

THE CANADIAN

UNITARIAN



Newsletter of the Canadian Unitarian Council • VOLUME 54 • NUMBER 3 • SUMMER 2012

Neighbours in Faith

Being with other people who do religion differently is helpful for reflecting on one's own spiritual and religious growth, according to David Dalley, member of South Fraser Unitarian Congregation of Surrey, BC, and father of two young children. David believes that interfaith work can inspire Christians to be better Christians, Muslims to be better Muslims, Sikhs to be better Sikhs, and Unitarians to be better Unitarians. In addition, Surrey is an increasingly diverse community—in 2006 46.1% of the city's population identified themselves as visible minorities. For this reason, the congregation's interfaith programming focused on education and building trust among communities.

Five years ago, David and his wife Erin met with several families from different faith traditions. They visited one another's houses of worship and began the formation of the Surrey Neighbouring Faiths Program, with a mission to build "community capacity for multifaith learning and dialogue, with focus on children and families."

Volunteers from 11 different faith communities worked together to develop and administer a wide range of multifaith community programs. One of

the first programs, in partnership with the local public library, was the development of a Multifaith Booklist and 11 Multifaith Storytelling Kits about the community's different faith traditions, including a Unitarian kit. Following this, workshops were held for various educators and community groups.

In 2010 consultation was given to a number of secular and faith-based organizations to assist in the development of interfaith committees, dialogues, and programs. Building Interfaith Capacity in Your Community was presented to the YMCA Youth Peace Network. Five workshops, Honouring Children's Religious and Spiritual Identities, were presented within the Surrey School District. The year culminated with the production of a video documentary, *Honouring Diverse Beliefs in*

our Communities: A Conversational Toolkit, which showcases a multifaith workshop that is designed to engage participants in active learning and dialogue about religious diversity. A workbook for early childhood educators, *Honouring Children's Religious Spiritual Identities* was also produced.

With the goals of networking, information-sharing, and the development *continued on page 2*

DAVID DALLEY



Lengthy conversation in the Sikh gurdwara: one of the many delightful moments of the Surrey Neighbouring Faiths Program.



THE CANADIAN

UNITARIAN

VOLUME 54 • NUMBER 3 • SUMMER 2012

<http://cuc.ca/the-canadian-unitarian>

ISSN 0527-9860

The Canadian Unitarian is the newsletter of the Canadian Unitarian Council. It is free to all members for whom the CUC has a current address.* *The Canadian Unitarian* reports on newsworthy events in the denomination, including the annual conference each spring. It attempts to reflect all segments of Unitarianism and Universalism in Canada. We welcome all submissions; however publication is based on the criteria of newsworthiness, relevance to readers, length, and balance. Signed letters to the editor will be included, after being edited for length and content.

* Non-members can subscribe to *The Canadian Unitarian* for \$15 CDN or USD. Send name, address, and cheque to CUC office.

Canadian Unitarian Council Conseil unitarien du Canada

100-344 Dupont Street
Toronto, ON M5R 1V9

Toll-free 1.888.568.5723
Phone 416.489.4121
Email info@cuc.ca

Opinions expressed in *The Canadian Unitarian* are those of the contributors. Sources and numerical values reported within articles have been verified by the authors.

Contents

- 1 Neighbours in Faith
- 3 Letters to the Editor
- 4 President's Message
- 5 Executive Director's Message
- 6 Staff Shout Out
- 10 Working Together in RE
- 10 CHURCH presents at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver
- 11 Poem: Loon
- 12 Across Canada
- 17 Responses to the Symposium
- 18 Many voices, One Song
- 19 *Un texte pour le temps présent*
- 20 The Life of a Lay Chaplain
- 21 Are you a UU Visible Minority?
- 22 Message from UUMOC
- 24 In Praise of Our Differences



continued from page 1 of support systems, Surrey Neighbouring Faiths Program is continuing to create programs, and build relationships and trust among religious groups as well as in many different secular community organizations.

Unitarians are well suited to be interfaith community builders; our contributions can enrich our local communities and add vitality to our growing liberal religious movement. We are curious, open-minded, generally good at making friends, and we are fluent in both 'religious' and 'secular' languages.

 Gerri Ormiston,

South Fraser Unitarian Congregation

Visit www.snfp.ca to learn more about
Surrey Neighbouring Faiths Program and
watch the documentary online.

Contact David Dalley at davidanderin@dalley.ca or (604) 502-8661



Printed on Canadian-made, acid-free,
recycled paper (100% post-consumer fibre)

Letters to the Editor

The Czech Connection

It was most interesting to read about the 90th anniversary of Czech Unitarians in Prague. Of special interest too was Rev. Frances Deverell's lead article "Social Justice as Spiritual Practice", in which she notes: "We learned from Lotta Hitschmanova that it was not enough to send warm clothes and blankets. We had to work with people to help them take charge of their own well-being, not create dependence." Dr. Lotta, as she became known, founded USC Canada in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee, thereby becoming one of the most prominent Czech (and Prague) born Unitarians in Canadian history.

David Rain, USC Canada

Revamped logo?

On the cover of the spring issue, I see someone has tampered with the Maple Leaf—trying to improve it?—with curly leaves rather than the former straight lines. I do hope this is a temporary change.

Arthur Hughes, Unitarian Church of Victoria

Please be assured that The Canadian Unitarian has made no modifications to the CUC logo.



Five of the Seven principles, in child-friendly language, by UUEstrie-Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley, for the local Canada Day parade.

CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND STAFF

President
Gary Groot

Vice-President
Ellen Campbell

Treasurer
Kristina Stevens

Secretary
Glenda Butt

Social Responsibility Liaison
Leslie Kemp

Curtis Murphy

Rev. Jessica Purple Rodela

Roger Rochester

Minister Observer
Rev. John Marsh

Youth Observer
Micaela Corcoran

Interim Executive Director
Vyda Ng

Congregational Development,
Central Region
Helen Armstrong

Office Administrator
Karen Claney

Social Responsibility Coordinator
April Hope

National Youth and Young Adult
Programming & Ministry Development
Ariel Hunt-Brondwin

Congregational Development,
Eastern Region
Kelly McDowell

Technical Services/ACM Program Manager
Jorge Moreira

Financial Administrator
Vidya Sudama

Congregational Development,
the West and British Columbia
Rev. Antonia Won

THE CANADIAN UNITARIAN

Editor
Raquel Rivera

Graphic Designer
Kim Chua

Issue Proofreaders
Kenzie Love, Larry Wulff

Diversity, You Say?

In my professional life I am in the midst of pulling together some research groups that I expect will have a significant impact on our healthcare system. During this process, it has become clear that successful research groups are those in which a wide range of expertise, crossing a variety of disciplines, comes to the table. While it might be easier to work with people who share my discipline's worldview, that wouldn't result in new ways of thinking—and it would fail to have the impact that the system sorely needs.

Since the Spiritual Leadership Symposium ended, I've had time to reflect on why it was a success for me. I experienced first hand our diversity and how we have come to celebrate it. We discussed and engaged in "woo woo"—Keynote Speaker Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom's term for the creative, emotion-based activities at the Symposium. We made space for a variety of expressions of spirituality, and moved beyond our tendency of limiting dialogue to an intellectual plane.



SYLVIA ZEELENBERG

At the masjid, learning about the Quran; part of the Surrey Neighbouring Faiths Program, co-organized by the South Fraser Unitarian Congregation.

As I travel to Unitarian Universalist congregations across our country I consistently hear conversation about diversity—how we uphold the worth and dignity of every person. To be honest, I do not frequently see that reflected in the people in attendance. We are essentially an aging, white, middle- to upper middle-class, intellectual movement. Yes, we are proud that we embrace diversity of sexual orientation and that we encourage people to explore a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, but frankly, we look more like a research team composed of individuals in the same field.

Is diversity a goal that we should be actively striving for? My experience of the Spiritual Leadership Symposium suggests to me that the answer is yes! I envision we could be a vibrant diverse team—stronger for our differences—that goes beyond tolerance to fully embrace the richness these differences bring to the table.

But if so, how do we go about it? Are we prepared to celebrate unfamiliar people coming through our doors, who bring different world views? How do we make space for them when they do come in? More responses to the Spiritual Leadership Symposium are in this edition of *The Canadian Unitarian*, along with more reflections, questions—and even a survey—on diversity in the UU community. What do you think—are we ready?

*Dr. Gary Groot,
President,
Canadian Unitarian Council*

Growing Our Vital Religious Communities

My first months on the job have been filled with opportunities to stretch, grow, and seek creative solutions, which also happened to be the focus of this spring's first-ever Spiritual Leadership Symposium—a milestone collaboration between the CUC and UU ministers of Canada (UUMOC).

In these months there have been challenges too. Staff made difficult decisions to cancel both Goldmine (UU leadership school by youth for youth) and Canadian UU Leadership (CUUL) School this summer. In addition, we have known since March that we would have to say goodbye to three staff in pivotal positions. While dealing with the impact of their loss, existing staff have been challenged to find ways to fill the gaps.

Underlying it all has been the question, “How will we grow our Canadian UU communities?” Growth is most often measured by increase in numbers or size; I believe that in our UU congregations and communities, our experiences are deeper and more meaningful when people engage together to survive conflict, collaborate in meaningful work, and laugh together. If we can find the best in ourselves and make it through to the other end, we may emerge stronger, enriched, and more mindful.

If our spiritual houses are in order, if we are ready to stretch and be welcoming, if we grow in compassion and understanding, numerical growth may be a fortunate by-product.

CUC staff spent three days in mid-July working through priorities, navigating team dynamics, and developing a realistic workplan geared towards congregational development and vitality. To undertake this vital growth with our 50 member congregations across the country, we have the challenge of working with a deficit budget and a reduced complement of four part-time and five full-time staff.

Can we do this? I believe we can—congregation by congregation, building carefully on our priorities. We can do this by strengthening connections, building relationships, and deepening our understanding

of what vitality means for each congregation. It will require hard work, much patience, and a willingness to be part of the journey. Most of all, it will require that we reach for the best in ourselves, and share that which makes us come alive.



Vyda Ng,
Interim Executive Director,
Canadian Unitarian Council

We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for the professional dedication and skill our colleagues brought to their work in the Canadian Unitarian Council:

Ben Wolfe, Director of Communications, for kick-starting CUC communications and revitalizing the website.

Phil Strapp, Director of Finance, for helping the CUC mature in its organization and function.

Linda Thomson, Director of Congregational Development, for grace, generosity, and acumen in growing our religious communities.

“May our faith sustain us, our hope inspire us, and our love surround us as we go our separate ways, knowing that we will gather again in this beloved community.”

Jim Wickman,
Illuminations, uua.org



CUC Staff Shout Out

Eyes and Ears of the CUC

Since joining the CUC in November 2011, I have met with some very interesting and dedicated people who've made my transition into the CUC family an absolute delight. These CUC Monitoring Groups members have been tracking, responding, and challenging government policy and corporate decisions for decades!

Part of this work resulted in the CUC gaining Intervenor status in the assisted dying case before the British Columbia Supreme Court, which in June ruled that the criminal laws against assisted dying were unconstitutional. The CUC has been long standing advocate for "...recognition of the right of death with dignity..." (1973 CUC Resolution).

The Canadian Unitarian Council now has 11 Monitoring Groups; we are always looking for eyes and ears to follow local, provincial and federal interests in the following areas; Affordable Housing, Choices in Dying, Criminal Justice, Democracy, Diversity, Drug Policy, Economic Justice, Environment, Gender & Sexual Diversity, Globalization, Peace. If you are interested in helping to monitor any of these areas, please contact April Hope, Social Responsibility Coordinator, at april@cuc.ca.

*✿ April Hope,
Social Responsibility Coordinator*

How Young Adults Grow

As many congregations ask how they can 'grow' their Young Adult (YA) and youth groups, YAs themselves are finding new ways to grow and become their own community, online and at gatherings.

This summer YAs from around Ontario and Quebec—many of whom first met each other at Youth Cons—ran the five-day spiritual retreat, OPUS, for YAs from across the continent. Fall will bring the fifth Annual YA weekend at Unicamp, as well as plans for a YA conference in BC. Regional Fall Gatherings in Ottawa, Mississauga, and Saskatoon will provide another chance for youth and young adults to connect with each other, as they participate in our larger community. YA planners from Calgary are already working on the ACM 2013 YA events, hoping to recapture some of the magic they experienced through fellowship and worship with their UU peers in Toronto 2011.

Concentrated events like these are a rich fertilizer that feed the YA community. For many YAs these events are 'church'. Recognizing this is probably one of the easiest—and most difficult—changes the Council can make. While it's a different way of being involved in church for many, look at the growth this shift is bringing.

*✿ Ariel Hunt-Bronwin,
National Youth and
Young Adult Programming & Ministry Development*

Fall Events & Gatherings

- Sep 14–16** 5th Annual UU Young Adult Weekend, Unicamp, ON
register online: http://connectuu.com/events.php?action=view&event_id=1279
- Oct 12–14** Eastern Regional Fall Gathering, Ottawa, ON
Western Regional Fall Gathering, Saskatoon, SK
- Nov 9–11** Central Regional Fall Gathering, Mississauga, ON
- TBA** BC Youth Con and the BC YA gathering will be posted at <http://cuc.ca/calendar/>

Aspiring and Inspiring Congregations

“New people are trying us out. Why are they not staying?” “Our leadership is ageing. How do we carry on as a liberal religious community?” “Our area is ripe for Unitarianism. How do we serve the people here?” These are questions I am asked by Boards and leaders across the BC and Western Regions.

Good questions are a healthy sign of a commitment to renewing our spiritual communities as Canadian Unitarians. In these changed times we recognize our congregations may need to shift focus, but they remain relevant places for people of all kinds to find meaning and hope. The question behind all these questions is, “How do we evolve as a congregation?”

Its answer lies in another question: What does our congregation aspire to? Many who attended Rev. Robert Latham’s seminars on ‘mission’ at the ACM 2011 in Toronto, realized a need for a unifying sense of purpose, and initiated that conversation in their congregations this year. Other leaders challenged their congregations to re-examine their understanding of ministry, and its potential for enriching the congregation and its wider community. This resulted in new or expanded ministries. Others determined it was time to cultivate a common expression of their expectations of one another, through a congregational covenant.

Undertaking these questions and initiatives is demanding but it brings clarity that revives the spirit and inspires us anew. It reveals us to one another, and gives us hope and reason to take steps forward into the unknown together. My congratulations and gratitude go to all congregational leaders on a year of courageous commitments.

*✦ Rev. Antonia Won,
Congregational Development
—BC and Western Regions*

Being Better Together

Across the Central Region, congregations engage with the perennial question of how to grow. The five types of growth are numerical, maturational (growth in each person’s spiritual deepening), organic (a congregation’s ability to maintain its health and to engage with the world), incarnational (living our values in the world) and associational (relationship to other Unitarian Universalist Congregations and the wider community).

After our CUC sessions on mission building with Rev. Robert Latham in 2011, congregations began to re-examine mission work. The Unitarian Congregation of Mississauga and Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Toronto joined together to bring Rev. Latham in for a day-long mission building session, and Huronia Unitarian Fellowship had a conversation about their mission. The Unitarian Fellowship of London engaged in a day-long leadership retreat, while The Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough and the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo did intensive work on financial stewardship.

Getting our congregational house in order can help us attract new members. Working on a new mission can start this renewal process, as can attention to safe communities policies, and Board development work. Establishing communication and conflict resolution processes can also strengthen the foundation. It is hopeful to see congregations embrace change, remain relevant, and step up to think collectively about who we are and how we can work on being better together.

*✦ Helen Armstrong,
Congregational Development—Central Region
continued on page 9*



Staff Shout Out (*continued*)

continued from page 8

SYLVIA ZEELENBERG



CUC Changes: 10 Years in Perspective

10 years ago I started my employment with the Canadian Unitarian Council. Only a few months earlier, the delegates to the CUC Annual Meeting and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) had voted to affirm CUC in a role that would be more independent from the UUA. Congregational development supports that had previously been available through the UUA were now to be the responsibility of the CUC. I was one of three people selected to help us move forward.

Much has happened over those 10 years at the Council level. Our Boards have worked hard, making best decisions with available information and resources. I've had the pleasure of working with dedicated colleagues and gifted volunteers. However, looking back over the past 10 years, what really strikes me are the changes in the way we understand ourselves—both at the congregational level and the national level.

During my time with the Council, I've seen us consider and embrace the idea of shared ministry, when lay leaders and professional ministers combine efforts, for a potent creative synergy. As a result of this I've seen more acceptance of ordained ministers, and recognition of how they can support congregational vitality.

I've also seen several of our congregations grapple with growth, while understanding that numerical growth comes when congregations are open to change—and to the possibility that they are not as open and accepting as they hoped to be.

More and more, I've seen leaders in congregations adopt the idea of welcoming and growth as a ministry—a way of reaching to serve those who might long for a liberal religious community. It used to be common to hear people talk about growth as

beneficial for the congregation (more people = more pledges + more volunteers), rather than as a value central to the congregation's sense of mission.

I hear congregations redefining their mission, considering both what is needed and what might need to stop. I've noticed a movement toward a more inclusive theology at the congregational level. Humanists, theists, and others are learning, how to support and learn from one another as the demographics of society and our congregations change.

It is also my impression that congregations are paying more attention to leadership development, seeking people who bring a connection that is grounded to the work, and no longer recruiting the first person who says 'yes'.

These are markers of a growing maturity in our movement and our congregations. I believe that in time our movement, our congregations, and the people who call themselves Unitarian Universalists, will be richer for it.

I'm sorry that my time with the CUC is ending; I had hoped to serve longer. I don't exactly know where my path leads (do any of us ever?). But I take with me gratitude and inspiration. I've had the privilege of serving our movement and supporting our congregations. I've met people whose dedication to Unitarian Universalism and our congregations is breathtaking. I'll carry that with me into my ministry. I believe that the communities we are creating make a real difference in the lives of many. What we do is important, life affirming work. I am proud to have been part of it!

*✿ Linda Thomson,
Director of Congregational Development*

Many Milestones

It has been a significant year for Eastern congregations. UUEstrie in North Hatley and the Unitarian Fellowship of Ottawa ratified mission and vision statements. The Kingston Fellowship took the leap and purchased a new home. The UU Church of Halifax celebrated its 75th anniversary, was awarded the 2012 Northern Lights grant, and called Rev. Norm Horofker as their settled minister. The Unitarian Church of Montreal celebrated its 170th anniversary.

In October, the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa hosts the Eastern Regional Gathering (ERG) with the theme, *A Gathering for All Ages*. Dale McGowan, co-author of *Parenting Beyond Belief*, is the Keynote speaker. A Renaissance Module focused on UU Identity will run concurrently with the ERG and will be an enriching experience for deepening understanding of, and capacity to articulate, Unitarian Universalism.

This fall, thanks to the hard work of Audrey O’Callaghan and Laura McNaughton, the CUC is thrilled to be publishing the Wise Elders’ Curriculum. Wise Elders Circles are a form of small group ministry developed to enable seniors to share their stories and wisdom with others. Audrey will be offering facilitation training for these circles at the upcoming ERG and the Central Regional Gathering.

Stay tuned for information on a number of exciting initiatives that leaders in the Eastern Region are brewing up. As a region facing declining membership, my sense is that leaders are starting to look at growth with new eyes, and are showing a willingness to adapt to changing realities. It is an exciting time to be a part of this movement and I look forward to supporting growth and vitality throughout the upcoming season.

 Kelly McDowell,

Congregational Development—Eastern Region

Announcement



Annual Conference and Meeting 2013: Join the Conversation!

A hearty welcome and invitation from the Host Committee at the Unitarian Church of Calgary for the ACM 2013: Diversity.

Here’s a glimpse of what’s in store: There will be organized programs for all ages of children, youth, young adults, and adults. We expect families will especially enjoy this weekend. Be prepared to engage in conversations that will stretch and provoke you on the theme of Diversity. The Confluence Lecture, sponsored by the UU Ministers of Canada (UUMOC), will be delivered by Rev. Shawn Newton. Details on activities will be posted to the CUC website cuc.ca by mid-September, 2012.

You’ll also learn about the many things to enjoy in and around Calgary should you extend your stay, the beautiful mountains in our backyard, and many city attractions.

No website access? Never fear—ACM 2013 information is also being sent directly to your congregation.

Start now by marking your calendar: the Annual Meeting and Conference in Calgary for the holiday long weekend of May 17-19, 2013. The Host Committee can be reached at 2013-acm@cuc.ca. Gather with a great group of Unitarians and Universalists from across the country—and welcome to the conversation!

 *The Host Committee of the Unitarian Church of Calgary*

Working Together in RE

Working Together in Faith; this was the mission statement Rev. Anne Barker, and I designed to help begin defining our professional relationship at Westwood Unitarian Congregation in Edmonton. As a statement of respect and compassion, it acknowledges that working in a faith community is unique, that the jobs of minister and Director of Religious Education are intertwined, and a potential source of support and growth for each other.

Like many of our Directors of Religious Education (DRE's) I'm part-time, and have other major time commitments that are not church-related. Having this statement helps me focus on my job and reminds me that we both strive to bring our best selves to the work we do together and for our chosen faith. It also opens the door to discussions about faith, learning and understanding. Our commitment to Work Together in Faith, helps me feel—in what is sometimes a lonely job—like I have a co-worker, and I do!

This year Anne and I decided to create something new: we want to deliver a year-long integrated

program, involving as many parts of the community as possible and creating opportunities to share and learn throughout the congregation.

The theme for the coming year is, Living the Principles Together. Each month we will explore some aspect of bringing the Seven UU principles into our lives. Our RE stories will be based on the principles, and be shared with both adults and children each week. We've invited all the working committees at Westwood to participate, with the idea that their planned activities can also serve to highlight the principles in action. One of our hopes is that we can remember all of the principles by the end of the year!

We'll let you know how it goes: check out our blog @ livingtheprinciplestogether.wordpress.com, to be launched this September.

 *Kathy Lightfoot,*
Director of Religious Education,
Westwood Unitarian Congregation

ALANNAH JOHNSTON



CHURCH presents at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver

It was a crisp, clear winter evening; people of all ages—friends, family, strangers—gathered in the social hall of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. Twinkle lights and colourful projected lightscares lit the hall while the delicious scents of spicy chai tea and samosas wafted through the room. People mingled, drinks in hand. They joined the ping pong tournament, chatted at the “drawing table”, and wondered what the evening had in store. They were here for CHURCH, but not the kind you are thinking. Everyone was invited across the courtyard into the sanctuary. The show was about to start.

Rewind to a few months before, when Rev. Steven Epperson gathered a group of creatively inclined young people who were involved in and around the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. He observed how the sanctuary often sat empty on Sunday evenings—a sanctuary with incredible acoustics, seating for 200, and a sound system. Knowing how hard it is for emerging artists to find affordable places to perform, he offered it to us, to make something happen. So CHURCH presents was born.

continued on page 11



Loon by M. Elaine Harvey

Elaine Harvey is a long-time Kingston Unitarian for whom the Seventh UU principle, “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”, is profoundly important. She has served in many roles, including UU-UNO Envoy. At present she is a member of the Canadian Unitarian Council Peace Monitoring Group.

Please send your submissions of short poems to Janet Vickers, poetry editor (poetry@cuc.ca).

The night’s fury gone
in the morning mist
of the after-storm
When the cove is calm
from the surge replenished
When the land drips green
and the gentle rain
caresses the leaves
A broadening “v”
begins to form
and at its head
a stately loon
glides smoothly
along the axis of the bay.
No fishers out at dawn–
They did not come.
No swimmers break
the silence of the morn.
And as she glides
her trail augmenting,
embraces the bay behind.
Once more she claims
mystique and mystery.
The bay is hers!

continued from page 10

Our goal with CHURCH is to provide a venue for emerging and established artists to perform, cross-weaving Vancouver’s various artistic enclaves, to curate an evening of sensory and community-making delight.

CHURCH presents is about creating a space for art to happen, showcasing talent and creativity, and providing a new and refreshing experience for all to enjoy. With the goal of all artists being compensated fairly for their craft, all proceeds from tickets went to the artists themselves.

Our debut evening featured the talents of Hannah Epperson on violin, loop, and vocals, the extraordinary shadow puppet duo Mind of a Snail Puppet Co., and the lovely ensemble Morlove.

After the (somewhat bewildering) success of our first event on January 28, CHURCH presented

again on May 11 with the talented Magpie Ulysses, James Lamb, and Maria in the Shower, along with the shadow puppet wizards Mind of a Snail Puppet Co., a visual art installation in the social hall, and a rustic pie vendor! CHURCH is now planning an exciting line up of events for this fall. Please check out our facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/churchpresents>, or our blog: churchpresents.wordpress.com for more info on CHURCH presents and our upcoming events.

 *Haley Hunt-Brondwin,
Unitarian Church of Vancouver*



Across Canada

Farewell at Nanaimo

Members and friends of the First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo (FUFON) gathered at Pacific Garden Cohousing Community the afternoon of Sunday, June 24, for our year-end picnic and to bid Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz a fond farewell before she departed to take up her new position as a developmental minister at the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon.

There was lots of great food as well as lively musical performances by the choir and other talented musicians from the congregation. There were some tears, laughter, and many reminiscences of Karen's four years with us. The congregation presented Karen with three gifts: a special book of photographs of FUFON life; a book of remembrances with individual poems, writings, and drawings from congregation members; and a beautiful pendant with a Tree of Life design. Our loss is Saskatoon's gain!

Now we will be moving into the ministerial search process, something we've never done before. However, like Saska-

toon, we are at the stage where we want a developmental minister, and in the coming months will be identifying what the issues and problems are for our congregation, as well as our hopes and dreams for the future, ably assisted by Rev. Jane Bramadat, the UUA's Ministerial Settlement Representative in Canada.

Kathryn-Jane Hazel

Victoria: HOW Active and Alive

First Unitarian Church of Victoria's ministers begin their parental leave this fall, following the much-anticipated birth of Rev. Shana's baby in August. Rev. Melora has organized an impressive line-up of ministers to fill the pulpit, and an extensive network of lay leadership to support the congregation until our ministers return to us in December.

Last spring, we launched another Healing Our World (HOW) promotion and are funding three projects: feeding breakfast to 30 pupils from poverty-stricken families in Jamaica for a year; providing financial support to a minister who cares for members

of the street community with no medical conditions or mental illness. The costs for a local First Unitarian Church encourage Aboriginal people in the community. We also provided support for a new initiative that we cooked 810 hot, protein-rich soups. Out of the Rain Youth Centre provides less youth, as well as clothing, jackets, and other necessities.

As always, music was a highlight of our church year. We had music by the men's and women's choirs in addition to our regular handbell choir.

Bittersweet Celebrations

Samaya Oakley, our Youth Coordinator of 15 years at the Shore Unitarian Church, is taking the next step towards ordination as a ministerial internship at the Unitarian Church in Kirkland, WA. We are proud of what she's accomplished and also sad to see her go. She was a volunteer and went on to become the most widely known youth coordinator of our church.

On June 9, 125 church members, adults and adults from other congregations in BC and WA gathered to celebrate her vocation.

THANKS TO SUELLEN GUENTHER



KATHY SAGE



community afflicted with addiction; and helping with the Nation's pow-wow to bring youth back into their communities. Church members provided practical support. Church members provided practical support. Church members provided practical support.

was an important part and included special and women's choirs, in par choirs and the new

✦ *Suellen Guenther*

Transition at North Shore

paid Youth Program leaves the North Shore church in order to take the ordained ministry: a minister at Northlake UU Church are happy for her and accomplished, but are no. Samaya began as a minister to become one of our own and respected UU minister on the continent. children, youth, young people from a number of congregations in Washington State, gathered to see her off

in an evening of appreciation, congratulation, and not a little hilarity. The next day, Samaya led us in worship and spoke to us about The Art of Saying Goodbye, after which she received a standing ovation.

This is a significant event in our 45-year history; we took the step years ago to pay for quality youth programming, and now we have hired our subsequent Youth Coordinator who will be introduced to the congregation this September.

✦ *Rev Stephen Atkinson*

Beacon Welcomes Consulting Minister

Beacon Unitarian Church is pleased to announce that Ms. Debra Thorne, ministerial candidate, will be joining us as our Consulting Minister starting in September. Debra has years of experience in the Unitarian church, including seven years as a lay chaplain. She is a long-time member of the Vancouver Unitarian Church. Her first profession was as Acting Instructor, and then as Spiritual Director.

Having recently completed her master of divinity degree through Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago and an internship at the Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Port Townsend, WA, Debra had this to say about her new relationship with Beacon: "That place, that reason we come together, is in the rich joy of encountering another person in the cen-

tre of their searching, or in the shared moments of communion when we know that we are simply human, tenderly human, and richly human together. I look now confidently into the future with you, knowing that I can bring with me this deep joy for our human journey and with you continue to explore and celebrate our liberal religious journey."

We are excited about the new energy and perspective Debra will bring to our congregation as she assists us in fulfilling our potential as a vibrant liberal religious community in the Lower BC Mainland.

✦ *Sue Sparlin*

Saskatoon's Exciting Start

Like many Canadians, the members of the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon (UCS) scatter far and wide for the summer months. As we return to Saskatoon for the fall season, we're looking forward to a busy time. The most exciting event at *continued on page 14*

From left to right:

- Rev. Al's Street Ministry: one of the projects sponsored by the First Unitarian Church of Victoria.
- Kingston Unitarian Fellowship hosts an Interfaith Pride Service for the community.
- Performance by the First Unitarian Church of Victoria's new handbell choir.
- Taking a turn lighting the incense at the Buddhist temple: Surrey Neighbouring Faiths Program.



MARY CRAMER



DAVID DALLEY



Across Canada (continued)

continued from page 13 UCS this fall is surely the arrival of Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz as our Developmental Minister (this is a three year, three-quarter-time contract position). Rev. Karen has been our quarter-time consulting minister for 18 months. You can imagine how exciting it was for everyone when she agreed to move to Saskatoon. UCS is also hosting the Western Regional Fall Gathering in October, which includes a Western Region Youth Conference. Add to this the start-up of RE programs for our children and youth, and you can see that everyone in the Congregation will be actively involved in some activity this fall.

✦ *Bryan Carroll*

First U Toronto: Growing Forth

The past year has been an eventful one at First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. We hosted a Peace Encounter on 9/11 when our minister, Rev. Shawn Newton, and the leaders of five other faith communities met to discuss how religious groups can work together to address barriers to peace-making.

We installed our Peace Pole in the front garden and reaffirmed our longtime commitment as a Welcoming Congregation by installing a rainbow flag on the front of our building.

Two of our members attended the ICUU conference in the Philippines, and we formed a Diversity Working Group to advance the congregational goal of intentionally welcoming people from diverse eth-

nic and racial communities, including Aboriginal peoples. We recently launched a program to help disadvantaged youth rent their first apartment.

Another highlight has been the return to being a Teaching Congregation: Fiona Heath joined us as our Intern Minister.

One of the challenges we faced in the past year was the gap between the cost of the many initiatives we wanted to support, and the finances required to fulfill them. While our leadership wrestled with making cuts, they came to realize that this would result in narrowed vision and diminished congregational experience. Instead, members and friends proved their commitment by not merely rising to the challenge of meeting our budget goals, but surpassing them significantly, in part through a fabulous fund-raising auction in May.

In the year ahead, the Building for the Future Task Force will guide us through a discernment process to decide whether our current building serves our future needs, or whether our mission and vision may necessitate relocating to another property. We are attracting more young adults and a new group is gathering to create connections among young Unitarians. We look forward to the coming year, to learn from and spiritually enrich one another, as we continue our great adventure together as a congregation.

✦ *Keith Gawronski*



Bringing Aboriginal youth back into their community: Victoria First helped defray costs for this local-area pow-wow



Breakfast in Jamaica: one of the Unitarian Church of Victoria's Healing Our World (HOW) initiatives.

THANKS TO SUELLEN GUENTHER

THANKS TO SUELLEN GUENTHER

Small is Beautiful at Niagara

The Unitarian Congregation of Niagara in St. Catharines had a very successful regular program last year, and over the summer enjoyed informal circle meetings.

On June 2 we had a well attended one day retreat, discussing where we envision the congregation in five years' time. The consensus was that we like our present size, and would want only limited growth in membership, since much larger congregations lose the close sense of community we enjoy. It was also the majority view that we like being lay led, and do not aspire to professional ministerial leadership.

Our summer attendance is around 20-22 people per Sunday. There is a regular flow of visitors.

✿ *John Mayer*

Traditional Print or E-Pub?

Help decide the best distribution channel for future issues of the Canadian Unitarian. Please choose the option that best describes your views at: <http://cuc.ca/canadian-unitarian-survey/>, or by calling the CUC office at 416-489-4121 or 1-888-568-5723 (toll-free).

The Canadian Unitarian should continue to publish a complete print run by traditional magazine publishing/ mailing methods, as we have always done.



OR



The Canadian Unitarian should be primarily distributed as an electronic publication, while maintaining a smaller print-run so that limited print copies are available for mailing on request.

CARSON PIKE



Standing ovation at North Shore Unitarian Church for departing Youth Program Coordinator.

Peterborough is Busy and Loving it

At the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough, we are enjoying an active time of growth and development. We are renewing our lease and continue to share space with the Beth Israel Synagogue. Our new Religious Education Coordinator, Kate Huband, is now actively engaged in our children's programs and is clearly loving it. Our Congregational Engagement Coordinator, Sue Prentice, has been working to match the interests and skills of members and friends with the volunteer needs that we have. She has undertaken an online survey to gather information about who is good at what, and who likes to do what kinds of activities.

Our Minister, Rev. Julie Stoneberg, will be taking a three-month sabbatical in early 2013, so we are planning how to fill Julie's shoes in her absence, and practice shared ministry among us all.

At our May AGM we voted to amend our by-laws to create an Endowment Fund and a Building Fund, largely to facilitate planned giving and the wishes of those wanting to offer a gift to the Fellowship. With two choirs, successful covenant groups, and a new Social and Environmental Responsibility Council, we continue to be an active bunch!

✿ *Sue Sauve*

continued on page 16

Across Canada (continued)

continued from page 15

Seasons of Montreal

“Spring comes, grass grows,” said the eternal Buddha and once again, it was no different in Montreal! The rains poured down and all over the city life was sprouting up. The lively student protests gave us all a chance to explore the multitude of perspectives and opinions regarding the true cost of our post-secondary education system, challenging us to dig deep and plant the seeds of compassion.

Rev. Diane Rollert returned to us from the Philippines and we said farewell to our Sabbatical Minister Rev. Carole Martignacco. Both ministers showered us with stories and lessons from their respective journeys. No wallflower, our very dear friend, liturgist, and outgoing secretary Rodrigo Solano-Quesnel graduated with a master of divinity from the United Theological College and has headed to Toronto First to begin his ministerial internship. All the Best, Rod!

As the seasons changed to heat waves and hazy days, our inspiring summer services didn't skip a beat. This fall UCM plans on testing our emerging governance structure and developing more leadership, drawing from the abundant well of knowledge and experience that hides in plain sight within our walls. As always, there is so much more to share and this note barely skims the surface!

✿ Amber Dawn Bellemare

UUEstrie ‘floats’ the Seven Principles

Canada Days are everywhere, but there is only one ‘Hatley Day’: the annual Canada Day celebration in (East) Hatley, QC, for the last 104 years.

So when it was noted that July 1 would occur on a Sunday this year, some genius saw this as an opportunity to take the UUEstrie-Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley on the road, to the Hatley Day Parade.

Our Children's RE (CRE) folks jumped on it; the UUEstrie float and the Hatley Day Parade became



HEATHER DAVIS
The UU Estrie-Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley's Seven principles parade float, in all its glory.

pretty well the entire church program for that Sunday. Those who weren't involved in creating or riding on the float, were dispersed through the stands—cheering, clapping, and singing along. Throughout the length of the parade, everyone on the float, *grands et petits*, sang lustily to “This Little Light of Mine” (the only song we know), with attendees in the stands joining in.

We received numerous compliments afterward for being the liveliest float in the parade and won fourth prize (\$20), which the children agreed to share with a local charity.

Our float flew three flags: the Maple Leaf, our UN flag, and our rainbow flag. It carried five adults and seven children, each child holding a sign describing one of the Seven principles, in kidspeak. The signs were stapled to cedar saplings, which themselves had been harvested in an overgrowth cleanout two years earlier, and preserved by our Building & Grounds people just for this purpose, or so it seemed.

We done good, and congratulate our CRE committee and friends. This effort also served two of several missionary purposes attached to our newly-crafted Vision for UUEstrie: to spread the message of UUism beyond our UU community, especially in the larger francophone community, and to foster a healthy and vibrant multigenerationality in our community (see the complete Vision at ueestrie.ca). This added accomplishment was *la cerise sur le Sundae*.

✿ Keith Baxter

Responses to the Symposium

Rev. Eric Walker Wikstrom, our ‘provocateur’ at May’s Spiritual Leadership Symposium, cautioned participants that they might be provoked outside of their normal comfort zones, and to expect some unexpected spiritual moments. Rev. Wikstrom categorized these moments as “woo woo,”: indefinable elements that might touch our spirits, incite us to extend our spiritual boundaries, and raise the hairs on the back of our necks. He warned that this could create discomfort for some participants.

It was recognized that the Spiritual Leadership Symposium was a success as a first-time collaboration between the CUC Board and Staff, and the UU Ministers of Canada (UUMOC). Participants appreciated the front-and-centre presence of the ministers, and their skill in “articulating Unitarian Universalist ideas and principles with clarity, commitment and compassion,” as a Symposium evaluation respondent wrote.

The atmosphere set by ministers during the Friday evening opening was another aspect that received much praise. One respondent felt that it “created a sense of both substance and anticipation of what was to follow,” Others enjoyed the playful sides that the ministers displayed in doing the hokey-pokey and whipping up tunes on kazoos.

For a few, the Symposium was not an unqualified success. One participant left the weekend feeling frustrated and that it had been a waste. Some

participants noted concerns about the choice of location, food, some of the facilitation, the spiritual emphasis, board dialogue, as well as insufficient time allotted for youth to be on their own.

However, a great number of participants shared comments such as, “Bravo to all who created the Symposium and led it!!!” and “seeing the blend of youth and adults discussing, sharing, debating together was an amazing sight.” Over 80% of those who completed the Symposium evaluation indicated that they were pleased overall, including with the worship service, accommodations, food, location, the provocateur, and multigenerational moments.

For a planning team who did not know each other, and who had not met face-to-face prior to arriving in Ottawa (albeit having met by teleconference for hundreds of hours over the preceding nine months), feelings ranged from uncertainty and frustration to incredible synergy. In the end, the Symposium came together as planned, with surprisingly few glitches.

Did the Spiritual Leadership Symposium achieve its purpose of developing spiritual leadership that is relevant in the world, and achieving greater understanding of shared ministry? Many did find that their spiritual selves were nurtured; others cheerfully admitted that they preferred more cerebral experiences.

Perhaps the Symposium can be perceived as a microcosm of Unitarian Universalist communities. The process of birthing the Symposium showcased the range of experience and skill that members have; there was diversity of opinion and perspective about the success of the Symposium. Perhaps one aspect of spiritual leadership involves creating and holding a space for people to come together and discover their own paths of deepening and learning.

 Vyda Ng,

*Interim Executive Director,
Canadian Unitarian Council*



Song and spirit: UU Estrie-Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley with a float in the local Canada Day parade.

Many Voices, One Song

It's a simple way for distinct voices to come together. No wonder song plays an important part in UU worship—providing a living, breathing example of community, sharing, and inclusion. The Canadian Unitarian sought insight from several accomplished songwriters working in the Canadian UU tradition today.

1% Inspiration

The words and music of a song arrive together for songwriter Dianne Potts, of Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship, and for Rev. Wendy Luella Perkins, a community minister based in Kingston, ON. Dianne tries to “gently ease out of the way to create a ‘universal’ feel, allowing the music and lyrics to take on their own life.”

Wendy finds “the rhythm of my walking, step by step, creates a beat that encourages songs to flow out of me. If I take the time to walk alone in the early morning, songs surely come.”

Lyricist Valerie Nielsen leads a writers' circle at The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton. She's most gratified by “the joy found in expressing and sharing our creativity.” As for writing her own hymns, Valerie explained, “I am concerned with bringing a spirit of reverence, of inviting people to express awe and wonder and to help them see the world of spirit in a new, fresh way.”

Gareth Auden-Hole recently released his band's self-titled debut album, *Jack Pine and The Fire*. “I like to recognize the dark as well as the light, either explicitly in the lyrics or by juxtaposing dark music with subject matter that is uplifting.” While unintentional, Gareth sees how his songs are infused with UU values—absorbed while growing up in the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. “UU is about understanding and respecting all perspectives; when writing, I think acknowledging this makes for a deeper story.”



99% Perspiration

“Like any other art form, writing songs or hymns gets better with practice,” according to Lynn Harrison, UU ministry student and performing songwriter. “The ‘practice’ part for me has to do with being mindful of what's meaningful to me—stops me in my tracks.” However Lynn must also consider her audience. “When I'm writing a hymn to be sung by the congregation, I'm very conscious of the philosophy or theology of the lyrics. [They] must be universal enough for the congregation to get behind them as a group.”

Singer, songwriter, and songleader Joyce Poley of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver also cited limitations: “Hymns are meant to be sung by groups, so a major consideration is to find ways of making sure the group can manage the music, while staying together rhythmically with the words. The challenge is to write about the theme in a way that is poetic rather than didactic.”

Like Lynn, Joyce is aware of the ramifications of writing for Unitarians but she believes that “it behooves us to sing some hymns we may not agree with, simply because someone else wants to sing them.” This is “one small way we can be gracious with one another, and practice one of our most important principles: ‘acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.’”

Aside from hymns, Rev. Wendy Luella Perkins extolls the virtues of chants as being excellent for meditation and worship. “Chants can be taught by ear, are very accessible for all ages, and invite the singers to go deeper with each repetition.”

Dianne Potts takes it further, leading improvisations at services where congregants hum in unison: “sharing in the simplest music-making can have an effect beyond reciting of words.”

continued on page 20

Un texte pour le temps présent.

L'hiver dernier, le rassemblement unitarien universaliste d'Ottawa a mis en ligne « Être libéral à une époque qui ne l'est pas », version française de plusieurs chapitres de « Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age » de Jack Mendelsohn. Avec les remous sociaux de ce printemps au Québec, les orientations politiques actuelles du Canada et la crise économique mondiale, j'ai particulièrement apprécié la lecture d'un texte me permettant de prendre du recul.

Même si je lis l'anglais régulièrement depuis des années, c'est dans un français convenable qu'un texte est plus susceptible d'éclairer mon esprit. Ici, en dépit de quelques phrases en « double genre » typique de notre époque, le langage est naturel et fluide. Par moment, on pourrait même croire qu'il s'agit de la version originale. Un seul problème de traduction m'a gêné: le terme « feu du dépotoir » attribué à Jésus n'existe pas dans mon souvenir des Évangiles. Par contre, le mot « Enfer » ou « Géhenne » aurait passé sous mon radar.

Mais qui est Jack Mendelsohn? Selon le site <http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/unitarians/mendelsohn.html> il a été ministre UU américain, entre 1945 et 1991. Il travailla en milieu urbain : Chicago, Rockford, Indianapolis, Boston où son ministère visait à réduire les injustices et à tisser des liens entre les communautés d'une même ville. Il s'est surtout fait connaître pour son opposition à la guerre du Vietnam. Il a aussi pris part à la défense des droits civiques des Afro-Américains et au mouvement d'émancipation des femmes. De plus, il fut ami et conseiller de Robert Kennedy et de Jesse Jackson.

À la lecture de la traduction de son livre, je découvre une personne à la fois pondérée, déterminée, assoiffée de justice et convaincue de la valeur de la personne humaine. Un homme qui recherche l'avancement des causes qu'il défend dans un esprit de paix et de réconciliation. S'il trouve normal que les « libéraux » subissent les foudres de la droite, il trouve plus difficile de recevoir des critiques virulentes de la gauche radicale qui, souvent, ne se contente

pas de réformes mais souhaite des révolutions. Sa réponse face à ces critiques est qu'aucun mouvement radical n'est vraiment efficace. Oui, il est bon d'être allergique à l'hypocrisie, d'être capable de ressentir profondément l'angoisse et la rage face aux injustices, mais nous devenons utiles seulement lorsque nous sommes assez disciplinés pour exiger, organiser et institutionnaliser les changements sociaux et individuels qui apporteront des solutions.

M. Mendelsohn s'identifie à ces êtres humains qui sont partagés entre le désir de jouir de la vie et celui de sauver le monde et qui trouvent une sérénité tangible en faisant véritablement face aux réalités de la vie: « L'accomplissement le plus profond de nos vies ne se trouve pas dans l'obtention de ce que nous pouvons désirer mais bien dans l'action de ce qui est nécessaire. » Comme Luther King, il ne voit pas de réelle dissociation entre l'Amour et le Pouvoir « ... le pouvoir sans amour est imprudent et abusif, tandis que l'amour sans pouvoir est sentimental et anémique. Le pouvoir à son meilleur est l'amour mettant en œuvre les exigences de la justice. La justice à son meilleure est l'amour qui corrige tout ce qui s'oppose à l'amour ». Sa remarque sur la prière est elle aussi très intéressante: si « ... (la prière) ne change pas les choses, (...) elle change les gens et les gens changent les choses. »

« Être libéral à une époque qui ne l'est pas » est un texte inspirant, profond, dense, sans complaisance. C'est le genre de texte qu'il faut lire et relire par « petites bouchées ». Grand merci au RUU d'Ottawa pour avoir produit cette traduction.

 Laurent Hubert,
UU Estrie-Église Unitarienne
Universaliste de North Hatley



The Life of a Lay Chaplain

UU lay chaplains often serve people with no church affiliation, or from mixed religious backgrounds. We are present during times when people are examining the basic assumptions they live by.

The free form of a Unitarian rite of passage encourages this, and in its planning even makes it necessary. How much 'God' language is really wanted? How careful do we want to be of the spiritual beliefs of members of the audience? What shall we plan to do about delinquent fathers, blended families, renegade uncles, prickly mothers-in-law? As lay chaplains refereeing these discussions, we are forced to confront and explain our own religious values.

Whether it is for a wedding, funeral, or baby-naming ceremony, we quickly become a friend—one who can talk about the basic values underlying the important decisions in our lives. We are not trained ministers and are discouraged from doing any kind of counselling. Nevertheless, in wedding interviews, my favorite prescription for a successful marriage is that it requires falling in love, many times—always with the same person.

Now that same sex unions are more tolerated in the United States, Canadian UU lay chaplains are performing far fewer. One wedding at which I officiated was especially exciting; it was advertised as a birthday party and when I announced that it was really a wedding, a shock wave rolled through the room. The roar of approval was deafening. Even the witnesses had to be informed of the real purpose of the gathering. The many guests had waited years for this official joining of two men and were overjoyed to see them finally going public with their commitment to each other.

Very few of the weddings where I've officiated have been held in a church. They've been outdoors in every kind of weather, on a yacht in Burlington Bay, at a remote resort in Parry Sound, at a winery in Vineland. One of the most memorable was held on the Six Nations Reserve, in Oshweken, ON, on the very windy shores of the Grand River. The bride looked fabulous in a white leather tunic and leggings,

beautifully beaded. There was a smudging ceremony and part of the wedding ceremony was given over to two elders, who gave advice in their native language on how to be good husband and a good wife.

When I began my term I thought that funerals would be the most difficult. The surprise was how rewarding they were. You are wanted; not for your official legal abilities, but for your human presence. Everyone is upset and full of need. You are welcomed into the innermost circle of grieving friends and relatives. I'd connect with them in a way that would be impossible in ordinary life. There are feelings of grief, rage, and guilt. For the families, a lay chaplain becomes a soft wall, gently reflecting their pain back to them, reframing it, and validating it.

This act of giving sympathy results in a kind of intimacy that always surprises me; my own ability to be sensitive and empathetic has been deepened. I have been given gifts that will always remain in my heart. Becoming a lay chaplain is a wonderful way to live out your Unitarian beliefs.

 Barbara Jepson,

First Unitarian Church of Hamilton



Many Voices, One Song (*continued*)

continued from page 18

And everyone can do it. Lynn Harrison suggests to “try making up a tune and a lyric and share it with your musical director or another member of the congregation. It might lead to a great collaboration.”



Are you a UU visible minority?

We know that George Moses, a Universalist minister ordained in the 1870s, was the first Aboriginal person to serve a Unitarian or Universalist denomination. We know that Bill White, the first Afro-Canadian to run for Parliament, and who was later appointed Officer of the Order of Canada, was among those who founded the Don Heights Unitarian Congregation in 1956. We know that the percentage of people who identified as visible minorities in Canada in 2006 was 16.2%, and we guesstimate that percentage among Canadian Unitarian congregations to be 4.2%.

We know only a little history, and even less about the current demographics of the visible minorities who are members of our congregations. We don't know how many, or the backgrounds or cultural mixtures represented. We don't know how many mixed marriages or cross-cultural/racial adoptions are among us. Regional distribution and the experiences of these visible minorities are equally unknown.

In 2003 and 2007, the Canadian Unitarian Council passed resolutions on "Racial, Religious, and First Nations Equity", propelled by principle and pas-

Diversity in Canadian UU Congregations:
who are we?

at www.surveymonkey.com/s/CUCdiversity
until October 12

sion but without an analysis of our own population. In the ensuing years, little has resulted from those resolutions. It is time to try again.

This past spring an ad-hoc diversity working group—consisting of UU Ministers and CUC Board and staff members—came together to discuss the current CUC situation. The conversation was heart-

felt, but largely anecdotal. The group decided that the first step was to gather information from visible minorities and those who have adopted cross-racially, who attend the CUC member congregations.

This is an adventure of sorts; we do not know what we will find. We may discover that our congregations are well-meaning, but lack knowledge to create a comfortable, intentionally welcome environment for people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. But this is conjecture; knowing requires that we ask. Awareness will emerge as we talk about the answers that follow.

If you are a visible minority or have adopted cross-racially, we urge you to fill out the survey, Diversity in Canadian UU Congregations: Who Are We? at www.surveymonkey.com/s/CUCdiversity, and please spread the word to others who may wish to respond. This survey will remain open until October 12. Printed copies of the survey can be obtained by calling the CUC office at 416-489-4121 or 1-888-568-5723 (toll-free).

We hope that the information we gather will tell us more about visible minorities in our community: historically, geographically, and about their experiences and concerns. A summary of the results will be made available, and used to begin a new conversation about cultural and racial diversity in the Canadian Unitarian Council.

We look forward to hearing from you.

 *Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed,*
past-President &
Vyda Ng, Interim Executive Director,
Canadian Unitarian Council



THANKS TO SUELLEN GUENTHER

Rev. Ray Drennan passes torch to Rev. Jane Bramadat

The Reverend Ray Drennan, retired minister of the Unitarian Church of Montreal and celebrated innkeeper of Le Vieux Presbytere in Bouctouche, NB, has served our Canadian Unitarian movement with dedication and passion in many ways. In December 2011, he retired after over six years as a Ministerial Settlement Representative (MSR) for the UUA Department of Ministry. In this role, Rev. Drennan has clearly drawn upon his long experience as a parish minister and his skills as a family therapist. In a recent interview, he outlined several key features to a successful ministerial transition and search process.

“Choosing a minister,” cautioned Drennan, is “not just a hire. It’s a call into deep relationship, inviting someone into sacred space. It is a careful process that requires transparency and trust.” Whenever a minister resigns, retires, or leaves settled ministry for any reason, the change is about both loss and opportunity. The role of the Ministerial Settlement Representative [MSR] is to companion and coach the congregation through the critical process of successful leadership change. Drennan pointed out that the Ministerial Settlement process is a service of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to Canadian congregations, which has continued despite the organizational separation between the UUA and the CUC a decade ago.

Drennan emphasized the importance of a well-designed ministerial search process, conducted with honesty and integrity. Ideally, before any public announcement, contact is made with the UUA Department of Ministry, to inform the settlement office of the available position, and to request appointment of an MSR, who meets early on with congregation and Board to help shape the Search Committee selection process.

One way of looking at this role is that it serves to slow things down. There’s often a tendency for con-

gregations to move quickly into action, or problem-solving mode. Drennan emphasized two essentials in a successful search.

The first is a careful selection of the Search Committee, “The successful Search Committee’s members each hold a vision for the whole, a deep concern for the health and potential of the entire congregation, not just their own individual causes or concerns,” said Drennan. “Their mandate is to represent the wisdom of the community in discovering who they might become and what kind of minister will lead them in creating a new future.”

The second is the installation of an interim ministry of sufficient length to encourage growth and new vision. A successful interim ministry is one in which the grieving process related to the past ministry is balanced with adequate attention to renewal, re-visioning, and honest assessment of a congregation’s strengths, weaknesses, goals and unrealized potential. “If handled well, ministry doesn’t end with the departure of a particular minister,” said Drennan. “The work of calling a new minister should call everyone in the congregation into a deeper, more committed shared ministry.”

We thank you, Reverend Ray Drennan, for your commitment to healthy congregations and the sharing of your unique gifts in this important work above and beyond—and often behind the scenes—of ministry in our Canadian movement.

*Rev. Carole Martignacco, UUEstrie-Unitarian
Universalist Church of North Hatley*

The current MSR for Canada is the Rev. Jane Bramadat. All information and necessary documents with regard to Ministerial Settlement may be found at: <http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/transitions/index.shtml>

Judge Rules to allow Assisted Dying

“If and when I choose to have assisted dying, I can do that and nobody will be charged and I’m just so glad... I’d like to be aware when I die, of my family and my friends around me. I could say my goodbyes and I don’t have to worry about anything.”

Gloria Taylor, plaintiff in the case seeking the legal right to doctor-assisted dying

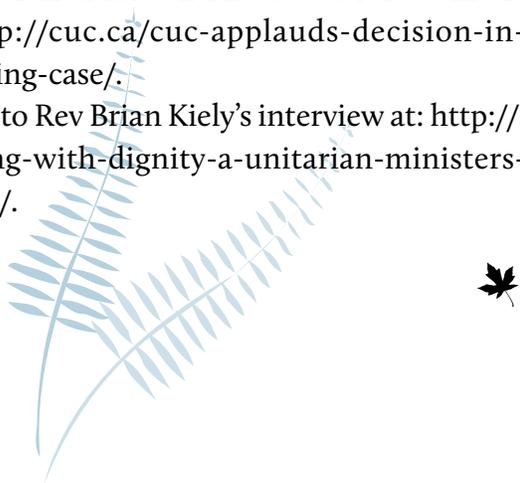
The CUC was granted Intervenor status in the Taylor case in the fall of 2011 because of its long standing involvement in, and support for, the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia. In resolutions dating back to 1973, the CUC advocates recognition of the right of death with dignity as a human right.

On June 15, Madame Justice Lynn Smith of the Supreme Court of British Columbia released a landmark decision that the criminal laws prohibiting assisted dying breach the Charter and are unconstitutional.

Edmonton AM, CBC Radio One, interviewed Rev. Brian Kiely of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and spokesperson for Dying with Dignity. Rev. Kiely described the court’s ruling as “huge... we are in a different legal climate now. [these kinds of judgments show] that this is a human rights issue, that there are sufficient safeguards and that it is time for this to change...”

For the full article on The CUC’s role as Intervenor: <http://cuc.ca/cuc-applauds-decision-in-assisted-dying-case/>.

Listen to Rev Brian Kiely’s interview at: <http://cuc.ca/dying-with-dignity-a-unitarian-ministers-perspective/>.



RUN FOR Biodiversity

Running WILD... for Food and Farmers!

Are you a **Runner** or a **Walker?**

Join us this fall in **Victoria & Toronto** in support of seed-saving farmers in **Honduras**

Be Part of our Team!

www.run4biodiversity.org

Contact David
R4B@usc-canada.org
1.800.565.6872 x231



CAST YOUR VOTE:

Annual Meeting Should be Webcast—or Not?

- YES**, I would participate electronically in a CUC Annual Meeting webcast. This webcast would allow me to speak and vote at a local or regional in-person meeting, which would be connected nationally online.”
- NO**, I would not participate in such a CUC Annual Meeting webcast.

Vote online at <http://cuc.ca/active-democracy-study-group/> or by phone: 1-888-568-5723.

Also, please give your feedback on the **Active Democracy Study Group** report and its recommendations, available at <http://cuc.ca/active-democracy-study-group/> or request a printed copy from the CUC office.

The **Active Democracy Study Group** was established in 2010 to hold a national conversation about democracy within the CUC. The Study Group presented its report at the CUC Annual Meeting 2012.

In Praise of Our Differences

Our theological diversity and differences are a great gift, yet rather than mining them for richer insights into what we believe, as a tool for spiritual deepening and outreach, we too often bicker instead: “Why doesn’t my perspective get the most pulpit time?” Or we bemoan the fact that others in our congregation don’t see things the way we do.

Why? The point is not to convert all those seated around us on Sunday morning to our point of view. Isn’t the need for multiple perspectives precisely the reason we left other traditions? Isn’t the freedom to continually grow—to form and reform our beliefs—an important part of what we love about this faith?

Isn’t it an amazing resource that I have someone who is an atheist seated on one side of me and a Buddhist practitioner on the other? I can ask each what helps them make it through the day. I can find out what matters most to them, what they believe is the meaning of life. And then, I can hold all of that up to what I believe, and find my own view shifting, growing, changing.

Throughout the Bible we are told of creative ways to avoid a call, and of many ways to answer. Jonah’s story is one example, Moses another. Sooner or later, in order to not be swallowed by a big fish—in order to not miss out on our own full becoming—we will have to go to Ninevah. Like Moses, we must learn that when we really, deeply encounter one another we are on sacred ground. We need not be perfect leaders, but we can be changed by what we are open to. And nothing so dramatic as a burning bush, or a ride in a whale’s belly, is needed to encounter the sacred in one another’s eyes, in one another’s story.

One of the great joys for me in ministry is watching people come alive. I’ve seen it again and again, when someone gets a new sense that they have within them all they need. We are the best resources we have to offer; not some better model, not some other miraculous and amazing person.

Martin Luther King’s mentor and teacher Howard Thurman has been often quoted, “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” You are alive, and alive with so much to share, to give, to offer. Doubt not your capacity to matter. Doubt not that you already do. Ask only, am I as alive as I could be? Am I living in a way that shares my spark of the holy?

May we mirror that spark back to one another. May we honor the many and varied forms it takes in each of us. May we praise our differences and mine them for the enlivening resource they are. So may it be. Amen.

Adapted from the Sunday sermon by Rev. Shana Lynngood, First Unitarian Congregation of Victoria, at the 2012 Spiritual Leadership Symposium.

