

# Weekly e-UU Newsletter

## Friday September 12, 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, September 14, 2025**

**Online and In Person**

***Starts at 10:30am***



### **Whose Are We? To Whom Do We Belong?**

**With Reverend Lara Cowtan**

The ancient question, “Who am I?” inevitably leads to a deeper one: “Whose am I?” – because there is not identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask “Whose am I” is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life, whose lives is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways? At the beginning of this new program year and new ministry, let us explore what Welcoming and Belonging mean to this community.

#### **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.



### **Children’s Religious Exploration**

**Our new curriculum starts this Sunday!** UU kids will join the rest of the congregation for the beginning of our weekly service, then proceed downstairs after Time for All Ages for Religious Exploration. Our 2-6 year-old UU Kids will be in the Rainbow Room (rm 4) with Rita and Esther, while our 7-12 year-olds will join Jodi and Susie in the Chalice Room (rm 2). **Dress for the weather** - we'll be spending a lot of time outdoors this week - and please bring your children's outdoor clothes down to Room 2 or 4 before the service begins. [Please remember to register your kids HERE.](#)

### **Splinters from the Board – August, 2025 Meeting**

The following are the key points from the August 20 meeting of the FirstU Board:

- Maury Prevost was appointed to chair a task force that will study the future of the Fall Fair.
- Phil Nagy was appointed to chair the 2026 pledge campaign team.
- It was agreed to hold a ‘Start-up Workshop’ for the congregation and Rev. Lara. This will be facilitated by Rev. Nicoline Guerrier, the Eastern and Central Regions Congregational Life Lead from the Canadian Unitarian Council.
- Received an update regarding the community bonds initiative.
- Received an update regarding the Odayanhaway Project.
- Discussed the Unitarian House request to own their property.
- Received an update regarding the Ajashki Program.
- Discussed plans for the board’s annual retreat.



## A Big Thanks to All Who Helped with the BBQ!

Last Sunday we greeted more than 200 people at our service and many stayed to enjoy the BBQ that helped welcome Rev. Lara and mark the beginning of our program year.

We want to give a huge shout-out to the team that pulled together the BBQ. This was led by the organizing group of Carmen Contreras, John Emond and Brenda Heming, but many others stepped forward to help - members of the Men's Breakfast Group and others handled the cooking, scores helped with preparation, set-up, tear-down, clean-up and capturing a photographic record, and the regular Hospitality Hour crew helped guide much of that volunteer work.

It was wonderful to see so many hands come forward to make the event move smoothly. A huge thanks to all!



## Caring Contacts for September

[Sooky Dunton](#) - 613-860-5571

[Carmen Contreras](#) - 613-715-3872

*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.*

## Featured Volunteer Opportunity

### Co-convenor for the Fall Fair Gift Shoppe

Fall Fair is not only our biggest fundraiser, it's also the most fun and engaging event of the year! Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and build connections with our wonderful community. Various tasks are available both during the week of November 9th and on the day of the sale, Saturday, November 15th.

We need lots of volunteers and we promise there's a job for you! See Eva in Fellowship Hall after the service, or email [ffvols@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:ffvols@firstunitarianottawa.ca).

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)

## Meet with Rev Lara!

Rev Lara would love to meet with you! For either in-person or zoom meetings, you can book a time by calling the church office at: 613-725-1066.



## Read All About It



### Town Hall to discuss Unitarian House Ownership of Their Land and Building

Unitarian House of Ottawa (UHO) has leased their land from FirstU ever since they were founded by FirstU more than 40 years ago. Recently, the UHO board approached the FirstU Board to express their interest in purchasing their land. [The Fall edition of the Spire](#) contains an article on page 4, by Board President Chuck Shields, discussing this request. As an initial step in this process, the FirstU board will be hosting a town hall on Sept 28 after the Sunday service, with presentations from both FirstU and UHO and an opportunity for the congregation to ask questions. Please join us for this important conversation.



### "Meet this Moment with Love & Justice" Journey Group

Times are changing. How are we preparing for this moment? How is our UU commitment to love and justice lived in this time? Using our UU principles for grounding and inspiration, through reflection, sharing and deep listening, our Journey Group will explore such themes as Embracing Change, Discerning Truth, and Awakening Wonder. Join us for an in-person introductory session on Tuesday, September 30 at 2:00pm. Regular meetings will be the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. Additional groups possible. For questions and registration, contact [journeygroups@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:journeygroups@firstunitarianottawa.ca).



### From the Property Team – FIRE DRILL!

On **Sunday October 5** at the end of service we will hold a fire drill in the building. There will be instructions shared in advance via eUU, and before the drill on the 5th. This will be a gentle drill and we hope everyone can take part, however if you are not comfortable participating you can observe in the pews so you will be familiar with the procedure. **This is required annually as part of the Ottawa Fire Services Safety Plan for buildings.**



### 2025 Fall Fair: Jewelry Request

We kindly ask for donations of jewelry—whether new, gently used, or even broken pieces. All types of jewelry are appreciated, as broken items can often be repaired or repurposed. The sorting and cleaning process requires time and care, so your promptness is truly valuable.

Drop-Off Instructions: Please deliver your jewelry donations directly to the main office. Your contributions are very much appreciated.



### FirstU Community Bonds Focus Groups

In May, the Congregation voted to pursue a Community Bond project to deepen our investment in our affordable housing project. The FirstU Bond team, led by Lisa Sharp and Brent Nicolle, is ready to present the proposed bond options (not yet ready for sale). **If you might be a potential investor, or are interested in knowing more about our plans, we'd like your feedback!** Please come hear one of our presentations and fill in a survey afterward:

- Tuesday, September 16th at 7:00pm, in-person in Fellowship Hall
- Sunday, September 21st at 12 noon, in-person in the NOW Room

Please RSVP by emailing [invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca) and we will send you some information to review before the meeting.



### Review Your Bookings for the New Church Season

As we begin a new season, please take a moment to check the [First Unitarian Ottawa calendar](#) to confirm that your rooms and Zoom are still listed. Bookings can expire over time, as do zoom links, so it's important to verify that they're up to date. Need to make updates or submit new requests? Reach out to Jen at:

[omr@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:omr@firstunitarianottawa.ca).



### Recurring Event Topics and Updates

- [Visit our Make Friends Page](#) for a list of our recurring events plus related zoom links
- **September 14 - After-Service Discussions** resume every other Sunday, **in the Lounge**; AND **Mia's Indian Cuisine** returns with hot food for sale **during Hospitality Hour**
- **September 15 - FirstU Trivia** returns on the third Sunday of every month, at **7:00pm on Zoom**
- **September 17 - Wednesday Evening Mindfulness Meditation** resumes online, every Wednesday.
- **September 21 - The Mental Health Support and Action Group** meets on the third Sunday of every month, at noon, in Room 6 and Online.
- **September 25 - Biweekly Virtual Discussion Group** meets on every other Thursday at **1:30pm, on Zoom**. This session's topic is "**The Future**"
- **September 25 - Thursday Evening Reading for Growth** meets on the Fourth Thursday of the month, at **7:00pm on Zoom**. [Contact Ken](#) for the zoom link. [Click HERE for a list of this year's books!](#)
- **September 26 - Friday Afternoon Reading for Growth** meets on the last Friday (often the 4th, sometimes the 5th) of the month, at **1:30pm, on Zoom**. This month's book is *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – And Why Things Are Better Than You Think* by Hans Rosling. [Contact Clea](#) for the link.
- **NEW! October 1 - Drop-In Euchre** meet on the first Wednesday of every month, at **7:00pm in Room 3**. Everyone from novices to experts are welcome. [Contact Andrew](#) for more information.
- **October 3 - Virtual Bridge**. They meet online on the first Friday of the month at 7:00pm. For details, contact [bridgehost@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:bridgehost@firstunitarianottawa.ca).

## Upcoming Events

### FirstU Community Bonds Focus Groups - See Dates and Times Below

In May, the Congregation voted to pursue a Community Bond project to deepen our investment in our affordable housing project. The FirstU Bond team, led by Lisa Sharp and Brent Nicolle, is ready to present the proposed bond options (not yet ready for sale). If you might be a potential investor, we'd like your feedback! Please come hear one of our presentations and fill in a survey afterward:



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Please RSVP by emailing [invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:invest@firstunitarianottawa.ca) and we will send you some information to review before the meeting.

### Women's Inclusive Pagan Circle: Autumn Equinox / Mabon Ritual

#### Wednesday, September 24 - 7:00pm - Fellowship Hall - \$5 Suggested

Join us as we honour the Autumn Equinox, AKA Mabon, with introspection and gratitude, in a ritual dedicated to Demeter and Persephone. Bring finger foods to share after the ritual and anything seasonal you'd like to include on our altar. We gather at 7:00pm and start our rituals around 7:30pm, typically in Fellowship Hall. Participation is by donation (\$5 suggested).



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

**Town Hall: Unitarian House Land/Building Ownership - Sunday, September 28 - 12:15pm**

**Worship Hall and Online**

The FirstU board will be hosting a town hall on Sept 28 after the Sunday service, with presentations from both FirstU and Unitarian House, and an opportunity for the congregation to ask questions about UH's request for ownership of their land and building (See: Fall Spire, page 4, for details). Please join us for this important conversation. [The Livestream will be on our YouTube Chanel.](#)




**"Meet this Moment with Love & Justice" Journey Group Intro Session - Tuesday, September 30 - 2:00pm**

How is our UU commitment to love and justice lived in this time? Using our UU principles for grounding and inspiration, through reflection, sharing and deep listening, our Journey Group will explore such themes as Embracing Change, Discerning Truth, and Awakening Wonder. Following this introductory session, regular meetings will be the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month.




## Unitarian Universalist nUUs

**CUC - Reclaiming Education - Wednesday, September 17 - 7:00pm - Online**

 In the wake of the residential school legacy, Watsenniiostha Nelson, Director of Education, Kaneshatà:ke, is working to center Indigenous voices and faces in the classroom, confront the roots of absenteeism, and create spaces where young people can thrive in their full identity. She will share her vision for transforming education from a tool of assimilation into a pathway of reclamation and empowerment. [Details and Registration HERE.](#)

**CUC - Dismantling Barriers: Engaging with Conciliation - Thursday, September 25 - 7:00pm**

 Join the Dismantling Barriers and Justice and Equity team in an exploration of Land Back as a faith practice and some of its intersections with barriers to full inclusion. [Details and registration HERE.](#)

## News from Our Friends

**High Tea with Bethany Hope - Saturday, September 20 - 1:00pm - 820 Woodroffe Ave**

The Bethany Hope Centre (their Executive Director was our guest-speaker on June 22) invites you to attend a fall High Tea! Enjoy desserts, savoury tidbits, and live music, bid in the silent auction, and raise funds for Bethany Hope Centre at the same time. Hats and fascinators encouraged! [Tickets HERE.](#)



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