

# Weekly e-UU Newsletter

## Friday, February 13, 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 15, 2026

[Online](#) and In Person

*Starts at 10:30am*



### A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning

*Reverend Lara Cowtan*

Free, yes, but what is a "Responsible Search"?

How do we discern what makes truth true or what makes meaning meaningful?

#### 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](mailto: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.



#### Children's Religious Exploration

This Sunday, after Time for All Ages, we'll head downstairs to celebrate Family Day Unitarian style. **We'll be continuing this week with just two rooms.**

- **Rainbow room:** Ages 5 and under, with Rita and our new volunteer, Olivia, where we'll make a family tree and talk about family traditions.
- **Chalice room:** Ages 6 and up, with Jodi and Esther, where we'll make family crests based on our UU values.

#### 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, no matter what comes up in our changing lives. 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. [A memorial notice can be read 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? Contact [david@davidc.ca](mailto: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](mailto:volunteers@firstunitarianottawa.ca)



## Read All About It

### 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!](#)

### Calling all Spire contributors!

Your articles, photos, poems are due on February 15. Please send them in to [spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto: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](mailto:fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca). Any remaining receipts after Feb 15<sup>th</sup> will be mailed on Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

## Watch Out for Fraud

Church staff WILL NOT send unexpected emails, texts or phone calls requesting favours, money, gift cards, etc. Please delete anything like this that reaches you, or hang up if you receive such a phone call. Details on how to spot a scam available [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.](#)

## 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!

## Recurring Event Topics and Updates

- [Click HERE](#) for a full list of our recurring events, plus zoom links for those that occur online.
- **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](mailto: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 - 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 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 Fellowship Hall.



## 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>

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](#).

[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](#).



## 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>