Activities and Groups at FirstU Ottawa are many and varied. Groups and activities fall into eight general categories:

- Fundraising
- Liaison
- Operations
- Self-Improvement
- Internal Service
- Music
- Outreach
- Social

Be sure to check the eUU Weekly Newsletter regularly for dates, times, and locations. Dates are also posted on the our website’s calendar at www.firstunitarianottawa.ca

In Memoriam

Elisabeth Leonore Renger ~ died May 15, 2019
Paul Michael Pfalzner, husband of the late Ann ~ died July 21, 2019
Mary Stuart Riley, wife of the late George ~ died August 13, 2019

Caring Contacts

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| mharhwood@gmail.com |"
Over the summer I have been to the States, near Peterborough, on to Montreal and back. Yet all the while, I had you all on my mind and in my heart. Thinking of those recovering from health events and the loss of loved ones, contemplating Sunday Services for the congregational year and year two of Developmental Ministry, in touch with the staff and so many dedicated volunteers still laboring over the summer, and wondering how much the children have grown and changed over the summer, as they tend to do.

You were on my mind when I visited Petroglyphs Provincial Park near Peterborough and took in “The Teaching Rocks.” Have you been there? They describe it as the “largest known concentration of Indigenous rock carvings in Canada.” It is thought that the carvings were made from perhaps 600-1400 of the Common Era.

As is common, the site of the petroglyphs was and is itself considered a sacred place, an access place to an underground spiritual world and it is still a place of pilgrimage for local Ojibwe people and other First Peoples.

So often in official historic sites, you learn about dates and chronologies . . . the timeline from the beginning to the present. Who occupied the land and when. What the conflicts were over the land and the resources. But in this historic site run by First Peoples, the lessons could best be described as spiritual. The displays discussed the significance of story, of passing down traditions from generation to generation, of the meaning of symbols found at the site.

As I noted, you were in my heart and mind this summer and especially as I walked through this sacred site, pondering the meaning of FirstU to each of you. What does our site, our spiritual home, this congregation represent to you and the greater community? What lessons do we wish to pass on and down for the generations? What is the legacy that we wish to leave behind and send forward?

Many times, we react to the issues and events at hand, to ‘to-do’ lists and calendars. But when we sit back and take time together to consider the longer view and “interbeing” of the whole congregation, FirstU in the next years to come, what might our decisions and actions be then? If we were to consider the bigger vision of mission, purpose and legacy?

May we contemplate and discern this together in the new congregational year that begins this fall. May we discern, learn from each other and play together as we come back in community following the adventures of summer.

We, bearers of the dream, affirm that a new vision of hope is emerging.
We pledge to work for that community in which justice will be actively present.
We affirm that there is struggle yet ahead.
Yet we know that in the struggle is the hope for the future.
We affirm that we are co-creators of the future, not passive . . .
And we stand united in affirmation of our hope and vision of a just and inclusive society . . .
We affirm a unity that opens our eyes, ears, and hearts to see the different but common forms of oppression, suffering, and pain . . .
We pledge to make our tomorrows become our todays.

(adapted from Affirmation of Hope, by the late Dr. Loretta F. Williams, sociologist, author, activist of African descent, long active and serving in diverse interfaith and secular organizations and commissions including the UUA Section on Social Responsibility in the '80's.)

~ Respectfully submitted, Rev. Pat
Throughout the summer Religious Exploration has been working together to create a pollinator-friendly children’s garden with the support of the Painter’s Circle.

The Painters have created 7 wonderful stepping stones representing our 7 UU principles. You are invited to visit our garden, interact with the space and tend to the needs of the garden. Read below to find out more about the intention of the garden.

Welcome to our Children’s Pollinator Garden

This Garden is for our Wild Pollinators
“Native bees, flies, moths, butterflies, beetles are overlooked, undervalued, and critical to life on this planet. The mostly native plants in this space provide refuge where wild pollinators can live, work, and thrive.”
-Wild Pollinators Partners

And this Garden is for our Children
“[Rachel Carson] urges us to explore nature with feelings and emotions, to use all our senses and to abandon the impulse to teach or explain. Arouse the emotions, Carson admonishes, for the foundation of learning is in what we love.”

Rachel Carson "cared passionately about the subject of how to maintain a sense of wonder and believed the war was won or lost in childhood. She hoped to inspire adults and children alike to experience the sensory and emotional in nature, and knew that if they did, they would have less appetite for those activities that threatened the living world.”
-Linda Lear, Introduction to Rachel Carson: The Sense of Wonder

Explore the Garden with all your Senses & Discover the Emotional in Nature
Smell the flowers and touch the leaves, but please don’t pick, they’re for the bees.
Walk round the flowers around and around. Or stop and stand still, then breathe deeply, how do you feel now?
Look at the flowers or look at the trees. Say thank you to them for making the oxygen we breathe.
Hop, jump or run on the stones and feel the breeze. How does the wind on your face feel today?
Step from stone to stone, then stop and read. These are our UU principles that we promise to keep.
Water the flowers. Fill, carry, pour and repeat. Help nature to grow by giving it what it needs.
Stop, close your eyes & face the sun. Do you feel the energy coming from the sun?
Feel the wood chips on your fingers or under your feet.
Then, leave them on the ground and in our garden, kindly please.
Stand still and wiggle your toes, do you feel the earth under your feet?
Feel it there, steady, unwavering, supporting us.

Say thank you for the earth that gives us everything we need.
Thank you to Sarah Nugent for her donation of bee friendly flowers. The image to the right shows a bee enjoying nectar in our garden.

Thank you to the Nagy family for volunteering your time and doing a HUGE culling of books in the children’s library.

Painter’s Circle hard at work creating UU themed stepping stones.
Religious Exploration cont...

Jr. High Owl at First U
It's not too late to register

Parent Orientation Meeting
SEPTEMBER 15
Our Terrific Team of Facilitators
Joanna Simpson
Lisa Sharp
Gay Bellespercher
Cayeve Price
Thank you to Joan Turner for all her hardwork in bringing OWL back to FU

This FALL

EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAM FOR UU'S IN GRADE 4–6. PLEASE INFORM NEO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN REGISTERING YOUR CHILD.

BIBLEODEON
Popular Bible stories presented through fun and engaging games
Musical Interludes
~Deirdre Kellerman

LOVE SINGING?

Join Chalice Choir!

Fall Term begins Thursday September 12th from 7-9.
No experience necessary.

NOW OPEN!
OUR BRAND NEW
MUSIC ROOM
ROOM 1

CHOIR SECTIONALS • INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE SPACE
• RE AND CONGREGATIONAL ACCESS TO MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND RESOURCES • QUIET SPACE TO REFLECT THROUGH MUSICAL MEDITATION • MUSICAL ARCHIVES • CD RESOURCES

The Music Director’s office is now in Room 1A, accessed through the Music Room
On October 19th, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, the Canadian Unitarian Council’s Eastern Region Fall Gathering will take place in our building, co-hosted by our congregation and the UU Fellowship of Ottawa. Start time is 9:45am and end time is 4:30pm. Lunch is included.

This is a unique opportunity to meet and interact with other Unitarian Universalists from Eastern Canada, as we explore some of the ways that we can respond to the challenges we face. The program theme is "Surviving and Thriving in Turbulent Times". Opportunities to consider personal practices, congregational responses, and social justice efforts are part of the program.

Registration and full details are on the CUC website at:

https://cuc.ca/events/eastern-region-fall-gathering-2019/1571474700/1571503500/

There will also be several volunteer opportunities in association with this event. The possibility to host out of town guests in your home has already been publicized. Stay tuned for details of other volunteer opportunities.

There will be one 90-minute workshop session in the morning and two 1-hour sessions in the afternoon. Several of the workshop presenters are from our own congregation:

- Patricia Stockwell and Rev. Linda Goonewardene are leading workshops related to mental health.
- Deirdre Kellerman is leading a session on Songs of Hope and Resilience.
- Rev. Patricia Guthmann Haresch is co-leading a workshop on Vital and Growing Congregations with Rev. Linda Thomson of the CUC.
- Mike Fletcher is leading a workshop on Climate Justice.

Other workshop subjects include:

- Taking Off the Cloak of Racism (in 3 parts), led by Rev. Julie Stoneberg of Peterborough and Beverley Horton of Hamilton, who proposed the resolution that has resulted in the CUC's 'Dismantling Racism' study group.
- Self-Care – Spiritual Practice, led by Evangeline Danseco, a lay chaplain at the Ottawa Fellowship
- Revitalizing Your Congregation's Social Justice Program, with leadership and examples from the Ottawa Fellowship and Hamilton congregation
- Walking the Talk; Settler Canadians Standing with Aboriginal People, led by Matthew Behrens

Childcare will be provided from 9am to 5pm. Registration fees are on a sliding scale with three options. Workshops will be suitable for youth, young adults, and older adults.

We look forward to a large participation from our congregation.

~ submitted by Maury Prevost, Host Team Convenor
First Aid for Mental Health

Adult education and lifelong learning are the tenets of a healthy lifestyle. To this end, the Mental Health Working Group (MHWG) at FirstU recently offered a course called ‘Mental Health First Aid’. The target audience was anyone in the congregation interested in learning more about mental health issues with a view to better understanding the problems involved.

This past spring, Geoff Pross, a professional counselor in addiction and mental health issues, led the 4-week course. Nineteen people responded enthusiastically to the program and the evaluation of his presentation was most positive.

The course had several objectives. The first one was to give information about the categories of mental health issues such as addiction, anxiety and depression and psychotic disorders. Then the symptoms of each category were described. The next objectives focused on treatment modalities and involvement of mental health professionals. The course program is intended to serve as a first step and introduction to complex and subtle problems.

First Aid for physical injury is a familiar concept in our communities. It is recognized as a valuable tool for first responders to such events as accidents, falls and sudden acute physical symptoms. With the statistics showing 20 percent of the population experiencing mental health issues at any given time, it makes sense to present opportunities for mental health education via the ‘First Aid’ formula.

The stigma associated with mental health problems is a real barrier to accessing timely management and treatment. Australia developed the initial First Aid for Mental Health in the 1990’s. By 2006, the Senate of Canada reported on the need to improve literacy regarding mental health issues in the public sphere. High on the list is promotion of greater awareness in the general population of what mental illness is. This is often referred to as ‘taking mental illness out of the shadows’ and shedding some light on the problem.

Support and encouragement are badly needed by those struggling with mental health issues. The FirstU community is well known for its open and inclusive style. The MHWG is dedicated to opening up the subtle symptoms and effects of these issues. Only then can we as a community move ahead in our understanding and acceptance of a growing problem.

~ submitted by Marie Reid, Mental Health Working Group

Baking and House Plant Sales

The Unitarian GoGos Working Group offers a warm invitation to monthly Baking and House Plant Sales as fundraisers to support the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s “Grandmothers to Grandmothers” campaign. African grandmothers have stepped forward to care for millions of children orphaned by AIDS. Resources from the campaign provide grandmothers and the children with supports that include food, educational supplies, uniforms and school fees, medical care, HIV counselling and testing, adequate housing and bedding, counselling and support groups, home visits, and much more.

Look for us in Fellowship Hall on Sundays September 22, October 20, and November 10.
2019 Tulipathon
Lovely sunny weather welcomed us all to the park near Dow’s Lake in May for the 2019 Tulipathon. “What is a Tulipathon?” you ask. Based on the traditional ‘walkathon’ fundraiser for a good cause, we walk among the wonderful tulip displays in the spring, from Dow’s Lake along the Rideau Canal. The important cause we support is the Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI).

MHI provides and promotes affordable housing, to encourage harmonious relations amongst tenants of diverse backgrounds, and to mobilize the resources of faith communities and others for these purposes. It is a wonderful working model of interfaith peace and collaboration at the local level in the fight against homelessness. MHI’s goal is to provide secure and affordable housing because through this, individuals as well as the community benefit from improved health outcomes, educational achievement, social inclusion, and economic opportunities.

MHI owns and operates rental units in four locations in Ottawa, and is developing two new projects, one oriented to family housing, and Veterans House with supportive housing.

We are proud that FirstU was represented by 17 walkers of all ages, and excited when the banner created by our Religious Exploration students was declared the Best Banner!

We are very grateful to the congregation for the total of $2,741 we donated to MHI, the second highest gift from Ottawa faith groups.

~ submitted by the Poverty Action Working Group

Global Justice Working Group Sales
The Global Justice Working Group (GJWG) will sell Zatoun and La Siembra (Co-op) Fair Trade, organic Xtra Virgin olive oil, chocolate and coffee products on Sundays September 22, October 20 and November 10. You will find us in Fellowship Hall after the morning service.

These two not-for-profit organizations need our support. Buying their products ensures a fair deal for family farmers and creates financial support for social infrastructure such as adult education classes, health clinics, and so on, increasing the welfare for all people in the community. GJWG makes a small profit on the chocolate and coffee products, which helps to cover some of the cost for our various activities.
Thanks, Merci, Miigwetch

♥ Margot Clarke offers a particularly big “Thank You” to Andrew Drake, who has volunteered to take on the very important role of ‘Chief Pew Tidier’! Give him a hand by continuing to recycle your Orders of Service, and by returning the hymn books to the racks with care.
♥ Thanks to all in the congregation who walked and/or contributed to this years successful Tulipathon!

The Bookshelf

The Bookshelf will be re-opening on September 8th after its summer hiatus. We have a wide selection of fine, carefully chosen adult and children’s books. We also have a selection of Unitarian Universalist literature. In September we shall be having a big sale to make room for new books, which I shall be buying this fall. We have a list in the bookshelf where you may make requests for any special book you would like.

The bookshelf committee is made up of Moira Duchesne, Suzanne Schaller and myself. Moira and Suzanne are very hardworking and reliable but it would be good to have at least one more member. You are required only to be on duty once a month. It is a perfect fit for anyone who loves books and people! If you are interested, please contact me at: margaretmzielinski@gmail.com

~ submitted by Margaret Zielinski

I pledge because this is my spiritual home and I believe in the importance of what our beloved community has to offer, not just to us as members but to the broader community. Now more than ever, our voice is needed!

Eva Berringer, Member since 2010

I am grateful to be part of a religious community that challenges me to be a better person and make a difference in the world. My children never want to miss a Sunday – they enjoy the music, the rituals and the fellowship. We are also a multi-faith family - my daughter is Catholic, my son is Hindu and I am Unitarian Universalist. At the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa we have a spiritual home where we all feel comfortable and can worship together. I pledge to ensure the vitality of our religious community - it embraced me on my religious journey when I was ready and I want to ensure that it remains a vibrant congregation that is ready to welcome others too.

Sharmila Khare, Member since 2017
Well-organized and accurately cataloged records and archives are a definite asset to a congregation such as ours. They help us to locate, for our own use, documents and other archived items without undue difficulty. They allow us to have material readily at hand (such as copies of meeting minutes or financial documents) which we are legally required to retain and which we may be called upon to produce by such bodies as our auditors or the Canada Revenue Agency. They preserve the main outlines of our history for the benefit of future generations of congregants.

An aspect of my enjoyable work as the records-archives volunteer relates to the past history of the congregation, a history that goes back more than 120 years to 1898. Some examples are:

- Glancing through an archived book (published in 1901) written by our first minister, Rev. Albert Walkley, and entitled "What Jesus Said".
- Reading newspaper articles from the early 1900s written about our congregation, then called “Church of Our Father, Unitarian”.
- Looking through hundreds of photos and graphics dating from the nineteenth century to the present.

Searchable Excel databases that name our records and archives are maintained. They also date material and disclose where in our building such material is located. Regularly updated copies of the databases are to be found in several of our church computers and with the records-archives volunteer.

The current status of our records-archives project, is as follows.

- Main Office: organized and computer-cataloged in an Excel database.
- Finance/Human Resources Office: organized and partly computer-cataloged in an Excel database. (Still some cataloging to do.)
- Basement Archives Room: organized and computer-cataloged in an Excel database. (Still some fine-tuning to do.)
- Religious Exploration Records Archives: a work in progress which involves organizing our RE files and cataloging them by name in an Excel database. (Slow but steady progress being made.)
- Our “In Memoriam” paper files and Excel database (begun in 2016) are being maintained. In this way we remember and honour those who have gone before us.

Of course, in the final analysis, only what is received can be archived; hence the importance of regularly submitting copies of meeting minutes and other significant documents to the church office.

~ Respectfully submitted by Brian Cowan, Records-Archives Volunteer

It is the abiding commitment of the Congregation to children and young families demonstrated by its support of River Parkway Children’s Centre that reconfirms for me that the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa is where I am proud to be a member.

Eleonore Benesch, Member since 1974

I was born a Unitarian, 66 years ago and have enjoyed the many lifelong gifts this religious thought has given me. I am proud of the care and empathy this Congregation provides to the community. River Parkway Children’s Centre and Unitarian House are ideals this Congregation has manifested. Our Garden provides a view of harmony that is an extension of the values that we share as a Congregation. Providing monetary assistance, by pledging, insures our ability to keep this ball rolling.

Janet Clayton, Member since 1996
When you return to the pews in September, gaze upon the newly refinished parquet in Worship and Fellowship Halls, and the Volunteer Centre! Thanks to you, and your generous donations to the Spiritual Home Campaign last year. We hired Rome Flooring, who initially installed the floors in 1967.

You will also notice a refreshed Lounge, now a space where we all – including our guests and renters - will feel more welcome in a clean and neat space.

Floors have been waxed, the exterior has had another ¼ paint job, the parking lot sports newly painted lines and a dedicated parking space for the minister, and a disabled access button is operational in the West Lobby washroom.

You will find Deirdre in her new office space in Room 1, on the Lower Level. **All this could not have been realized without the hard work of our custodial staff, the Property Team and Bob Armstrong, Volunteer Office Assistant.**

We are delighted that the Or Haneshamah Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation has signed another lease with us, and we will welcome Initiatives of Change to Room 8 in October, with Ancoura and Physicians for Global Survival continuing as their neighbours. If you become aware of any other charity requiring a small office space, Room 9 is currently available.

We continue to work towards improving our online presence and to solidify the FirstU Ottawa brand. Our publications are slowly beginning to look cohesive. Do follow us on Instagram and the congregation facebook page, as well as a new UU facebook page, FUUD for Thought – posts which reflect our UU principles. Meant to appeal to the general public in ways a specific faith page might not, liking and sharing these posts will help sow our beliefs – and then everyone will realize they are actually UU at heart.

Instagram: firstuottawa
Facebook:
• First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa
• FUUD for Thought

~ Submitted by Jen Brennan

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**Gentle Yoga**

**Fridays with Linda Percy**

For health, vitality, strength, flexibility, and mindful presence, in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere where everyone is encouraged to proceed at his/her own pace.

**DATE** September 13 - December 13 (no class November 15)
**TIME** 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.
**LOCATION** First Unitarian Congregation
30 Cleary Avenue
**INFO** 613-725-1066
**COST** $130 for 13 weeks or $12 drop-in

poster by Paula Theetge

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**I think of this church as a university for the heart and soul. Therefore, my pledge is like its tuition.**

Brent Nicolle, Member since 2003
Serving with Spirit or What We Did on Our Summer Vacation

Five people from FirstU, including Guy Belleperche, Carl Sonnen, Sharen Bowen, Mary Ella Keblusek and myself, recently attended the Serving with Spirit: Nurturing UU Leaders Retreat, at Carleton University.

This weekend program, presented by the Canadian Unitarian Council, was inspirational and energizing to those seeking to learn more about and develop their Unitarian Universalist (UU) spiritual practices.

Led by two wonderful facilitators, Rev. Linda Thomson and Rev. Peter Boullata, the program included many aspects of UU worship, including covenanting, small group ministry, singing and creating a worship service together. With lots of laughter and sharing of our past spiritual heritage and individual journeys, we learned about the shared ministry model, and how to change congregational culture at every level.

We had the pleasure of getting to know seven other participants from five other congregations, including some who have been UU’s for 30 years, and others fairly new to our faith. It was inspirational to share our ideas and concerns about our congregations. We heard how one congregation is rebuilding itself, starting with 10 members while some congregations are “lay led” which means they don’t have a minister.

There were two opportunities to experience “Small Group Ministry”. Sometimes called Covenant Groups or Chalice Groups, their purpose is to provide a more intimate connection than is possible during large group experiences such as the weekly worship service. These groups typically involve 5-10 people who meet on a regular basis to form deeper friendships, share life experiences, and engage in deep conversation about core issues and topics. FirstU has organized these groups in the past, including neighborhood-based groups and young adult groups. We are interested in exploring whether there would be interest in our congregation to establish some new small groups.

While reflecting upon and developing our own personal spiritual practices, I learned that it’s safe for me to create art even though I think I’m not “good at it”. For my guided meditation, I went for a walk, gathered items from nature and then made a collage to represent my life’s journey up until now.

Our facilitators ensured that all persons had the opportunity to participate and we learned about the concept of “taking space” and “making space”. Some of us have heard about this in the past, as a “step up” and “step back”. We all need to be aware of how much space we are taking at meetings and events so that other people can feel welcome to participate and become involved, valued members of our growing community... a great lesson for all of us as we look to become more welcoming to new people visiting our congregation.

One of the most interesting things we discussed was how to make our meetings an extension of our spiritual practice (and more “fun”). Guy, Carl and I are looking forward to implementing some of these ideas with our Board of Directors and with our Leadership Council in this upcoming year.

~ submitted by Lisa Sharp
The Unitarian Seniors’ Program began in 1996. For 23 years seniors and retired folks have been meeting once a month in the early afternoon to share a few hours of fellowship and entertainment. We begin with an informal worship service followed by a program which is entertaining or thought-provoking, or both. The afternoon concludes with tasty refreshments and lively conversation. It is a casual gathering of about 25 attendees. Seniors who have not already done so are encouraged to attend one of our get togethers (details are announced in the eUU and the order of worship).

Some of the most memorable seniors' programs have been when individuals from the congregation have spoken passionately about their special hobby, career, artistic endeavour, favourite sport, travel experience, or have shared their musical talent with us. Trudy Kassner touched us with her reminiscences of her professional figure skating career in New York in the 1940s; Guy Thatcher recounted tales of walking El Camino de Santiago which are documented in his book; Doris Jelly impressed the group with a discussion of the early days of Canada's communications satellite programs and the key role she played; John Soar used humour to demystify his beloved cricket. Numerous musical presentations have included special annual concerts by pianist Elisabeth Morrison and flautist Sam Clemann.

Do you have an interesting pastime, talent, vocation, avocation or other experience that you would be willing to share with the Unitarian Seniors? The informal program usually runs about 45 minutes with a question and answer session. It could be a short talk, slide show or demonstration. The Unitarian Seniors' Program Planning Committee would be delighted to hear from members of the congregation or their family or friends with hidden talents. They could be as varied as antique collectors, car restorers, birdwatchers, drone flyers, musicians, dancers, artists, flower arrangers, stamp or coin collectors, genealogists, photographers, stained glass artists, volunteer workers, wood turners, quilters . . . and the list goes on.

If you would like to share your special passion with a group of enthusiastic seniors, please contact the Chair of the Unitarian Seniors' Program Planning Committee:

Paula Theetge, at paulath@rogers.com or 613-260-1709.

We look forward to hearing from folks in our congregation with secret talents!

~ submitted by Maureen Sly
FirstU’s Fall Fair Is Coming!

Over many years the Fall Fair has become FirstU’s largest fundraising event. Through the hard work of over 300 volunteers, this event has raised a lot of money to ensure that FirstU can continue to support its many causes and be a positive presence in the community. Each year many people look forward to attending the largest church-based fair in the city, often arriving hours before the Fair opens to ensure they get the best bargains available.

This year’s edition of the Fall Fair will be held on **November 16, 2019 from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.**

**Volunteer**

To continue this tradition we need **volunteers** before and after the event as well as on the “day of” to help sell the myriad of available items. Anne Nagy is coordinating our volunteers. If you want to help out, contact Anne at [FallFair2019@FirstUnitarianOttawa.ca](mailto:FallFair2019@FirstUnitarianOttawa.ca) State your preferences and ask your questions. We are sure that there is at least one job that may suit your schedule and preferences.

**Bring your donations**

The other key component is having **goods for sale.** This is where we rely on congregational members as well as their friends and family to supply us with items that need a new home while also meeting a goal of re-using perfectly good items and helping reduce landfill. Many kinds of items are needed including clothing, small furniture items, housewares, books, toys, electronics and computer equipment, and jewellery. Especially valuable items may also be candidates for our **Silent Auction.**

Start searching through your possessions and put them aside now for the Fair. At this time we can only accept jewellery, in the office, for cleaning and repair, while other items should be delivered to the church during the **week of November 11.** If you need help getting your donations to the church, let us know: [FallFair2019@FirstUnitarianOttawa.ca](mailto:FallFair2019@FirstUnitarianOttawa.ca) or call the office.

**Tell Your Friends**

One other way to help is to make sure that your friends and family know about the biggest Fall Fair in town. People plan far ahead and they do want to know when the event will take place. Starting in September, small notices will be available at the Information Desk in the west foyer of the church to post in your condo or distribute to your contacts.

Let’s make this edition of the Fall Fair the best ever!
The Spirituality and Philosophy Discussion Group (S&P) has the potential to confound and challenge you in the most stimulating and enlightening ways. Our conversations influence our world views, help us learn more about our own minds and spirits, all the while expanding our knowledge.

In line with the 7th U.U. Principle: *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*; and our 6th Source: *Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature*, we’ve selected the book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer (ISBN: 1571313567) ([https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17465709-braiding-sweetgrass](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17465709-braiding-sweetgrass)) for discussion this fall.

The S&P group uses a selected book as the launching point for discussion - usually one chapter or section per meeting. Our current thinking is to follow *Braiding Sweetgrass* with a second book, possibly *Indigenous Healing: Exploring Traditional Paths* by Rupert Ross, to specifically continue exploring Indigenous Traditional Knowledge.

As most of us have been raised in and continue to live in the western world with western rational, logical and intellectual ways, we’ve chosen to explore the Indigenous ‘relational’ worldview this fall, opening ourselves to a different way of seeing, being and relating to each other and the world around us.

**Who?** Open to any and all who have an interest. Newcomers are welcome.


**When?** Alternate Saturdays from Sept 7th, 9:30 to 11:30 am (open approx. 9am-noon)

**Where?** Room 6, lower level, First Unitarian Congregation, 30 Cleary Ave.

**What to expect?** Traditionally, our meetings begin with an opening reading and check-in, followed by about an hour of facilitated discussion of the book’s chapter or section. After a brief break, the discussion resumes, followed by group business and a closing reading. The roles of meeting facilitator, opening, and closing are rotated each time on a volunteer basis. During our first fall meeting, Sept. 7th, we will work to revise the group’s covenant, determine meeting format and generally introduce ourselves.

**Cost?** Free, other than the cost of the book. A free-will offering is collected and, as we are able, we contribute nibbles for break.

**Contact** adultlearning@firstunitarianottawa.ca or Paula Theetge at 613-260-1709 for more information.

~ submitted by Amalilly Sullivan
Can We Talk?

Many of us recognize the late Joan Rivers’ trademark question from television shows some years ago. It was a question that was offered in a tone that was irreverent, even provocative - a challenge to speak up about uncomfortable topics. It’s a fair question. ‘Can we talk’ when the subject matter is embarrassing? When we feel angry with someone? When we feel intimidated, even bullied? When the other person is in a superior position to us? When the other person’s ideas are diametrically opposed to our own?

What happens when the person we can’t talk to is part of our own congregation? What are the options? Suffer in silence while letting the resentment and anger build up. Avoid the person by not coming to service. Drop out of joint activities. Recruit others to join forces against the other person. Make a complaint to the board or supervisor. Or at the most extreme find a different congregation. Contemplating such negative options is a red flag that should alert us to look for a more constructive way to resolve the issues rather than suffer in silence or escape.

The Right Relations Team’s answer to the question is a definite ‘Yes, we can talk’. In fact, talking is the best way to deal with differences between people. Members of the Right Relations Team who are trained as mediators and counsellors can assist congregational members and staff with difficult conversations. Mediation may seem like an unfamiliar, even legalistic concept. Actually it is nothing more than an opportunity to talk and listen to each other in a safe and confidential setting. Participation in mediation is always voluntary. However, through our Congregational Covenant all of us at FirstU have committed to ‘nurturing our relationships with each other’. Therefore, the onus is on each of us to do our best to live up to that covenant, including taking steps to resolve any conflicts that may occur.

Making a genuine effort to discuss and understand sources of interpersonal conflict and working towards a mutually agreeable solution can have a healing impact on the relationship. An American psychologist-mediator, Carl D. Schneider, proposes that mediation can offer benefits “beyond our struggles with aggression, competition, and estrangement”. It can result in an experience of “the interconnectedness of being between people”.

Becoming truly heard by the other - and truly hearing the other - can be more than an exercise in problem-solving. It can bring new insights into the needs and concerns that we all share as human beings.

~ submitted by the Right Relations Team therightrelationsteam@firstUottawa.ca

Ref. Carl D. Schneider: "If one of your number has a dispute with another: A New/Ancient Pastoral Paradigm and Praxis for Dealing with Conflict". In Pamela D. Couture and Rodney J. Hunter (eds.): Pastoral Care and Social Conflict. 1995

No Scents Please!!

Chemicals used to add scents to products causes serious health problems for some people in our congregation. Being near a scented product can make them sick. Even products containing natural plant extracts can cause reactions.

The Parkway Spire Team welcomes photos* (high resolution jpg format is preferred) and articles that are of interest to the congregation. Articles should be sent unformatted and have a maximum of 400 words. We reserve the right to edit articles when necessary.

Send your submissions to spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication.

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