

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, February 20, 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 22, 2026

Online and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



Out of the Shadows: Black History in Canada

Reverend Lara Cowtan

Canada's Black History Month is a time to honour the leadership, and contributions of Black communities across Canada. It is also a time to reflect on the systems that continue to shape the lives of Black Canadians today.

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 February, 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.



Children's Religious Exploration

This Sunday, after Time for All Ages, we'll head downstairs to continue the Our Unitarian Gifts program. **We'll be continuing this week with just two rooms.**

- **In the Rainbow room** with Rita and our volunteer, the children will participate in activities surrounding the book "We Are All Equal".
- **In the Chalice room** with Jodi and Esther, we will be learning about Viola Desmond and how community helps us fight for justice and equity.

Caring Contacts for February

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

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

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.

During "Heart Month," our Caring Network thanks you all for continuing to care for each other with a warm smile, a happy greeting or a caring phone call or visit. Caring is for everyone!

Passing

Memorial Service for Mike Cassidy

Mike Cassidy, a long-time member of First Unitarian passed away in November of 2025. According to the family's wishes, they are now making this news public. A service for Mike will be held here at **30 Cleary on Saturday, February 28 at 11:00am**, followed by a reception.

Announcing New Members!

The FirstU Board is pleased to announce that at its meeting on Wednesday evening they approved the membership applications of Elaine Hoskins, Erin Keene and Bob Thomson. Please join us in welcoming them to our community! We are very pleased to have them with us and look forward to their contributions to the congregation.

Watch Your Scents Please

Friends, please remember that FirstU is a scent-free building. Please don't wear fragrances – perfume, cologne, aftershave, etc – to church and remember that a great way to avoid setting off someone's allergies or scent sensitivities is to switch to fragrance-free laundry detergent, shampoo/conditioner, and moisturizer.



**This is a
Scent
Free
Zone**

Chemicals in scented products can be harmful to people with fragrance sensitivities, asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions.

- Use unscented personal care products. Do not wear perfume, cologne, aftershave, and other fragrances.
- Use fragrance-free cleaning products, deodorizers, soaps, detergents, and fabric softeners.

Canada  **CCOHS.ca**
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Featured Volunteer Opportunity

Religious Exploration Volunteers Wanted

Our Religious Exploration for Children and Youth (RE) programs are growing, and we want you to grow with us! We're looking for volunteers to support our staff in our Chalice and Wonder rooms. The time commitment would be one Sunday morning every 4 to 6 weeks. Please contact dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca if you'd like to learn more about how you can support our UU Kids, and our RE Staff, by volunteering with us.

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

Our Whole Lives – For K-Grade1

OWL supports parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Following a Parent Meeting and Parent/Child Orientation, the 8 sessions engage children with stories, songs and activities and include a weekly HomeLink - a homework project for parents and children to do together. Promotes dialogue between parent and child. We are happy to be offering the Kindergarten-First-Grade OWL program starting in April and open to all 5, 6 and 7 year olds. Contact dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca for details and to register.

Are you curious about crafting Worship?

Later this spring, Rev Lara will be leading a workshop for our Worship Team as they prepare for summer services. If you feel called to help shape worship — to craft words, readings, and ritual that hold our community in meaning and care — she would love to hear from you. Please reach out at minister@firstunitarianottawa.ca for information about applying to become a Worship Associate.

Aspire Affordable Housing Update

We are in the final stretch of raising the funds to increase FirstU's equity position in the Aspire affordable housing project. We are ecstatic to report that we have raised over \$900K in loans and donations from congregants and friends of FirstU. We are speaking with institutional investors about providing the remaining funds so we can make a \$1.5M investment. It's not too late to be a part of this amazing program. Contact invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca for details.

Kids! Sign Up for FirstU's Children's Choir

FirstU is thrilled to announce that our new Children's Choir program will be starting March 25 and running through to June! Rehearsals will be Wednesdays from 5:00pm - 6:00pm, in the NOW Room. Children in Grade 1 or older are welcome - no musical experience necessary! Please spread the word, and [register HERE!](#)

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!](#)

Recurring Event Topics and Updates

- [Click HERE for a full list of our recurring events, plus zoom links for those that occur online.](#)
- **February 20 – yUuth Group – 6:30pm.** Youth ages 11-17 are invited to join us for dinner and games in Fellowship Hall.
- **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 - The Men's Breakfast Group** will meet at **8:00am in Fellowship Hall** for breakfast and an engaging talk by speaker [Kevin Ford](#), President of the Ottawa Makers Shed, who will provide a comprehensive description of the international grassroots men's health movement history and the specifics of the Ottawa Makers Shed. Expect an engaging discussion to ensue. Register by Monday, February 23 by [filling out this form](#).
- **February 27 – Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth – 1:30pm.** This month's book is *Freezing Order: Surviving Vladimir Putin's Wrath*, by Bill Browder. [Contact Clea](#) for the zoom link.
- **March 4 - Drop-In Euchre - 6:30pm in Room 3.**
- **March 5 - Virtual Discussion Circle - 1:30pm** on zoom. [Click here to find the zoom link.](#) This session's discussion topic is "Rules, Rulers and Ruled".
- **March 16 - Our monthly online Trivia Quiz** takes place on zoom at **7:00pm.** [Click here to find the link.](#)
- **March 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



Upcoming Events

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>

Women's Inclusive Pagan Circle Ostara Ritual – Wednesday, March 25 – 7:00pm – Fellowship Hall - \$5 Suggested
Trans women, cis women, and non-binary people are invited to join us as we celebrate Mother Nature, the Green Man, and the balance of the elements at Spring Equinox! Wear green and other earthy colours if you want to! Bring finger foods to share after the ritual, and anything you'd like to include on our seasonal altar.

Our Whole Lives Info Session for K-Gr1 - Sunday, March 29 - 11:45am – Room 2

We're happy to be offering the Kindergarten-First-Grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education program, starting in April and open to all 5, 6 and 7 year olds. This program supports parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Need more information before committing? Come to our info session on Sunday, March 29 at 11:45am, in Room 2.

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>



Unitarian Universalist nUUs

Registration and Staffing Applications at Unicamp are Open!

Unicamp is a UU campground and retreat centre with 50 acres of forests, meadows, streams, and a spring-fed pond, where folks can explore, relax, and reconnect with self, community, and Nature. Registration is open for three [kids' sleep-away camp weeks in July](#), as well as [Adult Camp events](#) in August, and [drop-in Family Camp programming](#). You can also apply for one of many staff positions - from Prep Cook and Lifeguard to Program Director and Assistant Property Manager - by [filling out the application form here](#).

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 to 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](#). Register for a [Public Workshop here](#).



News from Our Friends

Tone Cluster Presents: *Cabaret* - An Audience Singalong and Fundraiser

Saturday, February 21 - 6:15pm (doors open at 5:45pm) - Bytowne Cinema – 325 Rideau St - \$25

Join Tone Cluster for a screening of the 1972 musical Cabaret at the Bytowne Cinema! Sing along to your favourite tunes! Dress up as your favourite major character and participate in our costume contest! All while supporting Tone Cluster, Quite a Queer Choir! [Tickets available here](#).

Trans Soup Night - Friday, February 27 - 5:30pm - Ottawa Trans Library - Bring food to share; BYO dishes and cutlery

Trans folks! Soup night is back! Join trans friends, and friends-you-haven't-met-yet, at the end of the month for a potluck-style community gathering. Feel free to bring soups, bread, bowls, utensils, to-go containers, or just your wonderful self! Please bring ingredient lists for any food items you bring to share. To reserve your seat, [click HERE](#).

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