



First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa

The Parkway Spire

Photo: Margaret Linton

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**Deadline for next Spire submissions:
August 23, 2014**



Big Soul Concert for Multi-faith Housing

Did you enjoy the recent concert by Big Soul Project Community Gospel Choir at Southminster United Church, put on by the Mental Illness Working Group as a fundraiser for Ancoura? Or maybe you missed it?

In either case, mark your calendar for another wonderful Big Soul Project, this time at First Unitarian Congregation, a fundraiser for the Multi-faith Housing Initiative in support of its capital campaign to double the number of its affordable housing units.

Date: Saturday September 13, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Worship Hall
Tickets: \$20 in advance. \$25 at the door. (Children under 12, \$10)
For ticket sale locations across Ottawa, see the posters in the church.
Contact:
povertyawareness@firstunitarianottawa.ca or Mike Wheeler 613-829-8298

In Memoriam

Joseph Mergl —
Died June 2, 2014



Photo: Margaret Linton

Caring Contacts

July

Janet Clayton 613-733-9566,
jayclay2010@gmail.com
Sherri Watson 613-792-1357,
smwatson@magma.ca

August

Anita Maclean 613-820-2892,
anitamaclean@rogers.com
Elisabeth Morrison 613-225-6702,
eq604@nfc.ca

We bid farewell to Liz Benjamin



Photos: Jan Andrews and Margaret Linton



President's Corner

– *Maury Prevost*

From Montreal to Arnprior

In this column, I would like to report briefly on two recent events: the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM) in Montreal May 16–18, and our own Board retreat in Arnprior June 6–7.

This was my third ACM and my third time as a voting delegate for our congregation at the CUC's Annual General Meeting. Our other voting delegates this year were John Marsh, Eva Berringer, Frances Deverell, Anita MacLean, Linda Goonewardene, and John Twemlow. I encourage you to talk to us about our experiences and takeaways from the sessions. We will be involving you in various follow-up activities during the coming months.



My overriding impression of this ACM was the same as the previous two I attended: it is a motivating and uplifting experience to connect with other Canadian Unitarian Universalists and a good reminder of the importance of our congregation to the CUC and vice versa; in other words, a reminder that we are part of a larger movement in Canada and internationally.

Our congregation has the responsibility and privilege of hosting next year's CUC ACM, May 15–17, at Algonquin College.

Members of the Host Committee—co-chairs Kathy Yach and Marg Lee, Jennifer Rae and Music Director Jacob Caines—were in Montreal to help prepare. They will need lots

of volunteers as we approach the 2015 event, so I encourage you to put the dates on your calendar now and to respond positively to the call for volunteers.

Arnprior was once again the destination for our Board retreat, thanks to the generosity of congregation member Ellen Smith, who allows us to use the wonderful facilities at her Kirkman House Bed & Breakfast at no charge. Ministers John Marsh and Jenn Gray joined Directors Maury Prevost, Maggie Sharp, Alastair Henderson, Chuck Triemstra, Eva Berringer, and Guy Belleperche for the full retreat. In addition, staff members Carolyn Turner, Susan McEwen, and Jacob Caines, and Past-President Kim Elmer joined us for the Friday session.

Key accomplishments at this retreat, in addition to some good team building, were:

- We started work on updating the congregation's Strategic Plan for 2015-2017, to be presented at the Fall Congregational Meeting in October;
- We reviewed responses to the Communications Survey and identified some concrete follow-up actions to implement in the next few months (stay tuned);
- Minister and staff presented a first-draft, balanced budget for 2015;
- We discussed Board priorities for 2014-2015 and developed a preliminary schedule of Board-related events for the next 12 months.

I wish you all a good summer.

~Maury



Capital Ideas!

—John Marsh



Sweet things of summer

Jacob, our Music Director, came into my office this afternoon with strawberries—my first local strawberries of 2014. The taste was nuanced, coming in waves: different parts sweet, tangy, hints of sour. Then was the texture: juicy, seedy, light, substantial. They tasted like summer. And after such a long winter they were so welcome!

I look forward to being in full summer mode. For me that means reading and cooking and swimming and lots of sleeping. The next few weeks are my time for catching up from last year and preparing for next year.

One of many proud accomplishments of last year was our work supporting the Multi-Faith Housing Initiative (MHI). A year ago last spring, we voted as a congregation to focus energy for the following two years on supporting the MHI capital campaign to double the units of affordable housing it offers in our city. The events started last fall with the dinner honouring Werner and Marjorie Daechsel (our “Werner Roast” raised \$4,500). Then we had a concert featuring The Big Soul Project (proceeds of \$692). While this year’s Tulipathon turned into a cold, washed-out disaster, the event gave all of us who were there good stories to tell, and we still raised \$2,975. Finally, our Tribute to Pete Seeger Fundraising Concert was a hoot beyond all reckoning. The concert also raised \$6,788 to be split between the MHI and USC Canada.

All of these events involved our connecting with lots of people beyond the circle we usually see on Sunday morning. We didn’t just raise over \$11,500 for a good cause; we enlarged the circle of people who know about the work of the Multi-faith Housing Initiative, and we enlarged our own circle of good will within the Ottawa community. What might we do for the MHI in its second year? And what new social justice project might we focus on starting in the fall of 2015? Talk to me if you have ideas.

I know that many of you enjoy our Sunday morning services all summer long without interruption. I know that many of you have cabins that you retreat to for most of the summer. And many of you, well, many of you do things in the summer that I know nothing about, and that is OK too.

Wherever your summer paths take you, I wish you some time spent in a sweet relaxed state of mind. Please know that our office has reduced hours in the summer, but it is still open five days a week (Sunday through Thursday). There is someone available for pastoral emergencies during the weeks I am away. And, oh yes, the congregation still has to pay its bills during the summer, so summer pledge payments are especially appreciated.

See you in watermelon season, if not before.

~ John



Photos: Margaret Linton



Religious Exploration – Sharing a moment with Susan



“You were born a child of light’s wonderful secret—you return to the beauty you have always been.”~ Aberjhani

RE Calendar

July/August

The Lounge next to Worship Hall is stocked with quiet activities for families who attend services.

September 6

RE Leaders’ Retreat at Baxter Conservation Area

September 6/7

Junior and Senior Youth Retreat at Baxter Conservation Area

September 7

Ingathering Service: RE resumes.

On a sunny summer morning in June, a group of children, youth, and adults gathered for RE time and concocted some healing salve with gifts from nature: olive and coconut oils, calendula flowers, beeswax, and essential oils of tea tree and lavender. As we poured our mixture into many little pots to be given as Father’s Day gifts to the beloved and loving men in our lives, I thought about the healing gifts we offer and receive.

With the touch of a caring hand, we might spread some of that salve on a scraped knee or an itchy bite. I wondered about the other kinds of ‘salve’ that exist in the medicine chests of our lives and what mindful love and gratitude is present in those moments of simple yet profound connection when we take the time to give our most precious healing gift—our attention.

This summer, many of us will venture outwardly and inwardly to myriad places of worship: woods, rivers, lakes, cottages, boats, park swings, nap-worthy hammocks, our kitchens, a neighbour’s front porch, family homes, busy streets, gardens, farmers’ markets, the stillness in our own depths. May we apply the healing salve of our mindful, compassionate attention to the experiences we meet, to the people we encounter, and to the softness of our own hearts.

~ Susan

All Purpose Healing Salve

- 1/2 cup of coconut oil
- 1/2 cup of olive oil
- 1/4 cup of beeswax
- 1/3 cup of Calendula flowers
- 15–25 drops of Melaleuca (tea tree)
- 15–25 drops of lavender

Directions

1. Put the coconut oil and olive oil in a saucepan. Melt the coconut oil if it isn’t melted already.
2. Add the calendula flower petals (dried) and simmer on low for around 2 hours. Make sure to stir a few times during the process. You can also add the oil and calendula to a crockpot and put on low for up to 3 hours.
3. Strain the mixture into a bowl through a cheesecloth.
4. Now add the calendula oil back to the saucepan and add the beeswax. Melt the beeswax.
5. Remove from heat and let cool for around 15 minutes.
6. Add the essential oils and stir.
7. Pour into a glass jar and store for up to a year. Makes 1 cup.



MUSICOPHILIA

—Jacob Caines, Music director



Beethoven

Listen. His father made a habit
out of hitting him. See
some men drink, some men yell
some men hit their children.
This man did it all, because I guess all men
Want their boys to be geniuses.
Beethoven –
Little boy living in a house
Where a name meant nothing.
Living in a house where mercy
Had to be earned through each perfect note
tumbling up through the roof
to tickle the toes of angels
whose harps couldn't hold half the passion
that was held in the hands
of a young boy
who was hard of hearing.
Beethoven, who heard
his father's anthem every time he put finger to
ivory.
It was not good enough.
So he played slowly-not good enough
so he played softly-not good enough
so he played strongly.
And when he could play no more
when his fingers cramped up
into the gnarled roots of tree trunks
it was not good enough.
Beethoven.
A musician without his most precious tool - his
eardrums.
Could no longer pound out rhythms
for the symphonies playing in his mind.
He couldn't hear the audiences clapping
couldn't hear the people loving him
couldn't hear the women in the front row
whispering.
Beethoven
as they let the music invade their nervous system
like an armada marching through
firing cannonballs detonating every molecule in
their bodies into explosions of heavenly
sensation. Each note leaving track marks
over every inch of their bodies
making them ache for one more hit.
He was an addiction and kings/queens

it didn't matter the man got down on his knees for
no one but amputated the legs of his piano so he
could feel the vibrations
through the floor.
The man got down on his knees
for music-and when the orchestra played his
symphonies
it was the echoes of his father's anthem repeating
itself like a broken record.
It was not good enough-so they played slowly
Not good enough-so they played softly
Not good enough-so they played strongly
Not good enough-so they tried to mock the man,
make fun of the madness by mimicking the
movements.
Holding their bows a quarter of an inch above the
strings
not making a sound.
It was perfect. See the deaf have an intimacy with
silence. It's there in their dreams
and the musicians turned to one another
not knowing what to make of the man
trying to calculate the distance between madness
and genius,
realizing that Beethoven's musical measurements
could take you to distances
reaching past the towers of Babylon
turning solar systems into symbols
that crashed together causing comets to collide
creating crescendos that were so loud
they shook the constellations until the stars began
to fall from the sky and it looked like the entire
universe had begun to cry.
Distance must be an illusion the man must be a
genius.
Beethoven, his thoughts moving at the speed of
sound,
transforming emotion into music and for a
moment it was like joy
was a tangible thing like you could touch it
like for the first time we could watch love and hate
dance together in a waltz of such precision and
beauty that we finally understood the history
wasn't important
to know the man all we ever had to do was listen.

~ by Shane Koyczan

Summer Worship Services

June 29: Jenn's final sermon as our 2013-14 intern

Speaker: Rev. Jennifer Gray
Worship Associate: Joe Connor

July 6: A Rule of Life

Speaker: Curtis Murphy
Worship Associate: Asha Philar

What comes to mind when you think of monasticism? Whether it's a Roman Catholic nun or a Buddhist monk in orange robes, it most likely doesn't have much to do with Unitarian Universalism! Join us to explore the ways UUs have drawn and continue to draw inspiration from monastic ways of living and practising our faith.



July 13: Secrecy Kills Democracy: Twelve Years of Injustice for Mohammed Harkat

(Global Justice Working Group service)

Speaker: Sophie Harkat
Worship Associate: Rev. Jenn Gray

July 20: What do we owe the poor?

Speaker: Reuel Amdur
Worship Associate: Bob Armstrong

Is this the right question? What is the reality of how as a society we treat the poor? Who is on welfare? Would it surprise you to know that everyone is?

July 27: Gratitude is Attitude

Speaker: Phyllis Eleazar
Worship Associate: Sam Wilmott

In a world where we are constantly bombarded with negative media messages, in times of our own stress and distress, it is easy to forget our "blessings" our "good fortune". Maybe these are the best times for just a little more Attitude!

August 3: Local Food - sustainable enterprises in the Ottawa area

(Environmental Working Group service)

Speaker: Bill Shields
Worship Associate: Bob Armstrong

From CSAs to food co-ops to community gardening, local food is increasingly the choice of environmentally concerned and health-conscious consumers.

August 10: The Prodigal Son

Speaker: Susan McEwen
Worship Associate: Alex Campbell

Join us to explore themes of forgiveness, acceptance, and grace in the parable of The Prodigal Son through the voices of its three main figures and the songs of Nina Simone. Special musical guests: Sheila McEwen and Jacob Caines.

August 17: Filling up the Glass

Speaker: Greg Scott
Worship Associate: Bob Armstrong

We will explore optimism vs. pessimism, and how thinkers in various religions relate to this idea.

August 24: Opening Our Eyes to the Spiritual Imperatives of Our Time

Speaker: Rev. Frances Deverell
Worship Associate: Alex Campbell

We know what we have to do, but we're not doing it. Why not? What is stopping us? Is the problem out there—with the politicians? Or is it within ourselves? If we are committed to spiritual growth, what spiritual characteristics do we need to develop in order to face the challenges of climate change and the political and economic state of the world?

August 31: Hymn Sing Service

Speaker: Jacob Caines

Come join us on August 31 for our second annual hymn sing service. Learn about the history of some of our hymns, pick hymns you want to sing, and sing some hymns that have been chosen beforehand.

We will sing old favourites and learn a couple of new ones. If you have a hymn that you would like to sing, send Jacob an email,

music@firstunitarianottawa.ca
by August 27.



Thank you Merci Gracias

~ compiled by Alastaire Henderson

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

- ✚ A very BIG thank-you to the **Seniors' Lunch Program** for donating \$1000 towards purchasing our beautiful new chairs in Fellowship Hall!!
- ✚ Many thanks to **Margot Clarke** and **Ted Elliott** for the handsome new wooden poster boards now gracing the back of Worship Hall.
- ✚ Thanks to the new chair of our RE Team, **Alison Harvey**, who has taken on leadership of our Playground Project. You may receive a call or message from Alison inviting you to lend a hand!
- ✚ A warm thank-you to **Marie Gabe** who continues to contribute many volunteer hours to the RE Library. Check out the new storage unit she economically found on Kijiji to house our cataloguing materials and library computer!
- ✚ Thanks to **Brian Cowan** who patiently and methodically cares for our Adult Library in the Lounge, culling and cataloguing books. What a wonderful resource to explore Unitarian Universalism, world religions, spiritual traditions and more!

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



Photos: Margaret Linton

Notes from the Office

A New Title – Office Manager

As many of you may know by now, Jen Brennan, our former Support Services Assistant has received a title change! As a lot of you have regular contact with our office and are very efficiently served by the always pleasant Jen Brennan, we are delighted to have her job title reflect her current responsibilities.

Jen not only provides extraordinary administrative support to our congregation but she also has developed and maintains our website, acts as facility tour guide for those booking weddings, memorials and workshops, does all of our room bookings (hundreds every month) both internal and external, ensures that our equipment is working properly and many other things that may not be immediately apparent to people.

You can be sure that if you see it (take for example our bulletin boards), Jen has had a hand in creating and/or maintaining it.

As Jen is now Office Manager of First Unitarian Congregation, her email address is omr@firstunitarianottawa.ca. Although emails to her old email address will be rerouted for a bit longer, please enter Jen's new address in your email address books.

Friends of the Meditation Gardens

Next time you take a gentle walk through our beautiful gardens, you'll notice an abundance of new black-and-white plant identification signs. We've received positive feedback on how these enhance the experience of the garden. A second display cabinet for the south arbour is also in the works, which will contain educational materials.

This year, beginning in August, we'll be holding monthly "volunteer days" when we'll be out in the gardens doing seasonal tasks, eating lunch together (BYOL, tea provided) then taking in a tutorial delivered by head gardener Renee de Vry. Everyone is welcome to the garden, the lunch, and/or the tutorial.

Volunteers will meet in the garden at 10 a.m., work until noon with Renee facilitating, and then have our lunch between 12 and 1 p.m.

At 1:00 p.m., Renee will give a tutorial with time for a Q&A at the end. We'll wrap up by 2:00 p.m.

Tutorial Topics

Thursday, August 14
"Care of Irises"

Friday, September 19
"Deadheading plants"

Saturday, October 18
"How to plant a tree"

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



Fall Fair (aka Holly and Lace Bazaar) – November 15, 2014

Please save those valuables!

As you clean out the garage or basement this summer, please consider saving your treasures for the Fair.

- Quality books, clothing (not children's), electronics (no cathode ray tubes please), small furniture, antiques, sports gear, toys, music and DVDs make for great Fall Fair donations. Items must be in good working order!
- Remember, too, the finer items for the silent auction—those gifts no longer used; a great way to earn a charitable tax receipt.
- Jewellery, stamps and coins can be left at the office at any time.

Storage space is limited. Thus only silent auction items can be accepted through the summer months. If your household items need to move before then, contact Katherine Gunn, who can route them into the Poverty Awareness Working Group's (PAWG) project assisting the Aboriginal Women's Shelter. For storage or PAWG, please call Katherine, 613-729-0504, klgunn@magma.ca.

Preserves

If you are making preserves this summer, consider making extra jars for the Fair. These need to be sealed Mason-like jars, with hot water bath sealing, in order for us to sell them. Keep your receipts for jar costs and we will reimburse.

More info:
mlinton@trytel.com

Volunteers Needed

Our success is due to our enthusiastic volunteer base; we have small tasks, big tasks, on site tasks, at-home tasks. People contribute by donating their gently used treasures, making jams, jellies, sweaters, squares, salads and baking, organizing a section of the bazaar, selling, serving, counting money and schlepping goods into our building and then out to community organizations whatever does not sell.



The Organizing Team is seeking people to grow into these roles:

Assistant Director—learn the co-director role; oversee the event ensuring congregational policies are followed; lead the organizing team.

Books, Bytes, Beats, Bric-a-Brac Coordinator—this coordinator mentors and manages the convenors of books, music, flea market, electronic and large items (outdoor).

Contact: Margaret at
613-728-2446,
mlinton@trytel.com



Announcements

Hospitality Hour

Summer hospitality hour means fewer volunteers are needed. It works well with two people on “set up and serve” from the main-kitchen hatch. We need one more person for clean-up and help with the dishwashing. It is easier on the female volunteers if there is a man to help lift the dish racks from the dishwasher.

Please sign up when you're available over the summer. We start set-up at 10 a.m., and serving and clean-up take about an hour or less after the service. Even if you haven't signed up, please come by the kitchen anyway whenever you're at a summer service to see if you can help on that day—it would be much appreciated. Without your help, Hospitality Hour cannot function as the congregation needs and expects.

Thank you!

~Tarrel Armstrong
Coordinator, Hospitality Hour

2013 Annual Report

This is a reminder that all groups should submit their write-ups for the congregation's 2013 Annual Report. Submissions are due by July 31, 2014 to publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

We would also love to have some extra help with preparing the report – Microsoft Word skills is an asset. If you are interested in proofreading or formatting, please send a message to Alastaire, hendersalas@gmail.com, 613-562-2253.

Women's Personal Growth Group

Please join us at our summer meetings. On Wednesday, **July 2**, we are headed to Isabel's cottage for a daytime gathering for lunch and a swim.

Our Wednesday, **August 6** meeting will take place at 7:15 p.m. in Room 6 at the church as usual.

Contact: Evelyn Algar, evelyn.algar@rogers.com, 613-728-5761.

Unitarian Seniors' Program

July

John Soar will challenge the group with some lighthearted and entertaining quizzes. Alex Campbell will lead the worship service. Participants are asked to bring their own sandwiches; tea, juice and cookies will be provided.

When: Tuesday, July 29

Service: 11:30 a.m.

Lunch (bring your own): 12 p.m.

Program: 1 pm

Where: Worship/Fellowship Hall
RSVP (if you are not on the phone list): Maureen Sly, 613-728-7610, mmsly@rogers.com by Sunday, July 27.

August

Ellen Bell will facilitate a “bring and share” activity. Those who wish to do so may bring an item of significance and share the story it represents. Others may prefer just to come and be entertained. Ellen will also lead the worship service. Participants are asked to bring their own sandwiches; tea, juice and cookies will be provided.

When: Wednesday, August 27

Service: 11:30 a.m.

Lunch (bring your own): 12 p.m.

Program: 1 p.m.

Where: Worship/Fellowship Hall
RSVP (if you are not on the phone list): Maureen Sly, 613-728-7610 mmsly@rogers.com by Monday, August 25.

The House Next Door

Unitarian House is seeking applications for positions on its Board of Governors.

Particular skills needed at this time are in finance and property management. We encourage congregation members to join so that Unitarian House can maintain its mandate of having a majority of congregation members on its board. We invite members who have the above skills, or other skills that would be of benefit to UH, to please consider joining this innovative and successful “home” founded by the congregation thirty years ago.

The Annual General Meeting will

take place in September 2014. Please send applications to the Chair, Nominating and Board Development Committee, Unitarian House of Ottawa, 20 Cleary Ave., Ottawa, ON K2A 3Z9, or by email, attention to the Chair at coneil@unitarianhouse.ca

For more information on the role you might want to speak to the some of the existing congregation members on the UH Board including Sue Williams and Paula Theetge.

Wednesday Evening Mindfulness Meditation

Three group meetings are planned over the summer, on Wednesdays July 2, July 30, and August 20. Starting time is 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

In the fall, the Wednesday Evening Mindfulness Meditation group will begin its weekly sittings on Wednesday, September 10. *Wishing everyone a relaxing summer*

Three Rivers Choir

Our thanks to Jacob Caines for providing guidance during the past season at the church. Three Rivers is a self-directed women's ensemble at First Unitarian. In the fall, the choir will have openings for two altos. If you would like to check us out, you are welcome to join us at our first two practices, on Wednesday September 10 and 17, 1–3 p.m. in Worship Hall. *For more information, contact:* Margaret Linton, mlinton@tytel.com or Jan Andrews, janandrews@rogers.com.

Glebe/Centretown/Old Ottawa South Neighbourhood Group

Note: CHANGE OF DATE for annual summer potluck supper!

When: Sunday, July 6 at 6 p.m.

Where: 108 Belmont Ave

Contact: Trudy Kassner, 613-730-2823, trudyk@magma.ca

All are welcome. Bring something to share with the group.

Next meeting - late September, date to be announced.



First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa

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Web site: www.firstunitarianottawa.ca

Summer Office Hours: Monday to Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

2014–2015 Board of Directors

Maury Prevost, President; Kim Elmer, Past President; Maggie Sharp, Vice-President; Chuck Triemstra,

Treasurer; Alastaire Henderson, Secretary;

Members at Large: Robert Cummings, Eva Berringer, Guy Belleperche, and Terry Kimmel

Youth Representative: Jenna Hill-Murphy

Program Staff

Rev. John Marsh, Minister minister@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x225

Susan McEwen, Director of Lifespan Learning dll@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x234

Marie Gabe, Lifespan Learning Assistant lla@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x226

Jacob Caines, Music Director, music@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x230

Ellen Bell, Spiritual Care Visitor

Lay Chaplains

Bob Armstrong (Beechwood Military Cemetery), Alec Campbell, Nicki Bridgland (candidate)

Administrative Staff

Carolyn Turner, Director of Operations dro@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x228

Jen Brennan, Office Manager omr@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x221

Mary Du, Accounting Officer accounting@firstunitarianottawa.ca, x222

Spire Contributors

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Next deadline for submissions: August 23, 2014

Subscriptions

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For information on receiving the Spire via surface mail (cost \$12), contact the church office.

Spire Editorial Team

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