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Deadline for next Spire
submissions:
April 15, 2017



In Memoriam

Edgar (Ed) Funke, husband of Dorothy - July 23, 2016

Geoffrey Dunkley, son of the late Anna Dunkley - October 18, 2016

Marilyn (Lynn) Erskine - died December 26, 2016

Joan Kabayama - died January 19, 2017

Muriel Helaine Whelan - died February 6, 2017

Jack Wright, husband of Jan Glyde- died February 12, 2017

Caring Contacts

March

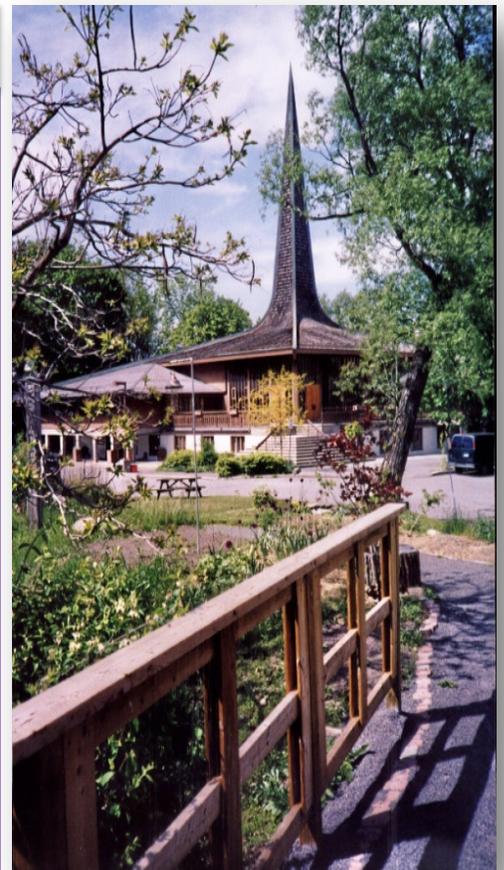
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President's Corner

~Maggie Sharp

We recently held a congregational town hall on governance, part of a somewhat overdue conversation about how we organize ourselves to accomplish our mission as a congregation to:

“kindle the light within and inspire courage to nurture the web of life and to create a just and compassionate world.”

First Unitarian Ottawa moved to policy-based governance in 2012, at the same time as we updated our bylaws. A lot of work went into this organizational shift, including the creation of a governance manual, which was recently updated and posted on our website at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/fucoogovernance>

However, I don't think there have been enough conversations since then about how to make policy-based governance work for us. And the thinking by the governance gurus, like Daniel Hotchkiss, continues to evolve.

The townhall on Sunday, February 12 was hosted by the Governance Committee, consisting of myself, Maury Prevost, Guy Belleperche, and Marlene Kohler, as well as Eva Berringer (who didn't let not being an official member of the Committee, stop her from being a tremendous help!).

We organized the session in response to feedback we've been getting that people have concerns about policy-based governance and how it works (or doesn't work) in our congregation. Some of the issues I've been hearing include:

- A persistent concern about not knowing who does what
- A strong desire to be consulted and involved in decisions
- Concerns that staff and the Board are not

adequately taking congregants' perspectives into account when making decisions

- Concerns that congregants routinely question staff members' authority to make decisions
- A tendency to escalate issues large and small to the president and/or the minister
- A sense that our congregation is not big enough to use policy governance
- A feeling that policy governance is too “corporate” for our congregation

To help explain policy-based governance, Eva and Guy did a presentation outlining key concepts, including how it helps the Board to focus on leadership rather than micro-managing, and empowers staff and volunteers to get on with the “doing” of ministry. Then Maury led a very productive Q&A session, while Marlene and Guy took copious notes.

The Governance Committee will be going over what we heard, and figuring out next steps. We will share these ideas with the congregation by email and on our website, along with the presentation and a summary of the town hall. I'm sure many of those in attendance are also continuing to mull things over and may have further ideas. As I said at the meeting, the Board has booked more opportunities for these kinds of discussions: the next two are on Sundays March 12 and April 9.

In the meantime, I encourage you to check out Governance and Ministry (2nd edition) by Dan Hotchkiss from the library or on your favourite e-reader.

~Maggie Sharp

In the Interim

~Dr. Paula Gable



Covenant: At the Heart of Unitarian Universalism

Since a number of people expressed interest in reviewing the “high points” of a recent sermon, I am including them below.

I thank the Rev. Linda Thomson of the Canadian Unitarian Council for providing inspiration on this topic.

What is the glue that holds our congregation together and what holds us in right relationship with the larger UU movement? In the absence of a creed, a statement of belief, we are sometimes a bit adrift, struggling to define ourselves. Some of our answers have not helped us with our goal of building strong, healthy communities. But I believe there are things we can do to help us to understand who we are.

Rev. Frederic Muir said it well when he wrote:

“Human beings, individually and collectively, become human by making commitments, by making promises. The human being as such, as Martin Buber says, is the promise-making, promise-keeping, promise-breaking, promise-renewing creature. The human being is the promise-maker, the commitment maker.”

Uniting in the common bonds of relationship rather than in obedience to a religious dogma is a distinguishing feature of Unitarianism. But theological diversity and the absence of creed do not mean “anything goes”. Our Fourth Principle speaks to responsible theological inquiry: *“We affirm and promote the free and responsible search for truth and meaning.”* Yet some interpret theological free thinking and spiritual seeking as acceptance, tolerance, or ignorance of behaviour that can undermine the well-being of our institutions. While we can take pride in the theological differences that unite us,

these differences aren’t always the best foundation for building a strong institution. There must be something more.

I and others believe the something more, the glue for our communities, is covenant. This desire to organize relationally is in our DNA. Rev. Alice Blair Wesley explored how covenant is a long-standing part of our tradition. She writes about how early Unitarian and Universalist congregations in New England organized as free churches. Members had come to North America looking for a place to freely practice their religion without government or ecclesiastic authority. They longed to create congregations in which members were loyal, before all else, to the spirit of love. And in those congregations the covenantal organizational pattern was a clear element of their understanding. It wasn’t a creed that held them together and informed their choices; rather their covenant that helped them function.

These spiritual ancestors understood that their covenant—the promises they made to one another—was an expression of their theology. The overarching theological understanding was that the spirit of love could and must be at the heart of what they did.



In the Interim cont...

What does that mean to us now? Here is Rev. Linda Thomson's stab at it:

"What you may or may not believe about the nature of God, or redemption, or any of the other traditional theological questions, is secondary to the high level theological aspiration we share – we're trying to be loyal to the spirit of love."

Now, it takes an unusual person to say that they don't want to be loyal to the spirit of love, so this should be easy right? Well... not so much, especially when people don't agree on key issues. It seems that loyalty to the spirit of love isn't quite enough to keep us out of trouble. In addition to an abiding spirit of love, we need to have clear, well-communicated expectations of behaviour in our congregations.

Covenant of Right Relationships

In short, we need a covenant of right relationships. After all, "the spirit of love" is a rather nebulous concept. Without a clear understanding of what that looks like, we are setting people up for disappointment and dismay when they "step in it" and didn't know there was anything to step in. Research has shown that writing down clear expectations of behaviour is essential if we are to avoid or limit hurt feelings that arise when one feels insulted or dismissed with an "Oh, come on, that's just the way we do things around here" explanation.

By making promises to one another about how we want to gather together in community, we agree that we want to spare one another the embarrassment of a misstep. In this way, we agree how we will be loyal to the spirit of love. This work of codifying right relationship takes a bit of maturity, because it demands loyalty to something greater than our own preferences. To be effective, it requires thinking about our congregation as bigger than any one individual or group, as more important than the desires of an individual or group.

And it does take a certain amount of emotional

and spiritual maturity to accept that things within a congregation won't always go the way I might personally prefer them to go. It also means that my needs will not always be met. Instead, I must put the needs of the organization above my individual needs. To fulfill our commitment to building a transformative and loving community, we must focus on a loyalty that goes beyond personal preferences and comforts. We must grow into the demanding mandate to serve the spirit of love and the greater good.

When we do this, we are freed to work toward realizing the mission and vision of the congregation as a whole. Of course, if my needs aren't met at least some of the time, I'll depart feeling tired, burned out, betrayed, angry and disappointed. That's not good for anyone. What is helpful is to find the proper balance between honoring the needs of me and the needs of we. To be a healthy congregation, we must transcend the constant need to satisfy the "me" so that we can also satisfy the needs of the community as a whole.

First Unitarian's Board of Directors has identified strengthening our covenanting process as a strategic activity for the coming months and years. This requires us to consider the essential elements of a covenant and to eventually put them down on paper and share them widely.

I suggest that, rather than just reading them, we make it an important part of our spiritual practice to embody them and use them as a guide for creating a Beloved Community based on shared values, understandings and objectives. I'm curious to hear your thoughts and see how this fascinating process unfolds.

In faith, with sincere gratitude for all your efforts to build Beloved Community.

~Paula

**BUILDING
BeLOVED
CoMMuNiTy**

Religious Exploration (RE)

~ Liz Roper



Our Religious Exploration Vision Weekend

At the Vision Weekend on January 20 and 21, over 40 people attended the session on the Saturday morning, and more than 15 people attended the key leaders' sessions on the Friday night and Saturday afternoon.

The vision created for First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa for religious exploration was:

“We strive to be a welcoming and diverse multi-generational Unitarian Universalist community that fosters the spiritual development of all ages.”

The values and wishes of our congregation were used to create this vision and will be used to create our mission, goals and objectives.

Our top priorities were overwhelmingly:

- Multigenerational connections
- Music

Closely followed by:

- Experiential/active learning
- Using our space differently
- Having program beyond a Sunday
- Feelings of revitalization, happiness, and satisfaction

Our top core values and wishes for the RE program were:

- Multigenerational connections
- Welcoming and diverse safe space
- Nurturing our UU values in our children and youth
- Exploring Spirituality
- Vibrant youth programming
- Growth

It was clear that, in terms of a Religious Exploration program, the congregation wants a holistic approach to spiritual development. This is something the whole congregation will work together to provide and the children's religious exploration program is just one piece of the puzzle.

In terms of a philosophy of Religious Education, it is a model reflected in the work of religious educators Sophia Lyon Fahs, Angus Maclean and Maria Harris, for whom “the congregation is the curriculum”.

Everything we do in our congregational building with our fellow congregants is religious exploration. We are continually learning together what it means to be Unitarian Universalists in community together.

We will be working over the next few months to restructure our children's RE program to reflect the vision, values and goals that have come to light, and to engage the entire congregation in the spiritual development of our children.

~Liz Roper



RE scavenger hunt with Julia (left), Kylan and Seth

CONGREGATIONAL NIGHT



**TUESDAY
NIGHTS!**



KICKOFF

**21ST MARCH
SONG CIRCLE**



**SHARED
DINNER**
5.30-6.30PM
PROGRAMS
6.30PM



**First Unitarian
Congregation of Ottawa**

**CHILDCARE
AVAILABLE**

WWW.FIRSTUNITARIANOTTAWA.CA/NIGHT

**FOOD • SOCIAL
JUSTICE • SINGING
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES
• AND MORE**

Check out our schedule:
**WEBSITE
E-UU
BULLETIN
BOARDS**

Child Care Providers needed for
Congregational Nights



We are looking for child care providers from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Tuesday evenings, starting March 21st.

The children range in age from 0 to 12 years of age.

For more details contact Marie Gabe:
lla@firstunitarianottawa.ca

Celebrating 50 Years on Cleary Avenue!

In 2017, First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa will mark the 50th anniversary of our award-winning building on Cleary Avenue. We have many accomplishments to celebrate. Everyone is invited to join the festivities, so mark your calendars now and plan to attend these special events!

A Steinway Celebration

March 4 - 7:30 p.m., Worship Hall
Open to the public, this professional-level concert will include emerging pianists in the area.

50th Anniversary Celebratory Dinner

April 22 - 5:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Plan to reunite with past and current friends as we gather together for this multi-generational potluck dinner, where you will have a chance to

reconnect with some special guests. You won't want to miss it!

Multi-sensory 50th Anniversary Service

April 23 - 10:30 a.m., Worship Hall

Greatest Hits: A Choir Concert Celebrating 50 Years at Cleary

May 6 - 7:30 p.m., Worship Hall

Open House: An Afternoon Celebrating 50 Years at Cleary

June 11 - 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Members and guests are invited to drop in for displays, tours, activities, and refreshments. The focus is on significant contributions the congregation has made over the last 50 years.

~ Kathy Yach

Time and Talent Auction

The last day of the annual “T&T” Auction will be on Sunday, April 23. This will be conducted at the church, as always, after the church service.

A slight difference this year will be that pre-bidding may be done online at any time between March 21 and April 21. We are hoping that this will:

- give our congregation more exposure in the larger community
- encourage more donations from outside businesses and organizations
- encourage more enthusiastic bidding, and
- prompt more people to make a point of attending church on April 23

Please think about what you might donate to support this important fundraiser for our congregation. For ideas, please see last year’s catalogue by clicking on this link, tinyurl.com/timetalent17, or by typing it into the address box of your browser.

At this link, you will also find a document on how to access this year’s online auction. As donations are received, they will be entered so that you can peruse them at leisure and plan which items will get your bids. Have a look now to see how it will work.



To make a donation, please send an email to timetalentfirst@gmail.com. Simply say, “same as last year”, or if new, describe the donation. Remember to include your name if it’s not obvious from the email address.

If you know of any businesses or organizations that might be willing to donate to our auction, please send the suggestion(s) to the same email address as for your own donation.

And even if you aren’t making a donation or suggestion, sending us an email to confirm your address and phone number will save you the trouble of ever having to write them on the bidding sheets in the church on April 23.

The annual Time and Talent Auction generates a significant amount of money for the operation of our congregation. Please help out with a donation of your time and talents and by bidding on some of the many items listed.

~ Bob Armstrong



Doing More by Doing Less

Condensed version of a January 22, 2017 sermon by Martin Settle, USC Canada

What inspires people to act to make a better world?

A story I heard may shed light on this question. Sheryl-Elaine Brazeau, as personal secretary for Lotta Hitschmanova, related Lotta's flight ahead of the advancing Nazis. Two key moments stood out: in 1939, as Lotta fled Brussels, she saw children left orphaned and homeless by bombing, and in early 1940, she fainted from hunger and woke in an American Unitarian Service Committee (USC) clinic. These two experiences motivated Lotta to seek out this congregation when she arrived in Canada, and to found the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada to help war orphans.

I'm going to assume that many of us share Lotta's desire to help. I am always struck by the alignment between the USC's values and Unitarian Universalism's principles. Principles 1, 2, and 7, are also the motivating principles for USC Canada. We share a belief in:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

These principles inform a basic motivation to create a better world – and there is a world of

work to do! Once you set out, new needs present themselves. Our work branched out over the 60 years we worked in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Central America, offering humanitarian assistance, sanitation, health services, education, and agricultural support. The needs were endless, and USC Canada responded wherever, however, and whenever we could.

Good things happened, and the world was made better. But a funny thing also happened. Somewhere we lost some of our focus, even our passion.

The thing about trying to do everything is you can never do or be enough. It becomes hard to articulate why you do anything, when it comes at the expense of other necessary things. Acting for change no longer comes from motivation, but obligation.

In 2007 USC Canada decided to stop trying to be everything, for many reasons, but ultimately it came down to this: Where do our skills, competencies and resources best align with the needs we perceive? What change can we make to have the most impact?

For USC Canada, the choice was clear; our most impactful work was our efforts to maintain and increase agricultural biodiversity. We made the decision to wind down everything except our Seeds of Survival program. We decided to accept being small. Small, and highly focused.

In the last 12 years USC Canada has invested over \$35,000,000 in seed preservation and breeding. We are a leading global player in supporting farmer varieties and landrace seeds as an alternative to corporate seed giants. Our participation in global decision-making bodies, like the Committee for World Food Security, is respected by governments and civil society organizations. The tools we have developed are shared beyond the programs we fund.

Impact in the field has been enhanced. USC Canada partners have bred and registered new varieties of seeds, tested new strains and crops, and increased dietary diversity. Identifying best practices for maintaining diversity has led to widespread adoption of agro-ecological methods, while reducing water consumption and dependence on inputs, and improving soil fertility.

Focusing our work has allowed us to share learnings on a global level. Farmer exchanges between countries increase enthusiasm and adoption of best practices for seed breeding and production. Achievements in one region are celebrated and replicated in others.

In choosing to do less, we have ended up doing more. Our impact is broader and deeper than when we tried to do everything. Doing less always remains a challenge. Everywhere we turn there is injustice and inequity.

Doing More by Doing Less cont...

The desire to jump in and volunteer is always present. Limiting ourselves to our niche seems to go against that activist passion.

The challenging truth is that USC Canada can't fix the world. We can't fix it by doing seed work, and we certainly can't fix it by trying to do everything. But we don't need to, because we aren't alone in striving to make the world better. You are all here, with that same motivation. People around the world are marching with the same motivation. Billions more see them and are inspired in turn.

We don't need to fix the world alone. None of us can or should do everything, but we all can and should do something, and whatever that is, we should do it well. I've always spoken of it as working for global justice. We take on our limited part in the absolute faith and trust that our allies will also step up to do their part.

USC Canada has always worked through partnership networks. In the world of overseas charitable activity, partnerships often mean structured relationships and contacts. But we also see our partnerships as far broader. We are in partnership with all who share the goal of global justice.

When we add all these billions of motivated people together, changing the world is a given. But we first need embrace our connectedness and let go of the responsibility to do it all alone. Accept that you should do less. It will be enough. In fact, it will be more than enough.

~ Martin Settle

Denominational Affairs Team

Our congregation is a member of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). One of the tasks of the Denominational Affairs Team (DAT) is proposing who will represent our congregation as voting delegates at the CUC's Annual General Meeting. The Board will approve this year's slate of seven delegates and a few alternates at its March 15 meeting.

This year's CUC AGM will take place on Saturday, May 13, primarily by online participation, as there is no associated national conference in 2017. The big decision to be made at this year's AGM is a possible change to the method of calculating how congregations financially support the CUC. When more information is available, the DAT will share it for review and comment, most likely in April.

As a result of a CUC AGM decision a few years ago, national conferences now take place every second year, with the next one planned for May 18-20, 2018, in Hamilton, Ontario. However, there will be youth and young adult conferences in Edmonton, May 19 to 22, 2017. You can find more information on the CUC website.

On Sunday, March 26, we will

have our annual "Sharing Our Faith" service in support of the Unitarian Universalist movement in Canada. Rev. Frances Deverell will present on this year's theme of love and justice. The service will include a special collection (offering) for the Sharing Our Faith fund, which provides grants to Canadian congregations for various projects and initiatives. For more information on Sharing Our Faith, see <http://cuc.ca/giving-and-funding/sharing-our-faith>.

The 2017 intergenerational Spring Seminar at the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) will be on the theme of Arm in Arm: Interfaith Action to Disarm Our Planet, Thursday to Saturday, April 6 to 8, in New York City. Subjects include nuclear disarmament, gun control, unmanned drones and radicalized violence.

For more information, go to: <http://www.uua.org/international/events/seminar>. Registration is open now.

For more information on any of these subjects, you can send an email to dat@firstunitarianottawa.ca, or speak to me in person.

~Maury Prevost, Chair,
Denominational Affairs Team



Meet a Member: Eric Inch



The third in a series of short biographies of congregation members, a project initiated by Isabel Burrows.

Born in 1919 in New Jerusalem, a New Brunswick farming community, Eric Inch left school as soon as he legally could to work on the family farm, until he went to wireless school in Saint John. From there, he joined the Canadian Air Force in 1940, working as a wireless operator. After the war, and a crash course in sciences and math (since he hadn't graduated from high school), he attended University of New Brunswick, graduating as an electrical engineer.

In 1947, he married Doris McCormack, and with one child they moved to Ottawa, where Eric worked for National Defence on electronic standards, and then for the Royal Canadian Navy as an electronics (radio and radar) instructor, living in naval quarters south of Ottawa.

In 1965, he joined Algonquin College where he taught, chaired and was Acting Dean until his retirement in 1979.

It was while in the Air Force that Eric began having some misgivings about Christianity: Back to Methuselah, by George Bernard Shaw, was influential, and he's proud that he imparted his questioning to the three children he and Doris had. An article in Macleans magazine introduced him to Unitarianism, and he thought its Sunday school would reinforce the critical approach he was encouraging his children to take. Although their attendance was short-lived, his own active involvement with the church lasted from the mid-1950s until he "sort of retired" in 1995-96 after running the Fall Fair that year. Doris died in 1998.

At the Elgin Street church, ministers Howard Box and David Pohl impressed him, and his church involvement ranged from teaching Sunday school to helping demolish a neighbouring house the church had bought in order to expand its space. At Cleary Avenue, he has been involved in a variety of ways, including helping initiate the church's newspaper, then called The Ottawa Unitarian, and being a contributor and editor, as well as helping produce it. He also served as Secretary of the Board and worked on and ran the Fall Fair.

Since 2005, he has lived in Unitarian House, which he likes. He enjoys audio books and TV, especially the news, baseball and hockey. Deteriorating vision and balance/mobility make attending the church less appealing. He also questions the concept of a Unitarian faith, referring me to a quotation attributed to Mark Twain: "Faith is when you believe something you know is not true". Rather, with his evidence-seeking position, Eric told me he "believes, but tentatively".

~Ann Denis



Unitarian Church on Elgin St.



Thank you Merci Meegwitch

~ compiled by Alastaire Henderson

Here are some people and activities to appreciate, recognize, and celebrate:

- ♥ A big thank you to **Jan Andrews** for doing such beautiful formatting for the Winter/Spring Edition of the Lifespan Learning Guide and to **Jen Brennan** for making the gorgeous cover.
- ♥ Thanks to **Tony Turner, Ann Downey and Ann Ludlou** for their lovely performances at the “*Evening with Tony Turner*” concert to celebrate our 50th Anniversary.
- ♥ Much appreciation to **Marg Lee, Margot Clarke, Brian Cowan, Margaret Linton and David Hudson, Frances Deverell, Marlene Kohler and Francis Murphy** for all your help with the Tony Turner evening.
- ♥ Participants in the Truth, Healing and Reconciliation study session on January 21 would like to thank **Elder Thomas Louttit and his helper Paul** very much for their moving presentation, which included Elder Louttit’s account of his own experience in the residential school system.
- ♥ Many thanks to **Marlene Campbell and Jane Lindsay** for the delicious baked goods they made for the “*Introducing Ourselves*” class on Feb. 5. And special thanks to **Jane** for organizing the event, which was very successful with 13 newcomers in attendance.

You can submit items by sending an email to Alastaire at hendersalas@gmail.com or by calling 613-562-2253 at least 48 hours before the Parkway Spire deadline.

GoGo Grannies African Party for Stephen Lewis Foundation

In February, the Unitarian GoGos’ fundraiser for the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign raised more than \$6,150 in donations and pledges. These funds go to the Foundation’s programs, which assist grandmothers in Africa raising children orphaned by the AIDS-related deaths of their parents.

Mango Upstart, a talented musical group specializing in Latin beats, and a medley of African songs by members of the congregation’s Three Rivers Singers entertained the guests. Members of the GoGos prepared a variety of snack and finger foods for the record turnout for the event’s 10th anniversary.

The silent auction of donated goods and services contributed greatly to the evening’s proceeds. We thank the donors and guests for their generosity in supporting the Foundation, and all the volunteers who made the evening possible.

~Diane Labrosse



GoGo Grannies, Photo: Joe Connor

What's going on with the Transition Team

The role of the Transition Team is to provide the Interim Minister with insight into congregational culture and history; to provide organizational and facilitative help; and to help strategize how to engage the congregation and congregational leadership in accomplishing the developmental tasks of interim ministry.

According to the Unitarian Universalist Association, these tasks for the congregation include:

- Claiming and honouring its past and engaging and honouring its griefs and conflicts
- Recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges
- Clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition
- Making appropriate use of regional, CUC, UUA, and other outside resources
- Proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

In addition, the Board established the following areas of focus during the interim period:

- Our governance and organizational model, including staff supervision
- Right relations, our congregational covenant, and conflict resolution process
- Bridging the "upstairs, downstairs" divide (between children, youth, their parents and the rest of the congregation)
- Hospitality, especially welcoming and integrating new people
- Expectations of membership, including engaging and supporting volunteers

The Board also selected areas of momentum that should not lose steam during the interim time:

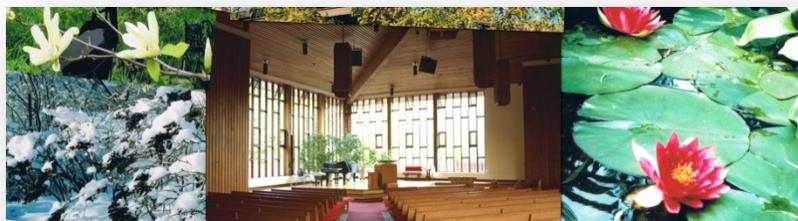
- Establishing theme-based ministry, including Discovery Circles (small groups)
- New Communications & Outreach Team (launched spring 2016)
- Year-round, holistic financial stewardship
- Active involvement of program directors (Lifespan Learning and Music) and lay Worship Associates in helping to plan and deliver Sunday worship services.

The Transition Team has both a planning and a monitoring role. For example, in our planning role, we took on the planning of the "Building Our Community" workshop facilitated by Rev. Linda Thomson last October, which began the interim work. In our monitoring role, along with Rev. Paula and the Board, we recently did an evaluation of where the congregation was at, after the first six months of the interim period.

The Transition Team also acts as an ear to the congregation, as an interface between the congregation and the Interim Minister. We are happy to hear from you at any time. At the request of the Board, we recently completed a "Getting the Pulse of the Congregation" exercise to gauge congregational feeling about whether it would be more beneficial in reaching our interim goals to extend Rev. Paula's mandate for a second year, or to find a different Interim Minister with a different skill set.

We are your Transition Team!
Please keep talking to us!

*~ Margaret Linton (Chair),
Donna Bowen-Willer, Ken
Gibson, John Scott-Thomas,
Joan Turner*



Social Responsibility Council

Challenged by Mental Health Issues for Yourself or a Loved One?

The Mental Health Working Group (MHWG) meets monthly at First Unitarian after Sunday services from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. People living with mental illness and/or their caregivers are invited to join us to share their experiences, offer and receive mutual support and possibly share ideas to improve their quality of life. Friends and family of congregants are also very welcome.

The group may decide on special topics for discussion, such as financial planning, mental health laws in Ontario, and negotiating the mental health system. At the end of each session, core MHWG members will give some attention to working group issues. Everyone attending is welcome to remain should they wish to.

For information, contact:
Linda Goonewardene
cupotea13@rogers.com
613-702-1595, or
Paul McGinnis
paulmcginnis9@gmail.com
613-829-7156

Paid childcare is available; please contact us for arrangements. Schedule of monthly Sunday meetings in the Lounge: March 26, April 23, May 28, June 25.

~Paul McGinnis, Chair

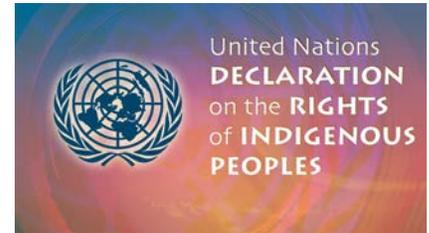
Congregational Focus on Indigenous Issues

The Congregation chose Aboriginal (Indigenous) Issues as the Social Responsibility focus for the two-year period, 2015-2017. Social Responsibility working groups orient their work to Aboriginal issues when that is suitable within their projects, and the Aboriginal Issues Coordinating Group co-ordinates or organizes other aspects of internal and public education, service projects, advocacy, and fundraising.

A team of trained facilitators has presented the first two sessions of the Canadian Unitarian Council's Truth, Healing and Reconciliation reflection program for adults, with significant congregational participation. The first, on Understanding Culture, was very revealing. In the second session, an elder spoke of his residential school experience, which moved us deeply. The remaining sessions will be on Saturday afternoons, March 18 and April 15.

The Global Justice Working Group presented a film series last spring with engaging discussions with indigenous speakers or commentators. These were well attended, including by non-congregants. It is now offering a three-part speaker and discussion series on "Truth and Reconciliation: What Should the Future Look Like?" The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

(TRC) has a clear recommendation for future action: Adopt the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for future action.



What does the UN Declaration say? What actions should be taken? Three Tuesday evenings at 7-9 p.m., explore these questions:

- **February 14:** Discrimination, Culture, Language
- **February 28:** Self-Governance
- **April 4:** Land and Resources with Lead speaker: Will David, lawyer from Akwesasne

Since spring 2015, the Poverty Awareness Working Group has encouraged donations for, and volunteer participation at, Centre 510, the drop-in for homeless and marginally housed indigenous people in Ottawa. Volunteers serve meals, do dishes and clean-up, and maintain a friendly rapport with staff and clients. Other congregational volunteers support our long-standing shelter project, which collects and delivers furniture and household goods to women moving on from the

Social Responsibility Council cont...

shelter operated by Minwaashin Aboriginal Women's Support Centre.



Some of us are also members of Ottawa's Right Relations Network, sharing information on learning about and taking action to address reconciliation and indigenous issues. These activities are ongoing.

Work is underway with the Interfaith Reconciliation Ottawa to encourage activities leading up to the second anniversary of the June 2, 2015 release of the TRC's Calls to Action, recognizing that the 150th anniversary of Confederation provides an important opportunity to reflect on reconciliation and progress on the Calls to Action.

*~Bill van Iterson and
Marlene Koehler*

Canada-Nepal Working Group's Nepali Gala

Preparations for the 11th Annual Nepali Gala are underway for another delightful evening on Saturday, April 29, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Proceeds support providing immediate shelter and medical, legal and psychological assistance to women and their children escaping situations of domestic abuse. Also assisted

are programs across Nepal supporting women through lifelong education and skills development; small business development, including access to microcredit; leadership and gender equality training; advocacy for women's rights; education and daycare for their children; a weaving program and cooperative; and much more – all in addition to running a shelter home in Kathmandu.

Join us once again at First Unitarian for delicious Nepali cuisine and traditional folk dancing. Hand-woven scarves, jewellery, and saris will be for sale, plus a silent auction of unique goods and services. Please book early with: ottawanepaligala@gmail.com or contact Patricia O'Regan at 613-820-4061.

~Patricia O'Regan



Unitarian GoGos Update

The Reflect, Rejoice and Rejuvenate Regional Gathering of Grandmothers, at which Stephen Lewis and Ilana Landsberg-Lewis are speaking, takes place on Friday April 28 (previously announced as March 31) at First Unitarian

Congregation of Ottawa.

To attend the mid-afternoon speech at 3 p.m. by Stephen and Ilana, contact Joan Turner at joan@joejoan.ca, or ask to be a guest of any member of Unitarian GoGos or any other Grandmother group.

We were saddened to learn of the death of long-time Unitarian GoGos member, H elaine Whelan, in early February.

~Joan Turner, Chair, Unitarian GoGos



Tulipathon - Sunday May 7, 2017

The first Sunday in May brings the annual Tulipathon, a walk among spring flowers that Unitarians have supported for the last 6 years to fundraise for the Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI). Faiths from across Ottawa work together to raise awareness and funds to build affordable housing and to provide internal subsidies for low-income tenants.

Throughout April, you will find sign-up sheets for registration and pledges plus more information at the Social Responsibility table on Sundays. Even if you cannot walk with us, we welcome a

Social Responsibility Council cont...

pledge to another congregant or friend. We welcome Religious Education parents to sign up downstairs as well. Everybody is welcome to this family-oriented event. It includes activities, refreshments and goodies at the end.

The SRC supports our congregation's efforts in a special way: for every dollar in pledges, the SRC donates a further 10%. The SRC also contributes an extra \$25 to the cause for every member of our congregation who walks in the Tulipathon. Information: Ria Heynen, r-j.heynen@bell.net, 613-828-8468.

Global Justice Working Group

Fair Trade, co-operatively produced, organic La Siembra chocolate and coffee products are for sale on Sundays March 19 and April 9, in Fellowship Hall after the service. We also have Zatoun products, including the famous Xtra virgin olive oil. Please support these sales to benefit small farmers and their communities.



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CALENDAR

March

Tuesday, March 7, 7:00 p.m.

Holtom Peace Lecture

Dr. Irvin Waller, University of Ottawa: Eliminating Violence in Our Homes and on Our Streets: an achievable peace for Canada?

Thursday, March 16, 1:30 p.m.

Unitarian GoGos

Friday, March 17, 9:30 a.m.

Social Responsibility Steering Committee

Saturday, March 18, 1:30 p.m.

Truth, Healing and Reconciliation: Connection

Thursday, March 23, 9:45 a.m.

Poverty Awareness Working Group

Sunday, March 26, 12:30 p.m.

Mental Health Working Group

Tuesday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.

Global Justice Working Group Film Night: The Pass System

April

Tuesday, April 4, 7:00 p.m.

Indigenous Issues: What Do We Do Now?

Saturday April 15, 1:30 p.m.

Truth, Healing and Reconciliation: Healing and Reconciliation

Thursday, April 20 1:30 p.m.

Unitarian GoGos

Friday, April 21, 9:30 a.m.

Social Responsibility Steering Committee

Sunday, April 23, 12:30 p.m.

Mental Health Working Group

Thursday, April 27, 9:45 a.m.

Poverty Awareness Working Group

Saturday, April 29, 5:00 p.m.

Nepali Gala

Sunday, April 30, 12:30 p.m.

Congregational Annual General Meeting



Announcements

River Parkway Children's Centre AGM

You are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the River Parkway Children's Centre Corporation, on April 6 at the River Parkway Centre, 40 Cleary, 613-729-3129

At 6 p.m.: registration, sale of memberships, light refreshments.

At 6:30 p.m.: AGM: 2016 Financial Statements and other reports for River Parkway and River Heights Children's Centres; Election of Board of Directors 2017-2018; any Other Business as may arise.

Memberships in the Corporation, @ \$5 per person, from the office weekdays or on the evening of the meeting, entitle members to a vote.

Childcare for River Parkway and River Heights children is available; reserve space in advance.

Getting Connected Brochure

The Getting Connected brochure, with its listing of groups and activities in our congregation, is back after a three-year hiatus. Although the format is the same as before, an important change is that the full latest version will always be available online. Click on this link, tinyurl.com/connected17, or type it into the address box of your browser.

Please have a look and send any changes needed to Bob Armstrong at: gettingconnected@firstunitarianottawa.ca.



UU Round Table Lunch

March

When: March 17, at 1 p.m.

Where: Mia's Restaurant, 917 Richmond Road

April - June

When: April 21, May 19, June 16, at 1 p.m.

Where: Biagio's Italian Kitchen, 1394 Richmond Road

Open to all Unitarian Universalists and guests.

Lively discussions take place among members of the group, who have diverse interests and experiences. Our meeting location changes every three months, and is held on the third Friday of each month.

Contact: Tudy McLaine, 613-745-8074 or Marjorie Daechsel, 613-596-1471, by the preceding Thursday evening to reserve a table.

Reading for Growth

Titles for the Friday group are as follows:

March 31:- *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates

April -28: *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths*, by Mariana Mazzucato

Friends of the Meditation Gardens

The Friends will be holding a Spring Clean-up of our congregational gardens on Sunday April 23 after the service. We'll meet at Brian's Reste around 12:15 p.m. to tackle some seasonal tasks with rakes, bags and secateurs. Tools are provided, but bring gardening gloves if you have them. All welcome, we'll match tasks to ability.

Contact: Alastaire, hendersalas@gmail.com, 613-562-2253.



Announcements cont...

Unitarian Seniors' Program March

Patricia Stockwell will speak about memoir writing. Bob Stevenson will lead the worship service.

When: Thursday, March 30.
Service: 1:00 p.m. Program: 1:30 p.m. Refreshments (\$3 or pay what you can): 2:30 p.m.
Where: Worship/Fellowship Hall RSVP (if you are not on the phone list): Maureen Sly at 613-728-7610, mmsly@rogers.com by Monday, March 27.

April

Rev. Paula Gable will speak about guided meditation. Alex Campbell will lead the worship service.

When: Thursday, April 27.
Service: 1:00 p.m. Program: 1:30 p.m. Refreshments (\$3 or pay what you can): 2:30 p.m.
Where: Worship/Fellowship Hall RSVP (if you are not on the phone list): Maureen Sly at 613-728-7610, mmsly@rogers.com by Monday, April 24.

Note: Earphones available in Worship and Fellowship Halls. Service and program can be recorded on a CD (cost \$5) or be available as a broadcast from our website (free), provided permission for such has been given by the speaker(s).

Glebe/Centretown/Old Ottawa South Neighbourhood Group

March

When and on what: Sunday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m.
Stephanie Woodend will talk about "Medical Geography- What can we learn from it? Mapping disease risks in order to prevent them."
Where: #5 – 405 Laurier Ave East
Contact: Marilyn or Maury Prevost at 613-231-7391, mmprevost@sympatico.ca
All are welcome. Bring a small dessert (finger food) to share.

April

When and on what: Sunday, April 23 at 7:30 pm. Ted Thiessen and Kathryn Elliot, member and treasurer respectively of the Syrian

Refugee Subgroup of the Refugee Working Group, will discuss "Reflecting on our first year of Syrian Sponsorship".

Where: 113 Sunnyside Avenue

Contact: Ann Denis at 613-730-0283,

adenis@uottawa.ca

All are welcome. Bring a small dessert (finger food) to share.

Whether you live in the neighbourhood or not, contact Ann Denis, adenis@uottawa.ca if you would like to be added to the email list and receive notices of the group's activities. The group usually meets the third Sunday of the month (unless, as is the case for March and April, there are holidays in competition on that date, or other impediments).





First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa

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