lisa S at sjan@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

Love a Good Story? We Need You!

Do you have a flair for the dramatic or a heart for sharing wisdom? While Jodi is teaching Our Whole Lives from April 19 to June 21, we are looking for **guest storytellers to lead Time for All Ages**. Don't worry about the prep—Jodi can help source the perfect story; we just need your voice and presence to bring it to life! Interested? Chat with Jodi or email her at dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Braille Hymnals Available

FirstU has a set of Braille hymnals available for use during Sunday Service. They can be requested from the Worship Associate or the Office Volunteer on Sunday mornings.

Rhubarb Wanted!

Fresh, frozen, lurking in your freezer since 2019. Susan B is on a mission to transform it into strawberry rhubarb pies for the TIME AND TALENT fundraiser—pies highly endorsed by at least one very enthusiastic Board member. Donate stalks, earn eternal gratitude. [Contact her](#) if you have rhubarb to donate.

FirstU Key Registry

It's time to document who has access keys to the building. You can let us know in one of two ways:

- Stop by the main office and the office volunteer will take your info.
- Email Jen at omr@firstunitarianottawa.ca with the details: building key and/or classroom/supply closet key.

A Reminder to Protect Your Belongings

While we strive to maintain a safe campus and building, incidents of theft and vandalism do occur from time to time. We remind everyone to lock their vehicles and avoid leaving valuables unattended or visible. Whenever possible, please leave valuable items at home.

Building Tours Reintroduced!

On the first Sunday of each month we will be giving tours of the building to newcomers or anyone interested in learning about our church building. Join us at the podium in Worship Hall, at 11:45am, to participate.

Drop-In Euchre is now Drop-In Games Night

Our monthly drop-in Games Night (the first Wednesday of every month, 6:30pm in Room 3) now includes **Chess** and **Backgammon** as well as **Euchre!** Stop by and have some fun with us!



Upcoming Events

Raise Your Voice Choir Concert - *Sunday, April 19* - 1:00pm - Worship Hall (refreshments beforehand) - By Donation

The choirs of FirstU present choral music that celebrates collective action, resistance, and resilience. Our choirs will perform songs that have carried communities through moments of challenge and transformation, from South African freedom songs, to the Nueva Canción movement in Latin America, to music of the Singing Revolution in the Baltics. Join your voice with ours for audience singalongs of well-known protest music!

Mapmaking: Navigating your Spiritual Journey at FirstU – Tuesdays, April 21 to May 26 – 7:00pm – Room 6

If you are a new/newish congregant, Mapmaking will involve you in a range of activities to make connections with others; reflect together on your concepts of spirituality, faith and our Unitarian Universalist principles; learn more about the congregation and its linkages to the broader world; consider what it means to belong to the FirstU community of faith and what you can bring to it; and reflect on your 'credo' of who you are and where you are in your faith journey. 1-2 spots still available. Email adultlearning@firstunitarianottawa.ca to register.

Biweekly Wednesday Community Dinner - Wednesday, April 22 - 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).

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

Are you looking for the Recurring Events item that used to be in the Read All About It section? We've moved that information to our website.

- Looking for the next topic for your favourite recurring discussion or book group? [Click here.](#)
- 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

Grassroots Festival - April 23-26 - Chez FirstU

The 14th edition of the festival takes place Thursday, April 23 - Sunday, April 26. All daytime performances and workshops on Saturday and Sunday are FREE for everyone to attend! Bring your friends, family, and neighbours—there's something for all ages, plus food, drinks, and plenty of fun throughout the weekend. [Full details and tickets HERE.](#)



Unitarian Universalist nUUs

International Council of Unitarian Universalist Women presents:

Five Ways to Tap Into Our Spiritual Resources During Transitional Times

Wednesday, April 22 - 12:00pm – Online

Led by Erika Orbán — Unitarian minister and mental health counselor — the workshop draws on Nancy Schlossberg's psychology of transition to help us identify the inner and outer resources that support our wellbeing. Through guided meditation, personal storytelling, and creative expression (you'll be invited to make or draw a bridge!), we'll discover the universal in the personal, and experience our interconnectedness as a global UU community. Bring paper and pencils or other drawing materials. RSVP by emailing membership@icuuw.org to let them know you're attending Session Two (North American time zones). [Click HERE to join the workshop.](#)

Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC): Dismantling Barriers Series

Join the CUC online, on Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 7:00pm, for an introductory conversation on economic solidarity, with a particular focus on **positionality**. What does "positionality" mean? It means exploring how our political and social identities interact and shape our experiences and understanding of money. What do our histories teach us about how we deal with money? How do our identities inform our money-making decisions and practices? And what can we do to align our spending practices with our solidarity values? [Details and registration HERE.](#)

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:

- April 25, 1:00pm: [UUism and Social Enterprise with Shaun Loney](#)
- 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!



News from Our Friends

River Parkway Children's Centre AGM - Thursday, April 23 - 6:30pm - Online

River Parkway Children's Centre will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 23rd, 2026, at 6:30pm. The AGM is online; all members are urged to renew their membership. For further information, please call the Centre 613-729-3129.

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