

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA



**ANNUAL REPORT
2011 - 2012**



First unitarian congregation of ottawa

First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa

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**In Memoriam
2011 - 2012**

*One came and said to the Prophet Mohammed:
"My mother has died, what shall I do for the good
of her soul?"*

*The Prophet thought of the panting heat of the
desert, and he replied: "Dig a well that the thirsty
may have water to drink."*

- Ismalic

Members and former members
who have died in the past months.

2010

Al Parsons - 3 November
Milan Egrmeir - 2 December
Dorothy Scott Hanna - 12 December

2011

John Hodgson - 8 January
Margot Carmon - 15 January
Jack Vernon Knight - 24 May
Earle MacEachern - 3 August
James (Jim) Burrows - 20 August
Katharine Smith - 9 September
Jean Williams - 29 December

2012

Frances Baldwin - 7 January
Jessie Marlene Eckstrand - 10 February
Ray Brining - 29 February
Lynne Larson - 4 March
Gordon Hatcher - 10 April
Geoffrey Leech - 17 April
Elizabeth Adamitz - 21 April
Frank Crowe - 16 May
Judy Hardiman - 27 June
John McMurrin - 7 July
Cathy Moore - 14 September



Report of the Minister

2011-2012 was a year of transition and change here at the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa.

Staff

The change was especially visible among our staff. Some people left our staff in order to retire, some to pursue other career opportunities, some because they thought they were not the right fit, some who loved working here, but felt other calls on their heartstrings. Staff changes included: a number of part time Custodians, our Bookkeeper, our Administrative Services Officer, our Publications Officer, our Director of Support Services (the position is now—Director of Operations), our Music Director and our Director of Lifespan Learning.

As one of the longest serving staff members, Sylvia Furman provided much of our institutional memory and I am grateful that she remains an active part of our congregation in her retirement.

I was saddened by the departure of Nicky Duenkel and Jane Perry. Their positions are the ones with which I work the closest. It is a testament to our congregational culture that both of these dynamic leaders remain involved in our movement—Jane as Music Director in Calgary, and Nicky, who in addition to her full time professorship at Cape Breton University, is leading a program for Religious Education leaders across Canada.

I thought Jane, Nicky and I made a great team and I had hoped we might work together for the rest of my tenure in Ottawa. As is often the case, wishes are not fulfilled, but other undreamt of possibilities arise. I am heartened by the wonderful people we have been able to attract to replace those who have left us. Our music program remained vibrant and vital under the interim direction of Sara Brooks and our new permanent director, Jacob Caines, will bring a special set of fresh skills that will enable him to add a new chapter to our tradition of musical excellence.

Commitment to our Lifespan Learning program is also a proud tradition here. We are especially fortunate to have Susan McEwen as our “once and future” Director. In a year of so many transitions Susan’s prior experience with our Congregation has been a special bonus among the many wonderful gifts she brings.

I also want to thank our (no longer new) Director of Operations, Carolyn Turner. Her position is the least public and visible (and perhaps least appreciated) among our Directors. Even as I have appreciated Susan’s prior experience here, I have also appreciated Carolyn’s fresh eyes asking why we do things the way we do them here. Sometimes I was able to provide a good answer, other times not so much. Carolyn’s moving her desk out to the main reception area has ushered in a new era of congeniality in the office.

Transitions at the Board of Directors

I am grateful that the first three years of my ministry enjoyed great continuity at the board level. I am especially grateful for Board President, Kathy Yach, agreeing to serve a rare third year term in order to see our transition into policy governance accomplished. This is something that was begun over a decade ago. It involves making the staff responsible for the day-to-day operations and empowering the board to spend its time focusing on the mission and goals of the congregation.

Kathy’s broad knowledge of Ottawa’s not for profit organizations has enabled her to connect our Congregation to persons with expert knowledge in various fields. We will reap benefits from her presidency for years to come.

The transition to policy governance involved the whole board. I also want to acknowledge that no one spent more time on this project than Scott Drennan. Scott read the articles and books, phoned people, went to small meetings to plan larger meetings, met with our lawyer, read more articles and more books. As our new Treasurer, Scott will now be working to implement the envisioned changes.

I am also looking forward to the new leadership of Kim Elmer and her commitment to moving forward in a number of areas.





Finances

Now that we have accomplished the transition to policy governance I sense a renewed commitment from the board to take on the thorny issue of deficit spending. While I do not believe that our Congregation is facing any immediate financial crises, neither do I believe that ongoing deficit spending is healthy for us. I welcome the opportunity to work with the board in seeing what can be done.

Future Leadership

Having a ministerial intern is one of the best investments for the future in our faith. Joining with the Unitarian Universalist (Eastern) Fellowship of Ottawa to share the responsibilities and benefits of an internship program has made it more affordable and gives us a living link to our sister congregation. All involved considered our first year of a shared internship successful—including our intern, Jennifer Channin. We are looking forward to our second year of this program with Kye Flannery.

I am also pleased to report that last year one of our former interns, Debra Faulk, assumed the position of minister to the Unitarian Congregation in Calgary. This year one of our former worship associates, Rod Solano-Quesnel, finished his third year of theological studies in Montreal. He will begin his internship next fall in Toronto with the Reverend Shawn Newton. Another of our worship associates, Sean Barron has also elected to pursue the ministry, and with encouragement from both me and our departing intern, Jennifer Channin, will begin studies at Harvard Divinity School this fall.

Worship

Last year we began holding services in the afternoon. We obtained a grant from the Canadian Unitarian Council to help with honorariums for guest musicians, which greatly enhanced the services. Attendance ranged from 12 to 150 with 15 to 30 being the norm. We will continue to offer an afternoon service September through June this coming year. We are changing the starting time from 5:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in order to accommodate residents of Unitarian House who have 5:00 p.m. as their dinnertime.

While it is good to have some familiar elements in every worship service—we also believe that revelation is not sealed and new occasions teach new duties. Hence we also look to change elements in our service from time to time. Starting in September we will use “Spirit of Life – Source de vie” as our sung benediction. It will follow a spoken benediction that will change each Sunday. Many Unitarian Universalist congregations currently use this song in their weekly services and the Montreal Congregation is promoting the use of the French translation with the aim of making it familiar to all Canadian Unitarians.

While we strive to make every service memorable—inevitably there are some that stand out. In the spring of 2011 it was “The Refuge of Three Rivers” where we told the story of Ottawa employing hymns, stories and giant puppets. In the spring of 2012 it was the contrasting services presented on April 1, which was both April Fools Day and Palm Sunday.





Our morning service celebrated foolery—with Barry Read and Susan McEwen enacting two opposite ancient clown spirits. Barry Read played Professor St. John Cholmondeley Smyth, the white faced clown, the God Apollo, the need for order, the mind and its awareness of death. Susan McEwen played the duck, the red nosed clown, the God Pan, the chaos of creativity, the body and its needs. I was heartened by the number of people who spoke to me after the service who said, not just that they laughed, but that it was food for the soul.

The afternoon service celebrated Palm Sunday with a presentation of Pergolasi's musical masterpiece, *Stabat Mater*. The music recalls the pain of Mary as she endures the death of her son. It also evokes the spirit of the ancient mother Goddess. I gave a brief homily at the beginning of the service in which I quoted T.S. Eliot:

*Blessed sister, holy mother,
spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden,
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood.
Teach us to care and not to care.
Teach us to sit still.*

Onward,

Rev. John N. Marsh, Minister





President's Report

The past year has been very busy and exciting. Here is what we have achieved:



- On November 12, 2011 we held our Fall Fair. We raised \$ 46, 868.51 after all the expenses were paid. We had budgeted \$45,000 in our annual budget, so we exceed our budget by \$1,868.51. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Margaret Linton for taking the lead and her team in making it another success.
- The Board continued to develop the By-Laws and Board Policies which were passed this summer. I would like to thank Scott Drennan, Edwin Willer, Kim Elmer, Alastaire Henderson and Louise Lefort for all their hard work in making this possible.
- The Board approved funds to provide our staff with a person (from our accountant's office) to assist in improving our accounting system. Over the past year our Treasurer, Eleonore Benesch, along with Paul Ward and the Finance Committee (under the leadership of Barry Read) have worked very hard with the staff to improve our accounting system as well as the process in which reports are made to the Congregation. Thanks to all of you. I know it has not been an easy process.
- The implementation of last year's AGM Motion for meetings to "discuss the review and further development of a Strategic Campus Plan." This has included the Campus Planning Committee workshops. It should be noted that it was not the purpose of these workshops to choose any particular development project for the Congregation's property but rather consider the Campus Plan and to determine the selection criteria for potential projects. A report will be prepared by the Campus Planning Committee and presented to the Board. I would like to thank the members of the Campus Planning Committee under the leadership of Charles Lanktree and also add a special thank you to Jane Lindsay for facilitating these workshops.
- The Board reviewed their Multi- Year Strategic Plan (2011-2013) to ensure that we are achieving our "Ends."
- This past year we were fortunate to have as an Interim Minister, Jennifer Channin. We enjoyed having her input at all the Board meetings.
- The Personnel Committee, under the leadership of the Chair Chuck Shields, finalized and presented to the Board for their approval the "Employee Handbook" and the "Sexual Harassment Policy."
- The Board also completed a positive evaluation of Rev. John Marsh as part of this year's evaluation process. Doug Jordon did it for us pro-bono. It consisted of a series of confidential interviews with staff and selected Board Members.
- The Stewardship Campaign this year fell about \$53,000 short of the budget goal of \$461,000 and about \$22,000 below last year. I would like to thank all those who worked on this year's campaign.
- We now have a new Choir Director to replace Sara Brooks. His name is Jacob Caines. I would like to thank the Choir Director Search Committee for all their hard work in making this fine selection.
- We also supported the Stewardship Campaign of the Eastern Fellowship Congregation to raise money for their permanent building.

And finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the Board, Staff and Members of the Congregation for your help and support to me as President over the past three years. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Yach, Past President



Groups and Committees

Arts Night Committee

This past season, we celebrated our 9th year of Arts Night. On the last Friday of every month (September – June) a small group of dedicated people from the Congregation organize a very special evening featuring local artists, writers, poets, visual artists of all kinds from painters to jewelers, potters, and musicians of all genres to demonstrate their art.

These artists give us a short glimpse into their lives; what makes them choose what they do, how do they do it and what makes them continue. Writers read from their works, visual artists show some of their creations or give us a power-point presentation, and musicians give a short performance of their talent. The audience is always treated to a wonderful, informative and entertaining evening. There is something for everyone and we often ask ourselves, whether these events could get any better than they are. Members of the audience are also given a chance to start off the evening with a five minute presentation of their choice. There are many takers for this spot!

An admission fee of \$5 is collected at the door and this year the average take has been around \$126 at each event, all of which is given to the Church. Finger foods, donated by members of the committee and audience, are shared by everyone at the break. Our average attendance for each evening has been around thirty-two people, but a larger audience from the church would be more than welcome. Come and see what you have been missing.

Respectfully submitted by Elisabeth Morrison

Bridge Group

The average attendance of the UU Bridge Group over the eight sessions held this past year was eleven. This number was down somewhat from the previous year even though we had one more session than usual. The drop appeared due to illness and the relocation of participants.

Donations for the year totalled \$485. Those who attended appear to enjoy the evening gatherings.

Respectfully submitted by Tarrel Armstrong

Caring Committee Executive

During 2011-2012, the Caring Committee supported the Congregation's Caring network through assignment of two people as "Caring Contacts" each month. These volunteers responded to requests from members and friends of the Congregation, often through the use of the Committee's volunteer listings, and tried to keep in touch with joys and concerns in general. Basic training is provided through more experienced Contacts and the Coordinator.

Liaison with the Spiritual Care Council continued, helping identify any who might need a visit or phone call beyond the scope of the monthly contacts. Lyn Gerley represented the Caring Executive on the Council.

The Monthly Contacts were arranged.

Drives, 12; Casserole/Baking, 1; Telephone Visits, 41; Caring Cards, 60, and Personal Visits, 8. These are in addition to all those tasks taken on "anonymously" by members and friends who were able to provide needed caring throughout the year. A few informal lunches were arranged to broaden our outreach in the Congregation and among Contacts.

Eight Memorial Receptions were provided during the period July, 2011 through June, 2012.

As a group we managed two coffee hours, one in February to honour Heart Month and Caring within the Congregation. A breakfast was held in early May to thank our volunteer monthly contacts in person and to allow an exchange of the highs and lows experienced over the year's work. We welcomed several new contacts, and thanked others who have retired after being "on duty" for many years.

...continued page 10



Groups and Committees

We were sorry to lose Barbara Brown, Angela Beale and Mary Lou Curtis as Executive members; they will be difficult to replace. Ria Heynen is thanked for her many years as Contact Coordinator as she steps back from that position in September, but remains on the Executive.

Respectfully submitted by Alexandra Devine

Crafty Crafters-Knitters

The Crafty Crafters - Knitters continued to meet every Wednesday throughout the year. Numbers at our weekly gatherings fluctuated somewhat, but were usually close to ten. We welcomed a couple of new knitters and had visits from some who had not been able to attend recently. We were also grateful for knitted and crocheted articles provided by our friends, and always appreciate donations of yarn, patterns, etc.

The group is now settled in Room Three for our weekly meetings, and find it generally satisfactory except for the elevated noise level due to concrete walls and ceiling. The big benefit is that we now have our resources easily accessible - many thanks to custodian Phil Downs for installing the new tracks for the sliding doors on the cupboards.

Preparations for the Holly and Lace Bazaar (Fall Fair) are always one of our major projects for the year, both working throughout the year to create articles for sale, and then setting up and staffing the Craft Room (Lounge) at the event. In 2011, our booth contributed over \$1700 to Fall Fair revenue.

In addition, we turned in more than \$1200 to the Congregation, raised through a Christmas Sale at Unitarian House (\$225), the Mitten Tree Sale (\$515) and other miscellaneous sales. Moreover, our participation in the Fabric and Yarn Sale in February raised almost \$600 and we provided two items (\$85 total) for the Time and Talent Auction.

Members of our group (most notably Gerry Taylor-Woelfert) made decorations and organized the sale of Christmas items (hand-made and other) at the Fall Fair, thus raising several hundred dollars more.

We encountered llama wool for the first time this year. The arborist who has done a lot of tree cutting on the church property raises llamas and we were able to produce a sweater for him made from his very own llama wool - he seemed pleased with the result.

Our group continues to earn revenue for the Congregation while providing a valuable social and creative outlet for our members. We look forward to more of the same in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted by Rosemary Bonyun





Denominational Affairs Committee

The Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC) met monthly throughout 2011-12. The Committee maintained a bulletin board in Fellowship Hall and prepared a series of articles and ads for the Spire and EUU throughout the year to help keep First Unitarian members informed about the activities of the Canadian Unitarian Council and its affiliated organizations. In support of the 2012 CUC Annual Meeting and Symposium, the Committee created a special bulletin board in the west lobby and recruited volunteers for a variety of functions held during that event. DAC members particularly enjoyed meeting new friends at the Ottawa Fellowship while volunteering at the registration desk for the Symposium over the May long weekend. Several DAC members had great fun escorting delegates for dinner in the Byward Market on the Saturday evening.

Carol Anne Deneka has stepped down as Chair and no other Chair has been named. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated members: Margaret Linton, Elizabeth Bowen and Nancy Lauder, and send a special thank you to Don Fraser and Ellen Smith who attended as guests several times and provided much appreciated moral support.

Thank you

Respectfully submitted by Carol Anne Deneka on behalf of the DAC

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is one of the Standing Committees appointed by and accountable to the Board. The Finance Committee is responsible for advising the Board on financial policy and all financial matters affecting the Congregation.

With the changes to Bylaws and Policies earlier this year, the Committee is now chaired by the Treasurer. Many thanks to former Chair, Barry Read, who for many years has shepherded the finances of the Congregation, first as Treasurer and later as Finance Committee Chair. Barry retired from the Committee in May. Thanks also to all the other Finance Committee members, especially David Hudson and David Black. David Hudson has also served on the Committee for many years, both as Treasurer and most recently as Recording Secretary. David Black focused on our investments, oversaw the transition of our investment portfolio to Doherty and Associates, and retired from the committee earlier this year.

Doherty and Associates now supply quarterly updates on the performance of our investment portfolio to the Board. To date, the performance of our portfolio has exceeded the market benchmarks, although given the overall market performance we are unable to draw as much income from the portfolio to support our Congregational operations as in past years.

The Committee also assisted the Treasurer and staff with our financial audit, by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT). RCGT carried out the 2011 annual audit and prepared the 2011 Financial Statements which were submitted at the Congregation's AGM.

We have a number of challenges with our Congregational finances, due to regular deficits in our operational budgets over the past decade. This has been financed through a line of credit against our portfolio, which was paid off by selling investments during the transition to Doherty and Associates. Over the coming year a primary objective of the Finance Committee will be to advise the Board as the Board works to balance the operational budget and deal with the accumulated debt in our General Fund.

Anyone interested in our Congregational finances is invited contact the Treasurer or to attend meetings of the Finance Committee (contact the Treasurer for dates).

Respectfully submitted by Scott Drennan



Groups and Committees

Friday Reading For Growth

The Friday Reading for growth Group meets in the Lounge on the last Friday afternoon of the month from September to November and from January to May or June. Attendance has varied from four or five to nine or ten people. Newcomers are welcome. We concentrate on nonfiction and have had a number of lively discussions.

Some of the titles read this year were: *The Language of Life* by Francis Collins, *Arrival City* by Doug Saunders, *Exporting Democracy* by Bob Rae, *The Armageddon Factor* by Marci MacDonald, *The Age of Persuasion* by Terry O'Reilly and Mike Tennant, *Proust Was a Neuroscientist* by Jonah Lehrer, and *Heat* by George Monbiot.

Respectfully submitted by Margot Clarke

Friends of The Meditation Gardens

The Friends had a very busy fall. We were engaged in fundraising activities to support the solar-powered well project. During this period we produced and sold a 2012 garden calendar for sale to Congregants (it was also available at two local bookstores). These proved to be very popular as Christmas gifts. We also held two successful bake sales (at Halloween and shortly before Christmas) to raise funds for the project.

Between December and May the Friends delivered three presentations to the Campus Planning Committee workshops on future uses of the campus. These articulated the many uses of the Gardens to the Congregation and wider community and put forward the proposal that the gardens be permanently kept as gardens and not developed for other purposes. We were pleased by the support for this proposal we received from workshop attendees.

Under Renée de Vry's direction, a lot of work was done in the south garden to prepare for the installation of a solar array to power the well's pump. A backhoe operator dug trenches for electric and water conduits, and reshaped the stream bed below the water outlet. Renée built a dam across the stream bed to reduce flooding after heavy rains. Two structures were built: a south entrance arbour, with the solar array on top, and a pump house to protect the well head and pump. Special thanks go to Rick Day, chief carpenter on these two structures.

In the north garden, a new brick wall was built along the widened path beside the pond to facilitate visitors with walkers, and a display garden created behind the wall. A small arbour was built beside the Noble Bird statue. The invasive Mexican bamboo has been removed from the south edge of the north garden, and the area is being reshaped to create an enlarged area for outdoor weddings and other events.

Two big garden events in May were a plant sale and a Spring Gala to celebrate the many valuable contributions of supporters of the well project and of the gardens as a whole.

An unprecedented, prolonged drought, from early June into August, put a lot of pressure on the gardens' plants and trees and the continual six-day watering rotation took up most of Renée's time. Trees and shrubs were mulched to help conserve moisture. The gardens look wonderful thanks to Renée's strenuous efforts. Unfortunately the well's flow has suffered, and the installer has been contacted for advice.

This spring/summer we organized two field trips: the first to the Purdon Conservation Area to see lady slipper orchids in a woodland setting, and the other to two Perth-area gardens open to the public, Kiwi Gardens and Rock Wall Gardens.

Respectfully submitted by Alastaire Henderson, Chair, Friends of the Meditation Gardens and Renée de Vry, Head Gardener



Glebe/Centretown/Ottawa South Neighbourhood Group

The Glebe/Centretown/Ottawa South Neighbourhood Group usually met on the last Sunday of the month from September to November and from January to June. As usual the season began and ended with pot luck dinners (combined with planning meetings) at Trudy Kassner's. During the intervening months we discussed a wide range of topics, with invited speakers, including *Coins and Collectibles* (Don Kelly), *Reclaiming Equality: A Challenge for the Next Generation* (Mike Cassidy), *Music and Spirituality in our Lives* (Liz Benjamin and Helen Spenser), *An Exchange with our Intern Minister* (Jennifer Channin), *About the CUC Symposium* (Peter Patton). These meetings began with coffee/tea/juice and goodies brought by the group's members.

The core of our neighbourhood group come from the Glebe, Centretown and Old Ottawa South, but we welcome the participation of anyone else who is interested in participating in our informal discussions in a UU home or who is interested by the topic of the month.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Denis

Holly and Lace Bazaar (a.k.a. the Fall Fair)

Our annual Fall Fair, the Holly and Lace Bazaar, is the largest single activity in our church year. The focus each year is on the overall goal of a well-run, enjoyable, and successful community service—that also happens to raise a considerable chunk of money for the Congregation!

A success on many levels, the 2011 event was no exception. Over twenty-five sales areas and booths were set up. Over forty convenors and over 350 volunteers (many of them first time volunteers) worked over the lead-up week and sale day. Many hundreds of visitors from the broader Ottawa community attended our widely-known event. Each year we try to reduce our impact on the environment while increasing our support for others in the broader community. The goods we did not sell were donated to charities and community groups after the Bazaar. The distribution of these leftovers allows us to support a number of agencies and to build collaboration with their leadership.

Thanks to the office staff members (who carry out their usual tasks in the midst of this extensive disruption to their environment) and to the many enthusiastic people who each year give their time, their ideas and dynamism, and their critical donations.

Thank you, also, to the members of the organizing committee for their work in making the Bazaar so successful again this year. It is worth mentioning that some key coordinators and volunteers work through much of year to make the Fall Fair possible. Their contributions are invaluable.

In 2009–2010, the committee comprised: Isabel Burrows, David Black, Prue Craib, Scott Drennan, Meg Gourlay, Katherine Gunn, David Hudson, Margaret Linton, Paula Theetge, and Joyce Turnbull.

Respectfully submitted by Meg Gourlay and Margaret Linton



Groups and Committees

Hospitality Hour Committee

Throughout the year, a core group of volunteers assisted with Sunday Hospitality Hour. A number of men, rotated through the Sundays to help with the dishwashing (thankfully lifting those heavy trays). Wendy Tomlinson has been an invaluable assistant, making it possible to have at least one experienced person on duty each Sunday. We hope new volunteers will feel comfortable joining us. Decaffeinated coffee is now being served and is much appreciated by those who cannot drink our regular blend. Elisabeth Morrison filled in on a number of Sundays throughout the summer as the experienced volunteer - much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted by Tarrel Armstrong

Lay Spiritual Care Visitor Program

In this my twelfth year as Spiritual Care Visitor and Supervisor of Volunteer Lay Spiritual Care Visitors, having graduated from Meadville Lombard Theological School with a Master of Divinity degree in May, 2010, I have been able to start making more visits than I had for the previous three years when I was attending university. I made approximately 30 visits from July, 2011 to June, 2012, most in person but some by phone. In addition, I held monthly meetings with the Volunteer Lay Spiritual Care Visitors and also monthly meetings with the Spiritual Care Council. I am also part of the Seniors' Planning Council which meets several times a year. In addition, some of the Lay Spiritual Care Volunteers and I attended educational sessions presented by the Ottawa Pastoral Services group in the fall and in the spring.

The Volunteer Lay Spiritual Care Visitors continue to provide a significant number of visiting hours and are a crucial addition to the Spiritual Care Visiting outreach of this Congregation. Arthur Palmer and Katherine Gunn continue to provide devoted care and hard work. Peter Schmolka has rejoined the team. One of our longer-serving members, Doris Jelly, retired this Spring.

In the fall of 2012, I will offer a training program for people who wish to become volunteer visitors.

As our schedules permitted, the Volunteer Visitors and I attended many of the monthly Seniors' meetings.

We all look forward to continuing to provide spiritual care to the members of the Congregation.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Bell





Groups and Committees

Monday Reading for Growth

The Monday Reading For Growth Group met every month last year except during August. Our meetings take place every second Monday afternoon of the month. This is a non-fiction book club. We have ten members and are always inviting guests who may want to try it out before becoming a member. The maximum number is twelve but visitors are always welcome.

The meetings usually start with a short business discussion. Then each member is invited to name a book that they have read and that they would like to recommend for reading later in the year. Also, each person is assigned a month for which he or she will choose the book. In this way we develop a list of the members and the books that they have picked for discussion for the next three or four months. We try to plan well ahead so that the books can be ordered from the library in time.

Each month one person is responsible for the initial presentation of the current book and then each person in the group takes a couple of minutes to give his or her initial response to the book. After this an open discussion ensues which can be very lively.

Some books that read this past year were: *The Immortal Life* by Henrietta Lacks, *Life Money and Illusion* by Mike Nickerson, *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life* by Jane Hollis, *Manufacturing Consent* by E.E. Hermansky, *I Shall Not Hate* by Dr. Izzeldin Abuellaish, and *How Bad are Bananas* by Mike Berners-Lee, to name a few.

Our group is very interested in continuing next year. We are hoping that this program will continue successfully for some time to come.

Respectfully submitted by Anita MacLean, Coordinator

Nominating Committee

The 2011-2012 Nominating Committee comprised returning members Margot Clarke, Roberta Engel, Bob Staveley and Maury Prevost (Chair) as well as new members Chuck Shields and Sean Barron. Maury retired from the Committee in March when he was nominated (and subsequently elected) to serve on the Board of Directors. Margot Clarke agreed to be interim chair until the Fall Congregational Meeting when the Nominating Committee is up for election.

At the Annual General Meeting in April we nominated and the Congregation elected the following Board for 2012-2013:

- Kim Elmer as President for a two year term, 2012-2014.
- Maury Prevost (*new*) for a two-year term, to succeed Kim as President in 2014.
- Paul Ward for a two year term.
- Returning members, Scott Drennan and Alastaire Henderson (as Treasurer and Secretary respectively, for one year terms.
- Robert Cummings (*new*), Maggie Sharp (*new*), and Charles (Chuck) Triemstra (*new*) for three year terms as Members at Large.
- The Youth Group elected Evelyn Hope as their representative.

During the year the committee also nominated the five members of the Music Director Search Committee that were elected at the Fall Congregational Meeting. They were Jan Andrews, Joan Auden, Michael Cassidy, Kate Kirkwood and Jennifer Rae. Their work culminated in the hiring of Jacob Caines as the new Musical Director. He began work with the choirs and the Congregation beginning in August, 2012.

The Committee also nominated Jim Darragh to be the Congregation's appointed representative to the Unitarian House Board of Governors, as a replacement for Tom Dent who had served loyally for twelve years.

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Groups and Committees

In addition to its nominating tasks, the Nominating Committee continues to undertake some other leadership development related activities, specifically:

- Updating some documents of Board Member duties and ethics.
- Conducting exit interviews with members who have recently left the Board.
- Identifying current and emerging leaders in the Congregation to attend the Canadian Unitarian Universalist Leadership (“CU*UL”) School.

Three candidates were identified to attend this year but the “CU*UL School was cancelled for lack of registrants and lack of CUC staff time to administer it.

I thank my fellow members of the Nominating Committee for all of their contributions, especially Maury, for his sterling leadership. It was a pleasure to serve with them.

Respectfully submitted by Margot Clarke, Interim Chair

Personnel Committee

Members:

Members for the whole year include Rosemary Murphy, Carolyn Turner, Elizabeth Waechter and Chuck Shields (Chair). Mike Cassidy was a member, but resigned in the spring. Joining the committee in the spring were Bill Davis, Chip Shambare and Pat Wevrick.

Purpose:

The Personnel Committee is a standing committee of the Board. Its mandate is to assist the Congregation to develop and use sound, fair and responsible human resource management practices and policies with respect to its staff. The Committee acts primarily as an advisor and sounding board for the Board and its executive, the Minister and the Director of Operations.

Activities Over the Past Year

The Committee has worked with the Director of Operations, Carolyn Turner, to monitor the status of personnel for the Congregation and has continued its work to develop a number of policies and documents. These included a personnel policy, a sabbatical policy (implementation of this has been delayed pending funding being available), an employee confidentiality agreement and an employee handbook.

The move to the new governance model will lead to modification of the terms of reference and membership of the Committee, but at the time of preparing this report it is not clear exactly what these changes will be. It is expected, however, that the Committee will continue to serve essentially the same role that it has in the past.

Respectfully submitted by Chuck Shields, Chair





Groups and Committees

30s and 40s Group

In 2010-2011 several members of the Congregation got together to create the 30s and 40s Group to provide a space in which Congregants within this age range could get to know one another better and foster each other's spiritual growth within a social and family-friendly environment.

The Group meets approximately once a month, usually for a potluck family-style meal followed by topic-specific discussion. Previous discussion topics have included "mindfulness", "letting go/holding on", "covenant building" and many more. The format ranges from family-friendly events at people's homes to more adult-friendly events held at the church (where children who can entertain themselves during the discussion are welcome). The Group has also organized several outdoor activities, including skating on the canal and a nature walk/hike followed by a BBQ.

Events are usually posted in the eUU and Sunday Communiqué in advance. New members are always welcome. Contact: Becky Hogue at rhogue@pobox.com.

Respectfully submitted by Maggie Sharp

Time and Talent Auction

The annual Congregational Time and Talent Auction was held in April, 2012, and raised a total of \$9,638.50 for the Operating Fund.

This year we received eighty-two items (time, talent, goods and/or services). Bidding sheets were laid out before and after morning services for three consecutive Sundays (April 8, 15 & 22). Items with no bids at the close of the auction were offered at half-price the following Sunday. Within a week, by e-mail (where possible), winning bidders were invoiced and donors were told who had won their donated item/service. A collection table was set up at the back of Worship Hall the following three Sundays, before and after morning service, to receive payment from the winning bidders. Remaining payments were collected in the office. As of this date (July 13, 2012) the amount of money outstanding is \$290. Reminder notices have been sent to those who have not yet paid for their winning items.

At this time, I would like to thank the many generous Congregants and bidders, for offers and bids on such a wide variety of goods and/or services. I acknowledge and sincerely thank H  l  ne Lamb for so willingly assisting during auction dates, and with collections on the three Sundays following the auction. I also wish to thank Ruth Lanktree and Jenny Rae for their help when needed.

Respectfully submitted by Marg Lee, Chair





Unitarian Seniors Program

This program, which was started by Sue Van Iterson, has been running for many years now and continues to draw regular support, averaging around 40 each meeting. On the last week of every month (except December), on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, the group gathers for a now familiar program that starts with a short service at 11:30 a.m., lunch at Noon in Fellowship Hall, and at 1:00 p.m. some item from a varied program of talk, music, reminiscence, current affairs, general interest, etc. The group is remarkable, and remarked upon, for its liveliness, interest, and its continuity.

The Services which typically last for half an hour are taken in the Sanctuary by volunteers drawn from members of the Seniors Group, Congregational staff and willing others we can find. The range of approaches and topics is wide and rewarding—often surprising and always of interest.

The lunch is sometimes catered, sometimes by Unitarian House, is sometimes a brown bag (bring your own) affair, but it is often and best prepared by volunteers. Lunch is always characterized by a hubbub of conversation and laughter. Presiding over each lunch is a volunteer convener who looks after the preparation of the room, the provision and/or distribution of whatever is on offer and takes care of clean up afterwards. The conveners are assisted by other volunteers. We are always looking for people who are willing and able to help. Please think about volunteering as it eases the work of our regulars.

The after-lunch program is set up well in advance and is made as varied as possible. We have concerts and a carol sing in November, talks on local issues, story telling, and anyone or anything of interest suggested by the group. Congregational staff have played their part and in the past year we have had excellent talks from John Marsh on *King Lear* and Susan McEwen on the *Eight Limbs of Yoga*.

This is all organized by a planning committee which meets three times each year to review and to lay out future events. We have a telephone group who call before meetings, we have volunteer drivers, we have pools of people who are willing to take services, to be MC for the meeting, to convene lunches, to volunteer to work, to deal with publicity, to book the rooms, etc. We have a treasurer who looks after our money, a secretary who keeps notes of meetings. For the last three years we have been taking turns in leading the group. There is plenty of room for new ideas. Think about joining us. You'll enjoy it.

Respectfully submitted by John Soar, Chair

UU Writers' Group

I enjoy the UU Writer's Group, that has been meeting at the First Unitarian Church at 7:00 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month. The meetings generally start with a provocative read from a published writer, then participants hunker down with their writing tools and their imaginations for twenty minutes, to pen a mighty masterpiece or less. And some of the pieces are mini-masterpieces, or at least inspired, coherent, amusing, and occasionally not. Such is art.

The group, which consists of three to eight or nine aspirants each time, has taken the opportunity to explore a number of different writing forms this year, from personal essays, to fourteen-word Haiku, to travelogues, to six-word stories (actually!), to poems, to plays (of which members read different character parts). Afterwards each participant provides their critical analyses and comments. Often writers bring samples of their previous works to share.

Actually, it is the camaraderie that arises from the discussions which is one of the principal draws of these meetings. As we argue over different interpretations and opinions, much literary, philosophical, psychological, political, and practical information is shared and we generally leave fulfilled, not only with tea and biscuits, but with fresh inspiration and an eagerness to bring its fruits to the next encounter. A small donation to the Congregation is much appreciated. Interested persons are welcome to drop in at any time they wish or by calling Joycelyn Loeffelholz at 613-224-9880 or Ian Shields at 613-824-6080 x 282.

Respectfully submitted by David Creighton



Groups and Committees

Women's Personal Growth Group

Exploring, growing and also taking care of our inner selves is what the Women's Personal Growth Group is all about.

We welcome all women to our monthly meetings held the first Monday of each month (second Monday if the first one is a holiday) at 7:15 p.m. in Room 5, lower level.

The WPGG has an informal agenda. Check in happens as we prepare tea and snacks. Then we may discuss a planned topic with readings distributed ahead of time, or an idea or book that a member mentions takes hold and off we go to in-depth talk. Some evenings we start the "Question Game (getting to know you)" with its 170 questions on topics such as creativity, freedom, sex, your potential, health, spiritual trust, relationships, balanced lives and joy.

Together, we explore resources, share our own experiences and learn from one another. Having developed a deep trust, we are comfortable sharing our joys and concerns. Many have been members for many years—even a decade.

In such a large congregation the Women's Personal Growth Group allows us to get to know and support one another on a personal level.

Please join us; no membership required. We would love to see you and help nurture your emotional and spiritual side.

Respectfully submitted by Evelyn Algar

Worship Associate Committee

The 2011-2012 Worship Associate Committee was comprised of returning members, Heidi Wright, Sean Barron (Chair), Alex Campbell, Barry Read (retiring), and new members Sue Williams, Phyllis Eleazar, Kalyani Pandya, Sam Wilmont, Linda Gionet .

During 2011-2012 the Worship Associates continued their work supporting the Sunday worship as it expanded into two services. We ran a recruitment and training campaign for new Worship Associates and created an updated terms of reference document to more accurately reflect the committee's work.

Summer services were again coordinated by the Committee and saw four members of the Congregation present services, two Congregational committees, two former members of the Congregation and four guests from diverse backgrounds fill out pulpit.

The 2012-2013 Chair of the Committee will be Linda Gionet with Kalyani Pandya

Respectfully submitted by Sean Barron





Adult Learning Committee

The Adult Learning program at First Unitarian continues to be rich and varied, offering a range of ongoing and special programs. An area of continued focus is our core UU programming, which was expanded in the past year to include *What Moves Us: Unitarian Universalist Theology*, led by our intern minister Jennifer Channin, and introductory sessions of *Harvest the Power*, a program focused on developing lay spiritual leadership. Our regular enrichment programs, including yoga, Painters' Circle and various Reading for Growth groups, continue to be popular.

This year's new programming was guided by the priorities identified in the 2011 Congregational survey on adult learning. To respond to the interest in spirituality and exploring spiritual paths, sessions were held on Buddhism followed by instruction sessions on mindfulness meditation. Three reading groups have spent the past ten months focusing on Karen Armstrong's *12 Steps to a Compassionate Life* while John Marsh's Shakespearian-based discussion groups provided an opportunity for our erudite Congregational members to explore the big questions raised in Shakespeare's plays. The Wednesday night Meditation Group guided by Colleen Glass and the Monday evening yoga class led by Susan McEwen have provided opportunities for congregation members to incorporate regular spiritual practices in their lives.

Another priority for adult learning is social justice issues. To respond to this priority, Social Action Movie nights were introduced this year, with viewing and discussion of movies such as *Food, Inc. and Walmart – The High Cost of Low Price*. In response to their popularity, Social Action Movie Nights will be continued in 2012/13.

One of the highlights of the past year was the World Religions weekend held in May with thirty-eight participants. JW Windland, who is retiring this year, shared insights gained from his forty years of study and encounter with world religions. In addition to his fascinating overview of the world's religions, participants also benefited from more in depth exploration of three religious traditions: Buddhism, Sikhism and Native Spirituality.

I'd like to thank the members of our Adult Learning Committee for their enthusiasm and dedication to adult learning: Wendy Doyle (our Co-ordinator, Adult Learning), Bert Curtis, Colleen Glass, our newest member Jan Glyde, and Susan McEwen, whose support and information-sharing makes our job so much easier. And as always, a very special thanks to all those who help us plan, organize, promote and deliver our various adult learning activities throughout the year. It wouldn't happen without you!

Respectfully submitted by Eva Berringer, Chair





Religious Exploration Committee

This year's Religious Exploration (RE) Committee worked effectively to support what have become regular RE events; namely, the Fall Leaders' Retreat, the Mystery Pals Discovery Breakfast, and the Leaders Appreciation Breakfast. The Committee also had a regular presence downstairs on Sunday mornings helping with orienting new families and preparing snack for the children. In addition, the committee supported special events such as the Hallowe'en Procession, Night Tree event and Children's Art Auction.

As a committee, the group was very intentional in using its time together as a form of spiritual practice. Meetings always included a check-in, chalice lighting, readings, and a check-out. The Committee also incorporated its own celebrations that deepened the members' connections, including an afternoon "retreat" with yoga/massage and dinner, as well as a year-end exchange of gifts created to celebrate each other's "suchness". The RE Committee is more than a group working together to serve the Congregation—it is a support network for its members. All but one of the Committee members is returning next year, and a new member will be joining in the Fall.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Jo Murdock, Chair

Children and Youth Ministry

Statistics:

97 children registered
20 youth registered
72 families participating

Sunday morning program groupings:

September to May

First Steps (toddlers to 2 yr olds)
Celebrating Me & My World (3 & 4 yr olds)
Spirit Play and K/Gr. 1 OWL (5 & 6 yr olds)
World of New Friends/Love Will Guide Us (7 & 8 yr olds)
Bibleodeon and Gr. 4-6 OWL (9 to 11 yr olds)
Coming of Age (12 & 13 yr olds)
Youth Group (14 to 20 yr olds)

June

Multi-age Summer Program (toddlers to 13 yr olds)
Youth Group (14 to 20 yr olds)

Program Highlights:

We began a new program year in Children's and Youth Ministry with our annual R.E. Leaders' Retreat at Baxter Conservation Area. Participants of all ages opened the day by placing an object on our worship table to represent their "suchness." With a focus on intentions and goals, R.E. leaders explored the concept that, "Goals help you make your place in the world and be an effective person. But being grounded in intention is what provides integrity and unity in your life...By being in touch with and acting from your true intentions, you become more effective in reaching your goals." We asked, "what would it be like if [we] didn't measure the success of [our lives] just by what [we] get or don't get, but gave equal or greater priority to how aligned [we] are with our deepest values?" (Phillip Moffit) As our adult participants explored questions of "intention", the children present set off on an adventure into the wonders of the conservation area accompanied by R.E. Committee members and the Rev. John Marsh. They later shared their discoveries with us at the day's end.



Our Sunday morning activities offered space for learning and connection in large and small groups of similar and mixed ages. Each week we began with a Time for All Ages in Worship Hall: children and their families participated in the beginning of service before making their way downstairs for R.E. sessions. Once a month, children started their morning in the NOW Room for Children's Worship, a child-focused worship experience, complete with the sharing of joys and sorrows, movement, poetry, story, song, and reflection. Many parents also joined us for these special services, which were thematically aligned with the adult service happening the same day.

Most weeks, children and R.E. Leaders met in their smaller similar-age groups after Time for All Ages or Children's Worship to explore our chosen curricula. However, some Sundays found us gathered together for Social Action Projects (learning about the roots of social action, making soup mix to sell in support of the food bank, participating in a riverside clean up) and special events (making edible outdoor tree decorations for birds and animals at the Night Tree celebration, playing with colour, shape, and texture as we created works for the Children's Art Auction). We also came together beyond Sunday morning Worship and R.E. time for such events as our multi-generational Mystery Pals activity, rehearsals for special services, and our vibrant, joy-filled Congregational Picnic.

Our junior youth (Coming of Age) and youth (Youth Group) met in their groups beginning at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday and ventured together into community, learning, and reflection with visits from special guests, field trips, retreats, and social action projects. Making connections with the whole Congregation and the community beyond, our Coming of Age (COA) group led a letter-writing and clothing collection campaign to aid our city's homeless and the Youth Group hosted a coffee house, sharing proceeds with Child Haven International. April saw our junior youth in retreat at Baxter Conservation Area, while groups of our youth traveled to Mississauga for Senior High OWL workshops (having hosted a Senior High OWL weekend ourselves in December) and to New York City for the Unitarian Universalist United Nations spring seminar.

This year's music program for children and youth was led by Shannon Linton and Kaley Duff (during Shannon's maternity leave). We received very positive feedback from the families of our young participants and all of us benefitted from the enrichment of the children's and youth's choral energy in our services. At the same time, we found numbers of participants smaller this year. With the departure of Shannon Linton to new job opportunities this spring and the arrival of Jacob Caines as our new Music Director, our program team is exploring a new configuration for children's and youth music for the coming year that we hope will cultivate a strong music program for all ages.

Our Services for All Ages took many forms this year. USC Sunday welcomed everyone to the table as we recognized World Food Day, while The Mitten Tree included an interpretation of Jan Brett's "The Mitten" through creative movement. Our Family Christmas Eve Service unfolded around a nativity narrative told from the perspective of Mary and invited personal reflection on how each of us relates to the roles in the nativity story. In January, we celebrated the sacred journey of learning with contributions from all across the lifespan and then, in April, we treated the congregation to a light-hearted April Fool's day surprise.

Thanks to the vision and efforts of Lifespan Learning Assistant Marie Gabe, we have begun a revitalization of our library and look forward to cataloguing the collections of both R.E. and adult libraries in a new computerized system that will allow us to more fully and effectively access the resources we have built up over many years. Fundraising projects completed this year and planned for the coming years will support this endeavour, as well as our plan to improve the physical set up of our library to make it more user friendly and inviting.

This year we extended our program beyond mid-May with a multi-age summer program through to the end of June. Attendance ranged between 10 and 20 children each week and we were blessed with the presence of six new families during this time. It is my intention to continue expanding our offering each year until we have in place a well grounded and supported full year program.



Gratitude and Looking Forward:

On the horizon for 2012-13 are initiatives to bring our Sunday morning program outdoors with greater frequency, to provide regular opportunities for R.E. families to meet and connect, and to continue to focus on mixed age and all ages Worship, as well as on meaningful small group ministry. We will incorporate two new curricula into our repertoire, along with the outdoor components we are developing in-house. After offering a three session module of Harvest the Power (an adult spiritual leadership series) this past spring, I look forward to sharing all twelve workshops with the Congregation this coming program year. We will be hosting the Eastern Regional Gathering in October and are therefore gifted with a myriad ways to practice hospitality and to uplift and deepen our learning in a denominational context.

This summer, I participated in R.E. Week at the Mountain Retreat Center in North Carolina, completing the new Adult R.E. Renaissance module as well as the course, The Puzzle of Leadership. I also will be continuing my involvement in the Cooperative Inquiry process begun in May and led by Nicky Duenkel. This is a year-long project in which religious educators from across Canada explore together the nature of our work and the ways in which we can more meaningfully offer service to our congregations. When we host the Eastern Regional Gathering in October, I will be honoured to co-lead the UU Identity Renaissance Module for religious educators (staff and volunteers).

Our ministry of Lifespan Learning happens with the support, energy, presence, and participation of many. I express gratitude to the members of the R.E., Youth Programming, and Adult Learning Committees, to the volunteers who generously lead and assist with our programs for all ages, to the staff members who contribute in so many ways, and to all the participants who come together in the spirit of growth, connection, serving, and finding meaning.

Blessings,

Respectfully submitted by Susan McEwen





Music Program

Overview

2011-2012 has been one of change and growth in the music program at First Unitarian. With the departure of long-term music director, Jane Perry, came a period of transition for our choristers and musicians. What a joy it was to see this community bond together, rise to new challenges, and encourage their new director and fellow choristers. Not only did the adult choirs experience this change, but our Children’s Choirs as well, as Children’s Music Director, Shannon Linton, took a leave of maternity from September through December 2011. We were pleased to welcome Interim Youth Director Kaley Duff for these months and are continually grateful for her work with our youth.

Sunday morning services included a variety of musical experiences, including our many choirs and talented instrumental musicians within the Congregation. Violinist Rhiannon Ng, Pianist Elisabeth Morrison, Flutist Sam Clemann, Pianist Graeme Jones, Vocalist Tony Tuner, and special guests Diana Lam, Flute, and Travis Mandel, Trumpet, all contributed greatly to our morning worship this year.

Choirs

Our 50-voice **Chalice Choir** continued to meet Thursday evenings. In September we welcomed accompanist Alice Liu to the keys. A performance major at the University of Ottawa, Alice contributed greatly to our music-making! The Chalice Choir was active at many of our Sunday morning services this year, presenting a variety of anthems as well as leading in hymn singing. The ensemble also participated in two larger musical events: a December concert entitled *Winter Lights*, and a special afternoon service of music entitled *Lift Up Your Voice*. In addition, members of our SWAT team (Singing Will Always Triumph) presented musical selections at two Capital Region Interfaith Council events, one in November and the other in June.

The **Gospel Choir** met each Sunday morning before service from September through April to sing and rehearse a variety of repertoire. This group saw large growth in membership, going from fourteen members in September to twenty in January. The Gospel Choir sang in services once per month and participated in both December and April musical events.

Our auditioned **Chamber Choir** worked through many challenges this year. As an ensemble which does not meet regularly, (music was given in advance of a service or event and singers were expected to arrive with notes learned) I was forever appreciative of their flexibility and understanding in scheduling. The ensemble of twenty voices was active in one morning service per month and presented a variety of challenging anthems and works. The Chamber Choir also participated in both the December and April musical events. With the addition of the 5:00 p.m. evening service, this ensemble added yet another commitment to their schedules, preparing and presenting musical selections for one evening service per month. Many thanks to this crew for their willingness to tackle such an active schedule.





Children's Music

As mentioned above, Interim Children's Music Director, Kaley Duff, took our Junior and Intermediate choirs through the fall months, preparing them for two morning services as well as our December musical event. Though small in number, it was wonderful to hear these young groups developing and uplifting our Congregation in song. In January we welcomed back Shannon Linton, who not only continued these ensembles, but began a trial period for a new Youth Choir, involving youth ages twelve and up. This ensemble jumped into two services in February and March and presented some energetic musical selections. Unfortunately due to multiple scheduling conflicts, the group attendance declined in early Spring. It is thought that this particular ensemble may not continue in September, but rather its members are encouraged to participate in Chalice or Gospel Choirs. The more, the merrier!

In May, we found ourselves saddened to learn that Shannon was moving on to a new post with the Chamber Music Festival here in Ottawa. We said (and sang) our goodbyes to our wonderful Children's Music Director and we wish her well in her future endeavours. We look forward to welcoming a new director to the helm in the fall, and are excited by some new directions for the youth music program.

5:00 p.m. Evening Service

On September 11, 2011, the first 5:00 p.m. evening worship service was held at the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. In January, a small group of vocalists came together to form an **Evening Vocal Ensemble**. This group of eight voices participated in one evening service per month, presenting unaccompanied anthems and leading in hymn singing. Our musical support in this service was further enhanced with thanks to The Sharing Our Faith, Evening Worship Grant received by First Unitarian from the CUC. This grant facilitated musical worship in these services, allowing local musicians and guest artists to present special music in conjunction with other service elements.

In addition to regular weekly evening services, two large musical events were held this year, one in November and the other in April. These special services drew large numbers of Congregants, led to increased awareness of the newly offered services, and ministered in a very special way to those in attendance. On November 6 the Congregation hosted the *Gregorian Jazz Consort*. This group of local jazz musicians presented an evening of meditation and reflection. Basing their musical improvisations on ancient Gregorian chant melodies, the ensemble provided guided musical meditations which were interspersed with readings and reflections offered by our Intern minister, Jennifer Channin.

On April 1 three outstanding Classical artists presented Giovanni Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. Soprano Doreen Taylor-Claxton, Mezzo Soprano Whitney O'Hearn, and Pianist Mathew Walton, joined the First Unitarian Congregation in a moving musical service. This timeless work was brought to life by these rising local musicians. Once again interspersed with readings, the congregation was led in meditation in the days leading up to Easter celebrations. One of our most highly attended evenings, this special service was most memorable.

Other musical service highlights include presentations by Gareth Auden-Hole, whose recent CD has been released to wide acclaim; Jeremy Sills, whose work with guitar, vocals, and meditative singing bowls was most inspiring, and *A Touch of Klez*, a local Klezmer band, whose rousing music lifted the souls of many.

The 5:00 p.m. evening service is now an established part of the weekly worship here at First Unitarian. There is a core group of Congregants who attend regularly, and for them, this weekly service has become an important part of their week. It is hoped that services will continue to inspire, and that participation will increase when we reconvene for a new year in September, 2012.



Other Special Musical Events

Our fall season began with a wonderful series of concerts (with thanks to Jane Perry) presented by Pianist Mauro Bertoli and Violinist Wolfgang David. The three evenings of concerts allowed for spectacular presentation of the complete Beethoven Sonatas for Violin and Piano. This incredible artistic event was enjoyed by a wide audience composed of both Congregation members and individuals from across the city.

In November, a small concert was held entitled *Musical Mosaic*. Featuring alumni from the University of Ottawa, this fundraising event included a variety of musical presentations from these rising artists. Another fundraising concert was held in mid-January, as we welcomed the Standing Room Only Big Band to our space. This uplifting event included swing dancing in Fellowship Hall and was enjoyed by many! February saw yet another collaborative concert, as our congregation hosted Flutes on Fire. This concert featured a rising trio from the Ottawa/Montreal area, and included some thrilling repertoire.

New Director

In December, I made the difficult decision to leave the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa at the end of my contract. I accepted an opportunity to continue on to further musical study in Edmonton Alberta in the autumn of 2012.

March became a busy month for the newly-formed Music Director Search Committee. Formed to seek out a new Director for the program at First Unitarian, this hardworking group put in numerous hours to the search process. We are forever grateful for their energies as we excitedly welcome new director, Jacob Caines, who began his term in August, 2012. What an exciting time for this active music community. With Jacob's energy and background, this program will continue to grow, minister, and inspire.

Final Notes

And so the music community continues forward. In view of such positive growth in a year of transition, it is most certain that the program will continue to thrive. The coming year will be full of challenges and surprises and those involved will continue to be inspired.

Respectfully submitted by Sara Brooks, Interim Music Director





Social Responsibility Steering Committee

The Social Responsibility Steering Committee (SRSC) guides the work of the Social Responsibility Council (SRC), made up of eleven Working Groups. As chair it is my pleasure to report on activities this year.

We developed a manual to clarify and aid the activities of the working groups. Special thanks to Katherine Gunn and Mike Wheeler for uncounted hours of fine work.

Two SRSC members resigned and will have to be replaced. Ed Willer, Board Liaison, has been an intelligent, calm and thoughtful member for many years. Ed, you will be missed. The Board will appoint Ed's replacement. Thank you for your contributions to the Committee and the congregation. Katrin Nagelschmitz will also be leaving to concentrate on her many other commitments. We thank Katrin for her substantial contributions.

Continuing members also deserve thanks. Without Marlene Koehler's organizational skills we might get lost. Thanks Marlene. David Hudson keeps us on track financially. Many thanks to you!

The working groups continued good works for our Congregation and the larger community. The Refugee Working Group supported two refugees for their first year in Canada. Fund-raising by many working groups has provided aid to many worthy associations. A former Sanctuary Working Group family's major milestone was the opening of their restaurant. Further details about the year's activities are in the annual reports following.

We encourage the Congregation's members to join one of our Working Groups. Your participation will be rewarding for you and our community. Read their reports and contact the group that interests you.

The forthcoming year will bring both planned and unplanned challenges. We thank the Congregation for its support both financial and spiritual. With your support many in our Congregation have been able to follow their passions and improve our world.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Wilson, Chair

Canada-Nepal Working Group

The Canada Nepal Working Group (CNWG) performs many humanitarian activities to improve the lives of the people in Nepal, and to help immigrant people integrate into Canadian society in Canada.

Some members of our Group attended the 'Immigration Law Conference' about the immigration and refugee system in Canada. The CNWG also organized an integration program in Ottawa in which we shared knowledge and experience and promoted mutual interaction and an exchange of information between Nepal and Canada about equality and human rights issues.

Immigrant and refugee support: We provided and coordinated counselling and settlement support for 24 families. We supported the refugee process for many. One person received his conventional refugee (immigration) status in this year, and two others remain in the ongoing process. Many volunteers attended the refugee hearings at the Immigration and Refugee Board as well as family court. Volunteers also assisted refugees in preparing documents, and referred to other organizations according to clients' needs, such as ESL classes, job search training, etc.

Fundraising: In May our fundraising dinner realized \$7,000 for us to send to women's and children's shelter of the Women's Foundation of Nepal (<http://www.womenepal.org>). These funds cover the cost of rice, lentils, oil and other necessities for five months.

Partnerships: When new Nepalese immigrants arrive in Ottawa, a member of CNWG partners with them to help them connect with local resources. Their needs are to get furniture, obtain their Health card and Social Insurance Number, take parenting training, get information about Canada and ESL classes, to find jobs, drives to school etc. These partnerships help our refugees better deal with cultural shock.

Respectfully submitted by Tara Upreti, Chair



Child Haven Working Group

Child Haven Working Group supports Child Haven International (CHI) (<http://www.childhaven.ca>) which assists children and women in developing countries who are in need of food, education, health care, shelter and clothing, emotional and moral support. CHI maintains homes in India, Bangladesh, Tibet, and Nepal, and follows Gandhian principles such as: No Recognition of Caste, Equality of the Sexes, and Respect for Cultural/Religious Background. CHI was founded by former Unitarian Universalist minister Fred Cappuccino and his wife Bonnie. Child Haven's administration is based in the Ottawa area.

The Working Group helps in the organizing of publicity and fund-raising activities in the Ottawa area to help CHI carry out its mandate. In addition, volunteers occasionally offer to travel to one of the homes to lend their physical presence. Susan Bowers of our Congregation made such commitment for six months last winter.

The major fundraising event each year is CHI's *Eveningfest*. Working Group members sell tickets and assist with the dinner and entertainment. One of the presentations at this year's *Eveningfest* described a publishing project to tell the story of First Unitarian's Tara Upreti and her humanitarian work both in her native Nepal and in Ottawa.

For the Spring fundraiser, CHI's June Dinner, our volunteers sold tickets and assisted with the event.

Founder and director, Fred Cappuccino, gave one of his engaging signature sermons at the CHI summer service.

Respectfully submitted by Leslie Baird, Chair

Environmental Working Group

As the Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a small group, we met twice last fall to discuss whether and in what form the Group should continue. The upshot was that we became more of an e-mail group that meets only bimonthly. Active members are Alastaire Henderson, Bob Stevenson, Dan Morrison, Carol Chubb, Debra Mair, and Peter Goddard.

Given that almost everything we had done the previous year had a local focus, and that leading by example seems more effective than lobbying governments, we decided at our November meeting to maintain a local focus. Next year we will work to bring in local speakers on environmental topics.

Bob worked with Sustainable Living Ottawa West (SLOWest) (<http://www.slowest.ca>) to help bring Ottawa Riverkeeper Meredith Brown to Kitchissippi United Church in April, 2012. Meredith gave a report on her canoe trip down the Ottawa River in summer 2011.

In early 2012, we publicized the congregational Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Saffire Farms (<http://www.saffirefarms.ca>), which began weekly deliveries of vegetables in mid-June to the church parking lot.

We chose "water source protection" as the theme of the EWG summer service. After the Walkerton e-coli tainted water disaster, the Ontario government passed the Clean Water Act (<http://tinyurl.com/9otj5xj>), under which conservation authorities and others are to protect our water sources from contamination. Peter Goddard found a speaker from the Rideau Conservation Authority, Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, to speak on this topic at the July, 2012 Sunday worship service.

The Adopt-A-Riverbank group held a successful clean-up of our stretch of the Ottawa riverbank, in May, 2012, under the direction of Marilen Gerber.

Respectfully submitted by Alastaire Henderson, Chair



Global Justice Working Group

The past year's increased activity by our Group is partly due to having some members of the Board of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ) (<http://cusj.org>) here in Ottawa, motivating us to get involved. Congregants Frances Deverell, Bob Staveley and Debra Mair kept us informed of their actions at the national level.

Our Sunday service guest speaker last summer, Monia Mazigh, has worked tirelessly to highlight the actions of Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the RCMP in sending people like her husband, Maher Arar, to torture overseas.

We worked jointly with the Poverty Awareness Working Group to support Pathways to Education (<http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca>) which promotes bursaries for high school students. Our intern minister, Jennifer Channin, spoke about the Pathways tutoring and mentoring program at a recent Sunday service.

We hosted a town hall meeting entitled *Who Polices the Police?* Our very able panelists looked at various issues in this contentious topic including five current law suits against the Ottawa Police Department for police brutality, and the mass arrest of 1,100 people at the Toronto G20 summit in 2010.

Several social justice movie nights included pot luck suppers and discussions. We set up letter writing campaigns on such topics as the Harper government's Omnibus Crime Bill. We donated to many worthwhile organizations including *Families of Sisters in Spirit*, outreach work in El Salvador, *Homes Not Bombs*, support groups for Hassan Diab and Mohammed Harkat, and CUSJ to support the quarterly publication of *Just News*.

Our program year ended with a talk by Dr. Peter Larson entitled *The Forgotten Palestinians: The Arab- Israeli Struggle For Democracy Inside Today's Israel*. Peter has visited the area several times and has spoken to us previously on the situation in the West Bank and Gaza.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Stevenson, Chair

Mental Illness Working Group

The Mental Illness Working Group raises awareness in our Congregation and the wider community of the tragedy of mental illness. We work closely with *Ancoura* (<http://www.ancoura.ca>), a not-for-profit Ottawa organization providing housing and a supportive community for adults living with mental illness. We raise funds for *Ancoura*.

Fund Raising: Our annual Christmas and greeting cards sale (sold within and beyond the Congregation) raised about \$2,000. The beautiful card designs came from the "Art Studio" for artists living with mental illness. These artists received a share of the profits from the sale of cards. The sale also raised awareness in the general public of the need for supportive housing for people living with mental illness. Thanks to Marie Andrews for spearheading this project. We also donated \$750 to *Ancoura* through the Social Responsibility budget.

Ancoura homes: We welcomed volunteers to support the three current *Ancoura* residences. Some members of our Congregation took the training offered by *Ancoura*. It is hoped that a fourth residence will be opened in the fall of 2012.

Respectfully submitted by Paul McGinnis, Chair



Ottawa West Community Support

Ottawa West Community Support (OWCS) this year completed the first of a three year Multi Service Accountability Agreement with the Champlain LIHN. The Assisted Living Service (ALS) for high risk seniors reached capacity in its first full year of operation. This program provides 24/7 response in scheduled and unscheduled visits to seniors needing assistance. Clients are referred through the CCAC and must meet specific criteria for acuity of illness and risk of hospitalization. All other programs, both community support services and the Aging in Place service in the 11 Ottawa Community Housing buildings, operated at full capacity and met all service and fiscal targets.

With the aim of providing a better response to client needs OWCS is working with a number of other agencies and community partners to help improve system efficiencies. Preparation has begun for a new initiative by the LIHN which will involve the eastern counties in a greater integration and sharing of information across the community health sector. Implementing this Community Care Information Management (CCIM) model will be a major focus for OWCS in the year ahead.

OWCS is very grateful for the continuing support provided by its member west end churches, including First Unitarian Congregation.

Respectfully submitted by Margot Clarke, Liaison

Poverty Awareness Working Group

We maintained congregational membership in Ottawa's Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI) (<http://www.multifaithhousing.ca>), made a financial donation, and supported MHI's *Tulipathon* fundraising walk. Eleven walkers from the Congregation raised \$1,855 from sponsors. PAWG donated \$25 per walker plus 10% of the sponsorship totals, adding \$460 to the \$2,315 total. Marlene Koehler sold cookbooks as a fundraiser, raising \$240. Werner Daechsel sits on MHI's development committee. Werner recruited seven others for a table of eight attending National Housing Day fundraising dinner in November.

Volunteers from PAWG collected and stored household goods for ladies leaving the *Minwaashin Aboriginal Women's Support Centre* (<http://www.minlodge.com>) shelter for homes of their own. We assisted eighteen women and fourteen children. We are very grateful for excellent quality donations from Congregants and their families, friends and neighbours, and faithful help from over twenty pick-up-and-delivery volunteers. We estimate that each family receives about \$2,000 worth of goods, and that we have about \$5,000 in inventory. PAWG joins other Congregational and community groups in Indigenous rights activities, such as lobbying and information campaigns.

We supported the Pathways to Education program (<http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca>) and assisted seven students to attend the 2012 summer camp at Carleton University. One has already moved on to advanced training—a huge success.

The Working Group made financial donations to *Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services* (<http://www.pqchc.com>) and to *Ottawa West Community Support Services* (<http://www.owcs.ca>).

A group from PAWG has formed the *Site Stewardship Initiative Group*, concerned with development of the church campus oriented to affordable housing. This group made presentations on potential social/condominium housing/parking structures at two facilitated congregational meetings.

All are welcome to receive e-mail minutes of Working Group meetings, describing activities and planning, by speaking to anyone in PAWG or writing to povertyawareness@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

Respectfully submitted by Mike Wheeler, Chair



Refugee Working Group

During the past year our Working Group has assisted in the settlement of two young Ethiopian men, Tata and Brooke, in Ottawa. They had been forced to stay in Uganda for the previous four years. Our day-to-day assistance has been quite limited because they were helped by their sister Emebet Weldemariam who is also the sister of Tadyose Asfaw whom we helped in 2001-2002. Tadyose is now married and living in Edmonton where he is a heavy equipment mechanic.

Brooke and Tata were introduced to the Congregation last December. Our assistance has been a monthly stipend of \$500 from June, 2011 to June, 2012. Emebet reports that some of their money is being used to further their education. Tata and Brooke have been working at various jobs since they arrived and look to the future with confidence.

Our Group has decided to assist individuals in Ottawa to apply for landed immigrant status. Each applicant must pay a \$1,000 fee and we can assist in this aspect. Lisa Sharp of our Congregation is a lawyer specializing in family law and immigration and she is our contact person for this project. We expect to assist other refugees wishing to settle in Canada and received a request to help a young Eritrean woman presently in a refugee camp in Ethiopia.

Our Working Group appreciates the funding which our Congregation has provided during the past year. We met Tata and Brooke several times and can assure you that they are very happy to be in Canada.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Stevenson, Chair

Sanctuary Committee

The Sanctuary Working Group responds to the needs of refugees who requested sanctuary within the walls of First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. Two refugees, Samsu Mia from Bangladesh and Shree Rai from Nepal, were granted sanctuary by our Congregation in recent years. Both were successfully admitted to Canada along with their families, through the intense efforts of this Congregation.

The Working Group has conducted a variety of fund-raisers to cover all the services that our volunteers could not fulfill, for example: lawyers fees, food, medications, etc. The revenue from the Rais' Sun Nepali treats and sushi sales on Sundays after service were directed towards part of their shelter costs, similar to the earlier arrangement after Samsu Mia was liberated.

The group continues to assist both families in other areas such as tutoring, locating household furnishing donations, and other aspects of settling into Canadian society. We had very sad news this year of the death of Doly Akter, Samsu Mia's wife. This spring the Mia family welcomed Ottawa to their restaurant, *Mia's Indian Cuisine*, along Richmond Road west of the church. All the children, now young adults, in both families are doing wonderfully in their studies in high school and university.

We arranged for speakers and other special events to educate the Congregation and the community at large about refugee issues and legislation, and were pleased that all speakers came pro bono.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Duncan





Unitarian GoGos

The Unitarian GoGos have approximately thirty members. We meet on the third Thursday of the month. We raise funds and awareness for the grandmothers, and the orphans they are raising, in sub-Saharan Africa, through the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign (<http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org>).

Our November sale of the gorgeous Kazuri jewellery made by Kenyan women raised \$945 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

In February, the Unitarian GoGos hosted 98 guests to our African Dinner in Fellowship Hall, a wonderful three course African dinner, with appetizers, wine, and live dinner music, all cooked and served by the GoGos. Thanks to the generosity of our guests, and a very successful Silent Auction, we raised over \$7,500..

In April, friends of member Joan Turner hosted a very successful Wine and Nibble event which raised \$1,890.

In May, the Unitarian GoGos held a huge Plant and Garden Sale at the church. We encouraged prospective buyers to view the plants for sale in the Meditation Gardens as well, and Kazuri jewellery which we were selling. We raised over \$1,600.

Thanks to everyone who eagerly waits for our homemade Granny Squares. The monthly sales at our church of Granny Squares and Christmas baking brought in \$2,900.

In 2012, the Unitarian GoGos reached an important milestone. The Stephen Lewis Foundation reported that since we began fundraising in 2006, The Unitarian GoGos have raised over \$100,000.

Each year, the Unitarian GoGos makes a donation of \$200 to the First Unitarian Congregation. We sincerely appreciate the extensive support and encouragement we receive from the Congregation.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy Doyle





United Nations Working Group

In the past year, the United Nations Working Group (UNWG) experienced new momentum, continued its traditions and added new activities.

The UNWG was proud to present Ed Broadbent as the 2012 Holtom Lecturer. His topic was *Democratic Development Abroad: Dos and Don'ts*.

The Congregation celebrated UN Sunday with Diane Rivington, Director of Human Development and Gender Equality of the Canadian International Development Agency (now retired), as guest speaker in the morning and in the evening with our own Susan Tanner, recipient of the UN Association of Canada's (<http://www.unac.org>) "Championne" award for her work on human rights and the environment. The two women shared their personal experiences of working for the rights of women, providing the congregation with an inside look into making change.

The UNWG organized a service to celebrate Canada's National Aboriginal Day in June. The service included a smudging ceremony, welcoming drumming, and three diverse but equally thought-provoking reflections by Albert Dumont, traditional teacher, Claudette Commanda, Executive Director of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres, and Jean Akiwenzie, teacher of Aboriginal languages at Carlton University.

The members of the UNWG hosted fund-raising dinners with their friends to raise funds for Help Age Canada's (<http://www.helpagecanada.ca>) project to work with the elders of Nunavut to enable them to address the issues affecting their lives.

The UNWG supported six youth and two advisors to attend the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) (<http://www.uu-uno.org>) Spring Seminar in New York City in April. This year's seminar focussed on immigration and race.

The UNWG monitored the UU-UNO following its amalgamation with the Unitarian Universalist Association last year and the resulting new funding arrangements. As well, the UNWG is looking forward to contributing to the creation of a Canadian UNO office under the Canadian Unitarian Council.

Respectfully submitted by Katrin Nagelschmitz, Chair

Welcoming Congregation Working Group

The Welcoming Congregation Working Group oversees the implementation and integration of the Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation Program (<http://www.uua.org/lgbt/index.shtml>) which actively promotes the inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) people within the Congregation.

We made notable progress towards this goal in two key areas: (1) fostering relationships amongst GLBT Congregants; and (2) supporting outreach into the wider GLBT community.

To foster relationships (1), the Welcoming Congregation Group organized several social events such as potlucks throughout the year with an open invitation to all GLBT members. In the area of outreach (2), the group made contacts within Ottawa's larger GLBT community, particularly with Capital Rainbow Refuge of Ottawa.

With the support of the Congregation's Board of Directors, the Welcoming Congregation Working Group played a key role in the establishment of a partnership between the Canadian Unitarian Council and Capital Rainbow Refuge of Ottawa to be the Sponsorship Agreement Holder for a UN-designated refugee lesbian couple from a Muslim community in South Asia. The women, who were in hiding, arrived safely in Ottawa and are now considered permanent residents of Canada.

Also in relation to outreach within the wider GLBT community, the group is making plans to participate in Ottawa's Pride festivities in August, 2012, both the Pride Parade as well as the Pride Information Fair.

Respectfully submitted by Heidi Wright



Notes:





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