

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday, February 27, 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, March 1, 2026

Online and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



Wisdom Stories

Reverend Lara Cowtan

Long before there were textbooks, sermons, research papers, Google and podcasts, there were myths, fables, parables and wisdom stories.

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 March, our Sunday collections, unless marked towards your pledge, will be split 50/50 with our community partner, the [Women's Legal Education and Action Fund \(LEAF\)](#).

Since 1985, the [Women's Legal Education and Action Fund \(LEAF\)](#), which is based in the *uOttawa Law School*, has achieved significant landmark victories in Canada by using strategic litigation and legal education to advance gender equality. LEAF has intervened in over 160 cases, strengthening the Charter of Rights and Freedoms regarding reproductive freedom, workplace discrimination, pay equity, and the prevention of gender-based violence.



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 in three rooms this week:**

- **In the Rainbow room** with Rita and Anusha, we'll participate in activities surrounding the book "We Are Welcome".
- **In the Chalice room** with Esther and in the **Wonder room** with Jodi, we will be learning about how our pluralistic faith calls us to be inclusive and welcoming.

Caring Contacts for February

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

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

Caring Contacts for March

[Clea Derwent](#) – 613-694-0505

[Coral Sato](#) - 613-599-8838

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 **FirstU, tomorrow, February 28 at 11:00am**, followed by a reception.

Splinters from the Board – February 18, 2026 meeting

The following are the key points from the February 18 meeting of the FirstU Board:

- Approved the memberships of Elaine Hoskins, Erin Keene and Bob Thomson.
- Agreed on steps to take to remind congregants and others using our space that our building is scent-free.
- Discussed steps to take to consider having, in collaboration with the Fellowship, an intern minister starting this fall.
- Received a financial report through the end of 2025.
- Agreed to shift \$100K of the congregation's investments to be a loan to boost our equity share in the Aspire Riverview Homes building.
- Reviewed the January 25 Special Congregational Meeting and identified lessons learned regarding holding a hybrid meeting that involves both participants meeting in person and others joining on-line.
- Received updates regarding:
 - The Odayanhaway Project
 - Discussions with Unitarian House of Ottawa (UHO) and River Parkway Children's Centre regarding adjustments to the campus hydro supply
 - Discussions with UHO about various issues
- Selected a board working group that will identify the members to propose to the congregation during the Annual General Meeting of the task force that will lead the discernment process regarding Rev. Lara continuing as our minister.

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.

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

The Time & Talent Auction returns in April!

If you have items to offer (services, meals, guided tours, cottage stays and more) email coordinator David Chernushenko (david@davidc.ca). Ditto if you are new and want to know more about this community building and revenue generating event.

Postcards to the Province

The Justice and Equality Action Group invites you to pick up and sign a postcard in **Fellowship Hall this Sunday, March 1**. The postcards will be mailed to Doug Ford and the relevant MPPs, requesting that they provide more financial support for the Community Support Services (e.g.: Meals on Wheels, respite care, caregiver support) that help people keep living independently.

Little Free Libraries

FirstU has two Little Free Libraries - one for adults and one for children - located outside the west side (elevator) doors. While we accept up to 10 books at a time from donors, we would be happy to accept larger quantities if you have them. Simply bring them along to a Sunday Service and give them to Andrew Drake, or email him at andrewdrake235@gmail.com to arrange a pickup.

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. 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. For details and to register, contact dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

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 – Applications Due!

Lay Chaplains perform an important service for the wider community by conducting rites of passage, including child dedications, celebrations of life and weddings. The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa will be looking to appoint new lay chaplains in the coming months. If you are interested in learning more about lay chaplaincy and receiving the application package, please contact sharmila.khare@gmail.com. **Applications are due by TOMORROW, February 28, 2026.**

Recurring Event Topics and Updates

- [Click HERE](#) for a full list of our recurring events, plus zoom links for those that occur online.
- **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 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, March 9, by [filling out this form](#).
- **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
- **March 26** – Thursday Evening Reading for Growth – 7:00pm. This month's book is "Our Green Heart", by Diana Beresford-Kroeger. [Contact Ken](#) for the zoom link.
- **March 27** – Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth – 1:30pm. [Contact Clea](#) for the zoom link and this month's book selection.



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>

Get Involved with the Justice and Equality Action Group - Sunday, March 15 - 12:00pm - Room 6

If you are interested in getting involved in our food cupboard, affordable housing at FirstU, and/or international human rights, please join us to share your ideas. For more information, [contact Lisa S.](#)

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 March 29.

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!)

The Reciprocal Annual Mentorship Program (RAMP!) is 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

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

Trans folks! Soup night is back! Join us at the end of the month for a potluck community gathering. Bring soups, bread, bowls, utensils, to-go containers, or just yourself! Bring ingredient lists for any food items you bring to share. To register, [click HERE](#).

Unitarian House Spring Clothing and Jewellery Sale - Thursday March 19 – 11:00am – Founder's Room, 20 Cleary

Explore a wide selection of quality, gently used clothing and accessories donated by friends of Unitarian House including brand-name dress shop overstock. All proceeds support Unitarian House Residents' Association. Unsold items will be distributed among local charities. Sandwich/soup lunch available for purchase at mid-day.

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