

Weekly e-UU Newsletter

Friday December 19, 2025

Last eUU of 2025

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, December 21, 2025

Online and In Person

Starts at 10:30am



The Darkest Day

Rev Lara Cowtan

"Merry and Blessed Yule to all!
Hail the Sacred and Embracing Dark!
Hail the Invincible Sun!
There can be no Spring without the Winter,
no bloom without the seedtime,
no Light without the Dark."
~ Cyndi Simpson

This Sunday, we'll celebrate the Solstice and the longest night, with a FirstU tradition - our annual Solstice Spiral - and an exploration of the gentle dark and the need for quiet rest.

Please note: Our UU Kids will walk the spiral during the service, starting at 10:30am, so there will be no Time For All Ages this week. Adults are welcome to walk the Spiral themselves, in the NOW Room, starting at 11:30am.

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

All children and families are invited to join us this Sunday for our special Solstice Spiral Ritual: A peaceful celebration of the return of the light. We will meet downstairs at 10:30 AM in the Chalice Room (Room 2) to prepare the children before moving into the NOW Room together. Parents are warmly encouraged to stay and participate in this meaningful RE tradition with their children.

Christmas Holiday Break

The FirstU Ottawa office will close on Wednesday, December 24 at 3:00pm and will re-open at 9:30am on Monday, January 5, 2026. We wish you a safe, healthy, and joyful holiday!

Upcoming Services

The Night the World Waited: Lights of Hope

Wednesday, December 24

5:00pm

Join us for a lively service for all ages, filled with story and song!



Silent Night, Holy Night

Wednesday, December 24

7:00pm

Join us for a quieter, more contemplative service of carols and readings by candlelight.



Sacred Fire: Reflection, Release, Renewal

Sunday, December 28

10:30am

With the marking of the Winter Solstice two weeks ago, we have begun another circle around the sun together. On this last Sunday of 2025, Lisa Boulay will lead us in a Fire Communion, or burning bowl ritual, to center ourselves, seal our intentions, and leave behind what we wish to, as we move into the New Year, as individuals and in community.

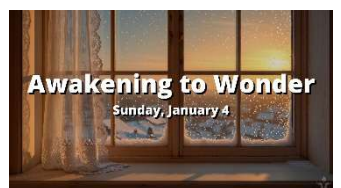


Awakening to Wonder

Sunday, January 4

10:30am

In the midst of a world that seems to be falling apart at times, with fascism brewing south of our border, and the world peace for which we hope seemingly becoming more elusive, we can start the New Year on a more positive note by focusing on "Awe and Amazement" as part of our "Awakening to Wonder" theme for January 2026. Doing so doesn't require money or the burning of fossil fuels - or even much time. We have a basic need for awe wired into our brains and bodies, so finding awe is easy if we just take a moment and wonder. All of us, no matter our background, can find our own meaningful path to awe. How awesome is that?!



Caring Cards for December

[Laurie Foster-McLeod](#) - 613-728-1916

[Paul McGinnis](#) - 613-829-7156

Caring Contacts for January

[Lisa Sharp](#) - 613-608-8698

[Karen Swinburne](#) - 613-234-4305

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.

New Members Welcome Ceremony

On December 7th, FirstU welcomed 18 new members - and their families - in a ceremony during the Sunday service. **Those welcomed were:**

Susan Barker, Carrie Buchanan, Saahil Cuccria, Calogero Cumbo and Renate Steinmetz, Lark Daigle, Briana Faubert, Barry Halden, Amanda Joynt, Paul Julien, Kim and Jon McArdle-Phipps, Nazim and Susan Ould-Brahim, Eric Ranger, Sarah Rotz and Daniel Rück, and Patrice Simister.

We invite you all to read bios about each one [HERE](#), and reach out to welcome them yourself, in particular if you share common interests.



Featured Volunteer Opportunity

Help Make for a Merry Christmas!

Between our 5pm (child-oriented) and 7pm (contemplative) Christmas Eve services on December 24, we'll be serving refreshments in Fellowship Hall. It would be helpful to have volunteers to bring soup, bread or dessert, and to help with organizing and serving the refreshments and clean-up. If you can help, please [contact Mary Ella](#).

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

Save the Date - Special Congregational Meeting

During the October 18 Fall Congregational Meeting, the motion to authorize the mortgage or lien of the congregation's property was tabled (withdrawn to be considered later). The board has received legal advice and has revised the motion, which will be presented to the membership at a Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25, following the service. FirstU Members can attend **and vote** both in person and via Zoom. Details regarding participation and the revised motion will be distributed to members in early January. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Aspire Riverview Homes Equity Loan Program Info Session 2

The next information session for the Aspire Riverview Homes Equity Loan Program is scheduled for the evening of **January 8th at 7:00 pm on Zoom**. We apologize for the late announcement of the meeting this week. This program has been very successful so far and we encourage interested investors to check out the investment brief [by clicking HERE](#), and to [contact us at invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca) for more information or to express your interest.

Two Lost/Found Items!

A white, Lexar thumb drive full of photos from 2016, of the wedding of "Michelle". Also a small hearing aid battery left in the main kitchen. Both are in the church office in case they are yours.

January Journey Groups

Everyone is welcome to join our Journey Groups on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of January, at 2pm in Room 6. January's theme is the practice of **Awakening to Wonder**: How does wonder relate to your spiritual understanding? How might wonder be cultivated as a spiritual practice? For more information [email Amalilly](mailto:Amalilly).

Maple Syrup Available

Unitarian GoGos will be selling local maple syrup after the service this coming Sunday, December 21. This will be your last chance to purchase this delicious syrup.

All proceeds go to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Cash, cheques, and eTransfers (to linevans@rogers.com) accepted. Full size is \$20. Stocking-stuffer size is \$5.

Using "Square" for Credit/Debit Cards

"Square" is the device the church has bought to allow groups to sell things or take donations by credit or debit card. It is a very expensive device, so we ask everyone to use it with care; i.e.: don't drop it!

To use Square for your activity, you must be trained in how to use it. [See Michelle](#) for a training session. When needed, you can pick it up at the church office. The Office Assistant will:

- Record your name, the event, the square category to be used, and the date and time.
- Record the date and time when you return the Square to the office.

Something New for Sunday Services

Starting in January, you'll 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!

Splinters from the Board

The following are the key points from the November 19 meeting of the FirstU Board:

- Approved the memberships of Lark Daigle, Amanda Joynt, Daniel Rück and Sarah Rotz
- Received an update regarding the pledge campaign
- Received a report from Rev. Lara regarding the process for planning the way forward for Ajashki
- Received and approved a proposal to develop an online data repository
- Conducted a debrief of the Fall Congregational Meeting
- Approved a revised motion to authorize the mortgage/lien of church property to increase FirstU's equity in Aspire Riverview Homes, Inc.
- Received a report on an alternative to community bonds for increasing FirstU's equity in Aspire Riverview Homes, Inc.
- Received a report regarding the Odayanhaway project
- Received a report regarding the UHO request to own their property
- Decided to hold a special congregational meeting on Jan. 25 to consider the motion to authorize the mortgage/lien of church property to increase FirstU's equity in Aspire Riverview Homes Inc.

New Protocol for Using Fellowship Hall During Hospitality Hour

If your group plans to serve food or drinks in Fellowship Hall on a Sunday morning, **please book this through Jen at omr@firstunitarianottawa.ca**. This helps ensure all stakeholders are informed and coordinated. A reminder as well that you may book tables in Worship or Fellowship Halls for selling, info etc. the same way.

Environmental Action

Recent months have seen many environmentally challenging decisions at all levels of government, including the **Memorandum of Understanding** between the Governments of Canada and Alberta. Leadnow has launched a petition with specific focus on stopping a bitumen pipeline from Alberta to the BC coast which would threaten our oceans, wildlife, rivers, and forests, and has received no Indigenous consent. Join with FirstU's EAG, environmental and indigenous advocacy groups, and over 9,000 others, and [sign the petition](#). For more information, [click HERE](#).

Recurring Event Topics and Updates

- [Click HERE](#) for a full list of our recurring events, plus zoom links for those that occur online.
- **Sunday, December 28 - Our After-Service Discussions** take place on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, at **11:45am, in the Lounge**
- Our **Thursday Evening and Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth groups** will not be meeting in December. See you in January!
- **January 7 - Euchre** in Fellowship Hall. **6:30pm - 8:30pm**
- **January 8 - Virtual Discussion Circle - 1:30pm** on Zoom. The topic is "**Oppressors and Oppressed**".
- **January 9 - The Men's Breakfast Group** will meet at **8:00am in Fellowship Hall** for breakfast and an engaging talk by [David Chernushenko](#) about his book, *Standing with Underdogs*, and the deep dive into his Ukrainian heritage that led to its writing. Register by January 5 by [filling out this form](#).
- **January 16 - 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
- **January 19 - Online Trivia Night - 7:00pm.** [Click here](#) to find details and to get the link.



~*~ Holiday Haha ~*~



Upcoming Events

Carols & Cocoa - Saturday, December 20 - 1:30pm - Fellowship Hall

Bring the whole family and celebrate the season with a Christmas carol singalong! Don your best festive wear (optional, but encouraged!) and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate as we sing our favourite Christmas tunes together. This event is free and family-friendly; a great way to get in the holiday spirit!

Waiting for the Light – Saturday, December 20 – 7:00pm – NOW Room - \$5 Suggested

Join us for an evening of contemplation as the days are shortening and the darkness is growing. We will walk a candle-lit labyrinth, share a time of quiet meditation and music, and enjoy warm apple cider together.

Women's Inclusive Pagan Circle: Yule Ritual - Monday, December 22 - 7:00pm - Fellowship Hall - \$5 Suggested

Trans women, cis women, and nonbinary folks are invited to take part in our Winter Solstice Ritual! Honour the long darkness and the coming return of the light, as we journey through the night with the Deer Mothers of Baltic and Slavic paganism to re-enchant the world and carry the sun safely through the dark.

Bring finger foods to share after the ritual and anything seasonal you'd like to include on our altar. We also ask that folks contribute \$5 to help cover the cost of space and supplies, and to bring a non-perishable donation or two to support the FirstU Food Cupboard.

Christmas Eve - Early Service: Generosity and Joy - Wednesday, December 24 - 5:00pm

Join us for a lively Christmas Eve celebration for all ages, filled with story and song!

Christmas Eve - Shared Meal - Wednesday, December 24 - 6:00pm

Join us for a light meal of soup, bread and dessert in Fellowship Hall.

Christmas Eve - Candle-Lit Service: Silent Night, Holy Night - Wednesday, December 24 - 7:00pm
A quieter, more contemplative service of carols and readings by candlelight.

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>



Save the Date

Aspire Riverview Homes Equity Loan Program Info Session 2 - Thursday, January 8 - 7:00pm - Online

The next information session for the Aspire Riverview Homes Equity Loan Program is scheduled for the evening of January 8th at 7:00 pm on Zoom.

[ZOOM LINK](#) Meeting ID 842 3372 5790 Passcode 868342

Special Congregational Meeting - January 25 - In Person and Online

The board has received legal advice and has revised the motion to authorize the mortgage or lien of the congregation's property. The revised motion will be presented to the membership at a **Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25**, following that day's service. Members of the congregation will be able to participate and vote in this meeting both in person and via Zoom. **Details to follow in early January.**



Unitarian Universalist nUUs

Sharing Our Faith 2026: Orientation Session - Thursday, January 15 - 7:30pm - Online

Sharing Our Faith is an annual opportunity for Canadian Unitarian Universalists to explore a shared spiritual theme, deepen our connections with one another, and support congregational growth across the country. Join the zoom call to learn more about the 2026 Sharing Our Faith theme: "Practicing Hope: Facing the Future with Gratitude, Imagination, Courage & Action" and how we live our values in rapidly changing times. [Details and registration HERE.](#)



News From Our Friends

Tone Cluster Presents: Seasons of Light – *This Monday*, December 22 - 7:30pm

Centretown United Church (207 Bank St) - \$25 or Pay What You Can (advance) or \$30 (at the door)

To welcome back the light, Tone Cluster and Queer Cadence choirs present music of Solstice and Yule. Harmony and hope intertwine as we honour this moment of stillness with songs of reflection, renewal, and joy.

[Advance tickets available HERE.](#)

Humanist Perspectives

The Autumn edition of Humanist Perspectives [is available here.](#)

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