

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, September 25, 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 27, 2026

Online and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



The Next Right Thing: Just Do It

Reverend Lara Cowtan

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

Lau Tzu

What do we do when the way forward is uncertain, overwhelming, or both?
The only thing we can: We put one foot in front of the other and do the next right thing.

SEPTEMBER OFFERING

Each month, we share our undesignated Sunday offertory 50/50 with a community 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, after Time for All Ages, our UU Kids will gather for whole group "Welcome to RE" activities. This Sunday's activities will centre on our UU values of Justice, Pluralism, Equity, Transformation, and Love!

Our new thematic RE program, "Woven Faith", will start on Sunday, October 4th.

Parents: Please join us from 9:30am to 10:15am, **this Sunday**, September 27, in the NOW Room to discuss our new volunteer initiative and thematic programming. You will have an opportunity to fill out our 2026-2027 program registration. An activity will be provided for the children.

This Weekend's Events

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

Join the Discernment Task Force for a hybrid Fireside Chat with Reverend Lara after the service in Worship Hall. Planning to join us online? [Join the livestream by clicking HERE.](#)



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 Contacts for October

Maryan O'Hagan - [Email](#) - 613-729-7752
Marianne Wood - [Email](#) - 613-725-3452

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

- **September 27:** Please join The Settled Minister Discernment Task Force and Rev Lara for a **Fireside Chat after this Sunday's service**, in Worship Hall, and online, at 12:30pm. For those of you wishing to join online, [click HERE to join the livestream.](#)
- In preparation for the Fireside Chat you may wish to read a letter from Rev Lara, [which is available HERE.](#)
- If you haven't filled out the Discernment Survey, and wish to, [it is available online HERE.](#) Paper copies are available at the Urn of Discernment table at the back of Worship Hall on Sundays. **The survey closes on September 30th.**



If you have any questions, connect with the members of the Task Force at discernment@firstunitarianottawa.ca
Your Discernment Task Force: Lisa Boulay, Alex Campbell, Ally Hobson, Erin Keene, and Lee Rose

Featured Volunteer Opportunity

Social Justice Leaders Needed

Are you passionate about social justice? We have action groups focusing on: food security, affordable housing, climate crisis, mental health, refugee support, LGBTQ+ issues and International Human Rights. Please consider getting involved in one of these groups so they can continue in their great work. [Contact Lisa S for more information.](#)

Lisa Sharp, Volunteer Coordinator - volunteers@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Read All About It

Orange Shirt Sunday

September 30 is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also called Orange Shirt Day. Our October 4 Sunday Service will focus on one of the Anishinaabeg Seven Grandfather Teachings, and we ask that you remember to wear your orange shirts to the service that day.

Environmental Action Group at the 2026 Climate March

Ottawa UUs from both FirstU and the Fellowship were among the hundreds of protesters marching to demand our government “stop the burning and defend our climate” during September 19’s [2026 Ottawa-Gatineau Climate March](#). Also participating was [Seniors’ Climate Witness](#), a group of seniors who had travelled from both east and west coasts in caravans, bringing stories and photos of those affected by the climate emergency to share with MPs. They have continued protests [in and near parliament this past week](#), with our own Three Rivers Singers joining them on Wednesday in musical support. To view photos from the event, [click HERE](#).

Donating by eTransfer

Please be advised: eTransfers are automatically deposited into our bank account. **The memo line on the Etransfer must be filled in stating what the payment is for, in order to be applied to the correct budget area.** If no information is provided, it will be deposited into a general account. This means:

- If it’s your pledge payment you will not get credit for the payment.
- If it’s a rental payment it will not be applied correctly
- If it’s a registration fee you will not be registered

Michelle receives many eTransfers per month and needs your help to make sure they get to the correct place.

Please fill out the memo line. If you are new to the congregation, please make sure the office knows your contact information for tax receipting purposes. The email address for eTransfer donations is fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

New Refugee Arriving from Burundi

The Refugee Support Action Group is pleased to share that Jean Niyongabo, a refugee from Burundi, will be arriving in Ottawa soon. Jean is a young man, in his 30s who speaks some French and very limited English. We're looking for **volunteers who speak French** and would be willing and available during the day to take Jean on some outings to introduce him to Ottawa. If you're interested, please email us at refugees@firstunitarianottawa.ca or talk to Brent or Eva.

2025/26 Annual Report Now Available

There are a few printed copies available in the church office, or visit [the Publications Page](#) to read.

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? Do you want to vote at our upcoming congregational meetings? If so, the Welcome and Membership team would love to chat with you. Please drop a line to welcome@firstunitarianottawa.ca or stop by the Welcome Table on a Sunday. NOTE: The deadline for membership applications to be approved in time for the Oct 18 settled minister vote is Monday October 5.

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?"

Journey Groups

Explore the monthly congregational theme to deepen our spiritual and soul matters together.

- Twice monthly in-person group next meets on Tuesday Sept 22nd 2:00 to 3:30pm. New participants are welcome.
- Once monthly online Zoom group, hopefully starting Sunday Sept 27th, 7:00 to 8:30pm, dependent on a minimum of 6 participants.
- An in-person group to meet Wednesday evenings (frequency to be determined by the group), dependent on a minimum of 6 participants.

[Complete the form](#) to register, and email adultlearningas@firstunitarianottawa.ca to receive the zoom link if you wish to participate online. **Facilitators are needed** and training is provided. Email adultlearningas@firstunitarianottawa.ca to volunteer as a facilitator.

Fall Fair

With fall starting officially on the 23rd, our thoughts turn to the Fall Fair. Fall Fair will be held, this year, on Saturday, November 14, so let’s start planning now:

- Our [web page](#) is now accessible on our website and will provide all the information you need to keep up to date.
- Start putting aside items to donate to the Fall Fair. Regular donations will be accepted from November 9 to November 12 from 10 am to 7 pm. [Click HERE for this year's list](#) of accepted donations.
- BUT: 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 bring those donations in sooner rather than later.
- Volunteer with Fall Fair. If you've done it before, you know it's fun, and if you're new, it's a great way to meet people. Contact Eva B by email at ffvols@firstunitarianottawa.ca to join.

Call to Action: Preventing Gender-Based Violence

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

[Resource for Action](#) highlights strategies proven to prevent GBV. For instance, evaluations of empowering university students to intervene to prevent intimate partner violence confirms reductions of 9-19%. [Hamilton Interval House](#) encourages youth to become leaders who promote respect and challenge harmful behaviour by leveraging the influence of coaches, athletes, and sports organizations (including the Ottawa RedBlacks) How could we reach enough young men and boys in Ottawa with proven programs?



Upcoming Events

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 programing. 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”.

FirstU Food Cupboard Food Drive – Sunday, October 11 – 10:00am

This Thanksgiving, share what you can: Please bring non-perishable food items as well as hygiene basics like (ideally unscented) deodorant, shampoo, dish soap, and toothpaste to the service. There will be tables available for your donations, and we'd love to see them filled!

**Special Congregational Meeting for Vote to Call Settled Minister – Sunday, October 18 – 12:30pm
Worship Hall and Online**

Members! Please make sure to attend this special congregational meeting where we will vote on the question of calling Reverend Lara Cowtan to be our settled minister. **Voting will be hybrid.** Meeting documents, proxy forms, and zoom link will be available on the website by October 6.

Fall Congregational Meeting – Sunday, October 25 – 12:30pm – Worship Hall [and Online](#)

Join us for our annual Fall Congregational Meeting. Voting will be in-person only, so watch this space for information on proxy voting if you are unable to attend in Worship Hall. Meeting documents will be available on the Members' Page as of mid-October.

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

- **October 1 - 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. We look forward to seeing you! [Contact Andrew](#) with any questions. Our topic will be: **"Describe the most captivating painting or artwork that you've ever seen"**
- **October 6 – Journey Group** – 2:00pm - Room 6 - Our Journey Group meets twice a month to discuss a monthly theme. September’s theme is **“Courage”**. 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.
- **October 9 - Men's Breakfast Group** - 8:30am - Fellowship Hall - Gentlemen are invited to join the Men's Breakfast Group on Friday, October 9, for coffee, socializing, and breakfast, followed by an informative and engaging talk and ensuing discussion. Register no later than Monday, October 5, by [clicking HERE and submitting this form.](#)

- **October 22 - 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.
- **October 30 - Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth** – 1:30pm on the last Friday of the month. [Contact Clea](#) for the zoom link and our next title

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

Canadian UU National Survey

The Canadian Unitarian Council invites Unitarian Universalists across Canada to share your perspectives, experiences, and hopes directly with the CUC, with the aim of supporting Unitarian Universalism in Canada going forward. Your insights will guide the next chapter of Canadian Unitarian Universalism. [Fill out the survey HERE.](#)

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 and 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! [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 between 9:00am and Noon. For details, contact Riley at: activities@unitarianhouse.ca

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