

THE CANADIAN UNITARIAN



NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL • VOLUME 58 • NUMBER 2 • FALL 2016

Building our covenant for Youth and Young Adult ministry

When youth gather, the first thing they tend to do is create a covenant. I have some theories why: perhaps to create a sense of shared responsibility; to make sacred their promises to one another and a larger whole; to feel power and agency, naming the ways they want to be treated and to care for one another. Whatever the reason, when youth communities create covenants, they all work to uphold those promises—those visions—for how they will be together.

In that spirit, I want to talk about the Canadian UU community's covenant for youth and young adult ministry. If we had a formalized covenant, I imagine that it would include the need to work collaboratively, to build on each of our strengths, to honour our sacred 'yes' and sacred 'no', and to work from each of our niches to support the spiritual development of our UU youth and young adults. It would include a recognition that each of us—individuals in congregations,

leaders, church staff, and CUC staff—has a unique and important part in youth and young adult ministries at all levels.

I want to affirm the ways that our congregations are already honouring this covenant of youth and young adult ministry by saying, thank you.

Thank you for sending in your Annual Program Contribution every year; the funding the CUC receives goes to vital programs and initiatives that help youth and young adults gather virtually, and in person, for leadership development, spiritual growth, and sacred community. It goes to fund work that we can only do on a regional and national level—organizing large events, creating national connections, and implementing a larger vision for this ministry.

In response to your gifts, we at the CUC covenant to continue stretching that funding by spending frugally, running events that break even or raise money, supporting



Bridging out of youth community and finding ways to deepen one's Unitarian Universalist faith as a young adult can be a challenge. Enter the first Meaning Makers retreat, designed for emerging UU adults ages 18 to 24—the population least likely to be served by local UU communities.

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Help Sustain our Faith Community

The Canadian Revenue Agency audit of the CUC required legal advice over 2015 and 2016, at a cost of \$63,000. Not only has this advice been critical in the constructive outcome of the audit, but it has also been purposed for important resources for CUC congregations, such as the Congregations, Charities and Best Practices series, and webinars such as the Reviewing and Updating Charitable Purposes Webinar in October.

Please help the CUC meet the cost of these legal fees, with your donation to the Friends of the CUC fund. Online: cuc.ca/giving-and-funding/friends. Cheques: Canadian Unitarian Council, 400-215 Spadina Ave, Toronto, ON, M5T 2C7

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youth and young adult participation in events, and developing innovative ways to serve our geographically extended community.

Thank you for promoting youth and young adult events within your congregations. We could not do any of this without fundraisers to send youth groups to conferences, without the support of Directors of Religious Education and youth advisors. We in turn covenant to constantly improve the way we reach out and connect, and to continue communicating regularly and in good time.

Thank you for the countless hours of paid and unpaid time that goes into youth events and young adult gatherings. Thank you for providing your buildings, kitchen help, overnight supervision, food, rides, and personal support to make sure that Youth conferences happen and youth can participate. Thank you for walking with our youth, for being present with them, and for creating safe communities where they can thrive.

We covenant to develop more ways to offer training and support for youth ministry, including providing guidelines, recommendations, consulting, check ins, and resources for Youth ministry and Youth programs.

We know that covenants are collaboratively built, constantly evolving, living documents that adapt to new realities, so we covenant to continue working with you to fulfill the promise of youth and young adult ministry. Thank you for being on this journey with us!

Asha Philar

CUC Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development



The first Universalist congregation in Canada was formed in the small hamlet of Olinda, ON, in 1880. The hamlet has been absorbed by the town of Kingsville, ON, but the Church still stands proudly at the same four corners where it was raised in 1881.

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Living Our Vision

Our new Canadian UU vision states simply, “our interdependence calls us to love and justice.” It goes on to honour principles, sources, and aspirations for the future, but what does the vision itself mean? Here’s my answer for today:

**For darkness we light
bonfires (the name tells it all).
Let’s go over there!**

First and foremost is the recognition of ‘interdependence’. For me this is a strong grounding concept. It reminds me that nothing about any element of any existence is independent. It reminds me of the profound importance of our seventh Principle. It reminds me that I am not alone nor separate, neither from people nor from the cosmos. It reminds me that each of my actions has effects, and if I seek happiness, I should strive to be mindful of those effects. Because I’m serving on the CUC board I think about how my actions there might influence the Canadian UU movement, and how I might be influenced by other CUC members. What each one of us does makes a difference to everyone. We matter in one another’s lives.

My second focus is the ‘call’, a strong word; it says there is something larger than me, a higher order, a mystery, asking something of me. That call is unique to each of us. My call right now is to use my skills for the benefit of the CUC. After a time, there will be new calls. I’ll try to remember to listen.

Third is ‘love’—that maddening notion! Love is complex, ambiguous, compelling, and has no singular meaning. “Love hurts” says the song. To which of the many dimensions of love am I called—agape, eros, philia, pragma, appreciation, passion, compassion? I need to think and feel carefully about how love is best lived in my life.

Retired and aging, I find that compassion for self and others rises to the surface. Close behind comes love for nature. Growing up in the country, it was nature

that gave me my first strong sense of the spiritual—the “direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder” (as defined by the first UU source)—and I feel called to enjoy and protect it. I also love the miracle of consciousness, without which all is darkness. For me, the complex call of love is a call to appreciate my companions, nature, and consciousness.

Justice comes fourth. It means fairness, and seems easier to discuss than love. The work of producing justice is demanding, but humans have a long history of moving slowly along an arc toward justice.

So that’s our vision for me—interdependence in responding to the mysterious calls of fairness, compassion, nature, and consciousness.

**Light and feeling both
inspire vision: in the void
meaning awaits us.**

I began to write this article as I flew WestJet flight 705 from Vancouver to Toronto. I thought about the carbon emissions I was helping to produce and how much my carbon offset payment to my church’s green fund should be (\$28). I was going to meet with CUC board and staff. We would learn, confer, plan, and celebrate our faith together. We would explore how to provide *fair* compensation for our staff, and how to treat more *fairly* the indigenous peoples of Canada. We would reflect on each congregation’s covenant to pay *fairly* and *compassionately* to support our *interdependent* national and international work. We would *appreciate*, perhaps even *love*, our *interdependence*. We would do our best to act *justly*, and *love* our lives together on this beautiful planet and perhaps one day even on Mars or beyond.

Keith Wilkinson
President
Canadian Unitarian Council

*interdependence *the call *love *justice

Lessons Learned from an Audit

In a directive to the Canada Revenue Agency in 2012, the previous federal government started a political audit program that would, by the fall of 2016, involve about 60 charities and 13.4 million dollars. The Canadian Unitarian Council was one of those charities, being served with notice of audit for 2012 and 2013 in January 2015.

The CUC's audit process has taken almost two years, totalled tens of thousands of dollars for (excellent) legal advice, caused anxiety, stress and sleepless nights, and exacted many hours of extra work by staff that is already thinly stretched. The audit examined all aspects of the CUC's organizational, financial, and political life, and necessitated a change to the CUC's Charitable Purpose, as one of the former purposes, "work for justice in the world", was considered too broad and vague. Canadian Unitarians approved new charitable purposes at the AGM 2016.

The audit has resulted in a Compliance Agreement between the CUC and the CRA. This outlines a number of corrective measures, many of which are already in place, that the CUC has to implement by February 2017.

Although exhausting and stressful, the process had a number of good lessons, applicable to our organizational—and possibly personal—lives:

If you've made a mistake, fix it. The audit turned up a number of inaccuracies. We are required to improve our bookkeeping practices and to file amendments to the T3010 (annual charity return). While time-consuming, these fixes are concrete and identifiable, and there is satisfaction in getting the job done right.

Keep the house in order. Let's be honest; the CUC's processes aren't pristine. There are dust balls and rust lurking in the filing cabinets and bookkeeping programs. The audit process shone a light into the dark corners, leading us to find better processes and systems which will help lead to an enduring organizational structure. Are our congregational houses in order?

Less is sometimes better. A CRA general audit demands all the minutes of all your meetings, event posters, financial records, governance documents, newsletters, correspondence, and other material you didn't

know you needed to keep. A media consultant once told me, "if you're not prepared to publish it on the first page of the national newspaper, don't share it." It's good advice, and provides a guideline for what we record in our committee meeting minutes, what we send in emails and say in conversations, and what we post on social media. Once it's out there, we can't take it back.

There is always something to learn. It was a harrowing experience with an uncertain outcome, but the audit produced some good discoveries. It resulted in a series of articles and resources for congregations: on charities and recommended practices; in webinars on CRA guidelines; and in support for congregational leaders when they're considering charitable purposes or political activities. There is often a way to do something better, or challenge ourselves to think outside of usual lines.

Reach Out. Throughout the audit journey we were in excellent company, from dedicated board, volunteers, staff, and legal counsel. Once speedy help was requested, the responses were immediate and affirming. We shouldn't let fear of being seen as vulnerable stop us from asking. It can make the journey less lonely, and provide rich and unexpected experiences.

The current federal government will not conduct more political audits, and has launched a consultation process to modernize rules governing the charitable sector and clarify the rules governing political activities. Charities and the public are invited to provide input through the Canada Revenue Agency website by November 25, 2016. Let's do so and make our UU voices heard.



Vyda Ng
Executive Director
Canadian Unitarian Council

“Little bit, step by step. I love life here in Canada.”

-Syrian newcomer in Alliston, ON

The CUC and Canadian UU congregations mobilized in force this past year, in response to the desperate circumstances of Syrian citizens.

In 2015/2016 nearly 50 refugee sponsorship applications were approved. To date, 15 families (almost 60 people) have safely arrived in Canada. 38 member congregations have been directly or indirectly involved with sponsorship since September 2015.

Most of these families are from Syria, now settling in large, medium, and small sized cities, mostly in Ontario. (Refuge has also been provided to people from Iraq, Somalia, Eritrea, Gambia, and Burundi.)

One family of three is now settling in Alliston, ON, sponsored by the group Out of a War Zone, with the CUC as Sponsorship Agreement Holder. “What kind of engineer are you?” the father was asked while doing volunteer work, practicing his English. “I’m an architect.” he replied, which led to a personal introduction to a local firm, and freelance work for the pleased newcomer.

The Unitarian Fellowship of Salt Spring Island spearheaded the sponsorship of a family of five, originally from Aleppo, via Turkey. Anne Marshall, chair of the Salt Spring Refugee Sponsorship Group, relates how “we were surprised to learn [they] have been members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship for 10 years—Unitarians longer than many of our own members.”

In Halifax, Andy Blair, co-chair of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax refugee sponsorship group visits the extended family of newcomers about every week. Not so much, he explains, for settlement reasons:

“We go shopping, go on expeditions to see places in Nova Scotia, hang out over beers, as friends will.”

The six family members, Andy is eager to add, “can only be described as doing fantastic, just amazing: working, excelling in school, bought a used car.” As for the sponsorship group, it’s been “an extremely positive experience and the congregation is considering sponsoring another family.”

Things haven’t gone as smoothly for the Unitarian Church of Montreal, as a result of delays with additional provincial government processing. “During a recent conversation via Google Hangouts, the children of the large family held up a beautiful plaque they had made for our congregation. They are anxious to deliver it.” Rev. Diane Rollert recounts. “We all had tears in our eyes as they thanked us for all we are doing. We are clearly getting very attached to these families. We’re just keeping the faith that they will be with us soon.”

As a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), the CUC is able to aid would-be sponsors who are CUC members and those who are not. Debbie Ebanks, founding member of Out of a War Zone, based in Simcoe and Dufferin counties, ON, cites the CUC as “the first to accept my plea to find an SAH... and then also facilitated the sponsorship of another family.” As go-between for sponsors and the federal government, “the CUC set up a refugee fund in order that we could receive donations and issue tax receipts. They were very generous with this administrative support and we would not have raised the amounts we did without it.”

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Though this past worship year has been especially busy, CUC Social Responsibility Coordinator April Hope notes that, “The CUC has been sponsoring refugees for over 20 years. We are in the process of completing applications for another 50 people out of visa offices in Nairobi, Tanzania, Pakistan, Israel, Beirut, Turkey, Cairo, Amman, Jordan and Germany.”

Many CUC congregations are collaborating with new groups to sponsor refugees in their local communities, with the support of the CUC. The CUC is also working directly with non-Unitarian partners to facilitate links to Syrian and LGBTQ communities across Canada.

Extremely satisfying have been successes in providing safety for urgent protection cases, under the Urgent Protection Program (UPP). Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, of the *Église Unitarienne au Burundi*, and LGBTQ cases across the country have received approval of their permanent residence status. These cases have created connections with many new community groups across Canada and overseas. Under the UPP, refugee cases in Afghanistan and Burundi are being sponsored by congregations in Peterborough, Saskatoon and Ottawa.

“Making a tangible difference in someone’s life as a response to a worldwide crisis, does help me psychologically process the bigger picture,” says Debbie Ebanks. To paraphrase one newcomer’s perspective: little by little, step by step. 🍁

**For refugees’ security, the CUC does not identify newcomers by name for the first year after their arrival.*

This story is about three brothers, Jalal, Fadel, and Kamal, who lived in a beautiful part of Eastern Syria, near the Euphrates River. The brothers worked hard and supported their families. Their children went to school, and their wives kept comfortable homes.

All that changed when fighting erupted in Syria. Jalal, Fadel, and Kamal mourned the death of their brother when his house was bombed. Kamal’s 10-year-old son lost his leg after being run over by an army truck. The brothers fled with their families to Beirut, where they subsisted on a small monthly stipend from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). In Beirut the brothers were not allowed to work; the children did not go to school.

This story is just one of hundreds of thousands. It is difficult to learn about homes destroyed by bombs, and mothers and fathers who weep over their injured or dead child. We live with so much privilege and our hearts break as we struggle for a response. How do we express our love for others, so far away and in pain?

Elie Wiesel wrote, “The opposite of love is not hate; the opposite of love is indifference.” As Unitarian Universalists we look for ways to resist indifference. At our CUC Annual Meeting in May, we adopted the following vision: “As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.” We are connected to those distant mothers and fathers, who require us to resist indifference and express our love by holding out justice. We can look to our privilege and ask ourselves what we can offer to express our love.

*Marlene Schellenberg and Debby Lake
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg*

(for more on this story see Winnipeg’s news in Across Canada, page 18.)



New Set of Purposes Allows Charitable Work Abroad

Approved by Canada Revenue Agency, the new CUC Statement of Purpose now affirms the Council's aim to promote Unitarian Universalism both nationally and internationally.

Since Canadian charities can work abroad only under specific conditions, the new wording empowers the CUC to work with international affiliates on every activity defined in the Statement. In addition, the new Statement of Purpose empowers the CUC to work with other Canadian charities on basic human rights at home.

The Statement of Purpose of the Corporation is to promote Unitarian Universalism, Unitarianism and Universalism, **in Canada and internationally**, by:

1. Affirming and promoting the principles, practices, and traditions of the Unitarian Universalist, Unitarian and Universalist faiths;
2. Supporting the development and growth of Unitarian Universalist, Unitarian and Universalist religious communities;
3. Nurturing, supporting and enhancing religious communities and other groups to work together on mutual concerns for the benefit of the community; and
4. **Providing basic necessities of life, including food, clean water, clothing, medical and dental care and supplies, shelter, and education, tuition and school supplies to those in need.**



UUs Meet in The Netherlands

As a member group of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU), the CUC continues to support the growth and enrichment of UU groups globally. Over the next several years the CUC will be specifically engaged with supporting leadership development in Africa, Asia, South America, and other countries.



They're Back: International Donations

In consultation with legal advisors, and in accordance with CRA requirements, the CUC is once again able to welcome your contributions to the International Council of Unitarian Universalists (ICUU) and the UU-United Nations Office (UU-UNO).

(The CUC is still unable to receive donations to the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) and the Church of the Larger Fellowship.)

Further questions? Please contact:
executivedirector@cuc.ca

Welcome to the CUC AGM!

The CUC Annual General Meeting 2017 will be held Saturday, May 13—prior to the May long weekend—at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto.

Members are welcome to attend in person or through online registration and voting, as successfully piloted at the CUC AGM 2016.

In 2018, First Unitarian Church of Hamilton will host the CUC biennial National Conference.

Healthy Relationships: The UU Islands Network

As part of the CUC's new vision to aspire to being "Deeply Connected", we thought that we would share the UU networking we have been doing—connecting personally and to promote Unitarian Universalism throughout the Vancouver Island and surrounding areas.

The Islands Network's newly created vision states: The Unitarian Universalist Islands Network provides multigenerational opportunities for Unitarian Universalists on Vancouver Island and surrounding islands to deepen our faith, to joyfully connect with each other, and inspire the larger community to join us in spiritual growth and actions for justice.

The Unitarian Universalist Islands Network (UUIN) has been intentionally connecting Island UU congregations since the 1960s. It was founded by the minister-led First Unitarian Church of Victoria, and the lay-led fellowships in Nanaimo and Comox Valley, and the erstwhile Powell River and Campbell River communities. Later a second congregation in Victoria and one in Salt Spring were founded, and joined the Network.

For 54 years, the main event—and the most popular—has been summer camp at the Shawnigan Lake Easter Seals Camp site. Other shared events include an annual Spring Conference and an All Island Sunday service. Shared workshops, such as last November's Our

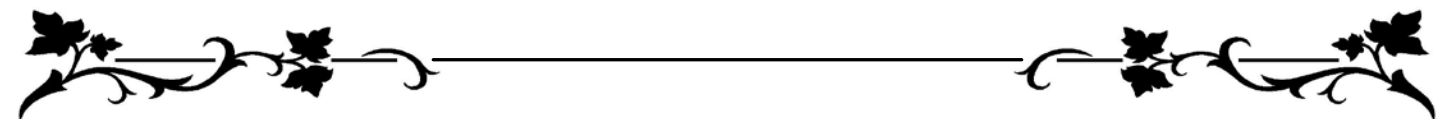
Whole Lives facilitator training in Victoria, mean that smaller congregations can also benefit.

How does it work? Each congregation's board of trustees appoints two UUIN representatives at their AGM. Now operating under ministerial leadership in three congregations, the UUIN is more organized, with on-line meetings five times a year that are facilitated by Rev. Melora Lynngood via Zoom video conferencing platform (thanks to the CUC).

In addition to connecting and sharing resources, the UUIN provides a conduit for promoting and participating in other BC-based UU events, such as the annual UU Men's and Women's Spiritual Retreats, the Regional Fall Gatherings, the newly formed Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ) Islands chapter, and special trainings and workshops.

We believe that the UU Island Network is an important vehicle in helping UUs on Vancouver Island and the surrounding islands remain deeply connected, giving us opportunities to nurture healthy relationships amongst and within UU communities—and with the world and all life.

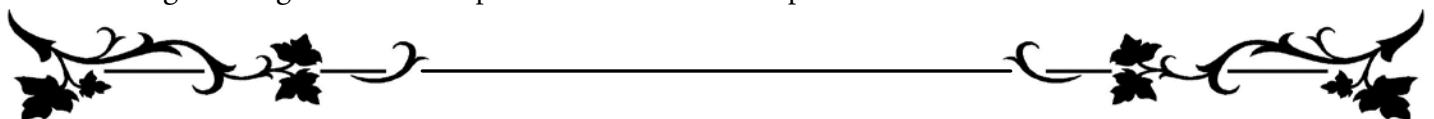
*Jane Fox
Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship*



Bunny (Florence Irene) Turner April 9, 1928 – September 17, 2016

The CUC joins family and friends in mourning the passing of Bunny Turner in Halifax, NS. Bunny's life-long commitment to Unitarian Universalism was manifest in both her public actions and private life. She served on the first CUC board with her brother Dick in 1961. (Her daughter Kim Turner served as board president during the CUC transition from UUA membership into its own national organization.) Bunny worked as administrator at First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto and was a founding member of the Unitarian Church of Calgary. The Nancy and Victor Knight Living Tribute Award is just one example of the many ways in which Bunny and her family (in the words of Vyda Ng, CUC executive director), "continue to be important and instrumental to Canadian UUs and the CUC".

Mary Lu MacDonald of the UU Church of Halifax adds, "It's typical of Bunny that, while I mourn her as a friend and colleague of over half a century, [a recent acquaintance] in our congregation was also very upset by her death... She gave the gift of friendship to all who crossed her path."



Lakeshore: The Little Church that Could

Take heart, all you churches with aging and dwindling memberships. After several years of stagnation, Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation (LUUC) in Lachine, QC, was slowly fading into oblivion. This was anathema to its few remaining members, but what to do?

Brainstorming sessions yielded few viable ideas. Having recently located to a French-speaking borough, there were some barriers to local advertising. Our fine, new rental space—an attractive 350-seat church—showed up our puny numbers of less than two dozen active members.

When a new board took office in June 2014, we wanted to ensure compliance with our by-laws, and accordingly, prepared a plan: the first year was for preparation, the second was to solidify our ideas, and in the third year we were to reap the benefits.

The first thing we did was involve as many members as possible in completely revamping our website and resolving to keep it up-to-date. We also posted LUUC announcements on websites such as MeetUp. We availed ourselves of CUC workshops by attending Rev. Linda Thompson's conference on problem solving. We learned to stay positive.

Being lay-led, we then looked to strengthen our Sunday Services and provide more varied speakers. To this end, we invited Rev. Frances Deverell to guide us in a workshop on service leading, which was money well spent.

But how to bring more people through our doors? That was the question. For this we considered our best assets, including our music director, Kerry-Anne Kutz. Kerry-Anne started a community choir as well as a music class for pre-schoolers, called Little Maestros. As part of securing funding for this choir, Lakeshore took part in the CUC crowdfunding project and was successful. We were very impressed, surprised, and grateful for the many Unitarians who are not LUUC members, who so generously contributed to our cause.

The Maestros and their parents attend a class before the Sunday service, and stay for the Children's Spiritual Exploration Program (SE), now facilitated by two new teachers. Not all choir members are church members, but they regularly participate in our activities and swell our attendance. Their presence generates quite a buzz, and the bigger the crowd, the more people attend.



At the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation, the Children's Spiritual Exploration group takes a bow after their skit on the environment.

Since we had gone into serious deficit every year for the past 20 years, one of our aims was a balanced budget. To this end, we made good use of the limited weekly access to our rented building (Saturday evening until Sunday afternoon). A monthly potluck luncheon usually coincided with our Minister-of-the-Month visit.

Over two years, these events grew in popularity, with a recent Mexican picnic hosting 74 people. On these occasions, we always provide a huge basket full of intriguing things to raffle. Our fun(d)raisers have included a square dance with a professional caller, and a spring pantomime with a concession-style lunch.

Imagination and hard work seems to have clicked; we now have:

- A 54% increase in membership
- A huge jump in Sunday attendance
- The hiring of two more SE teachers
- A balanced budget
- The 25-strong Community Choir (now singing regularly at LUUC and various West Island venues)
- High morale and enthusiastic volunteerism

Looking back just two years, on that near-empty church, gives special meaning to LUUC's proud role as host of the Eastern Regional Gathering this October—offering the fun spirit and sanctuary of our growing congregation, for networking and worship among CUC congregations of the eastern region.

*Heather Falconer, past president
Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation*

Your Online CUURE

Did you know that Canadian Unitarian Universalists Religious Educators (CUURE) is on the CUC website? Before stepping down as chair of CUURE, Andrea James, Director of Religious Education (DRE) at First UU Church of Winnipeg, created important content for Religious Educators and congregations. You'll find it under 'What We Do', then 'Religious Educators'.

CUURE online offers resources for congregations that are searching for a Religious Educator, and a top ten list for new Religious Educators. My favourite is this piece of advice:

Love the people; love what you do; watch your hours; foster healthy boundaries; having your own spiritual practice helps; find balance; and connect with your colleagues.

For those interested in becoming a Religious Educator, key skills and knowledge requirements are also highlighted.

While maintaining her position as DRE, Andrea James has accepted a position as secretary for the Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA), of which CUURE is the Canadian chapter. On behalf of all Religious Educators in Canada, I would like to thank Andrea for her commitment to CUURE and the important work of promoting Religious Educators' professional recognition.

*Pamela Smith-Loeters
Director of Lifespan Learning
Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga*

Staff swarm: warm, friendly, and dedicated staff make the UU Youth conference 2016 (CanUUdle XVI) a booming success.



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Photo: Sid Yasin Endro, chairperson of a USC Canada supported Community Seed Bank in Ethiopia.

Regional Fall Gatherings

Unique Fall Gathering for the West

This year's Western Regional Fall Gathering on Oct 14-16 was an inter-spiritual, multi-faith response to the Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action. The main program on Saturday was held at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, and led by Marjorie Beaucauge, a Métis filmmaker, cultural worker, and community-based video activist.

We entered the Sacred Circle of the Medicine Wheel and into the indigenous worldview, based on a Relationship with Land. Invited were people from outside the Unitarian community too, especially people from other faith groups and indigenous communities.

Led by Marjorie, we came together to understand history and recognize the impact of the Indian Act on non-indigenous as well as indigenous people. We began with a ceremonial welcome and then divided into groups to sit around a medicine wheel (a stone circle oriented to the points of the compass). We circled the medicine wheel several times during the day and each had the opportunity to respond personally and authentically to the history and current realities of indigenous-settler relations. As we moved into our own commitments, we deepened our knowledge and understanding of one another.

The day also featured delicious meals provided by Wanuskewin's restaurant, which uses as much fresh, local food as possible, reflecting their First Nations heritage. The menu included bison, bannock, fresh greens, and Saskatoon berry tarts.



Wanuskewin Heritage Park's mission: "To advance the understanding and appreciation of the evolving cultures of the Northern Plains indigenous peoples."

A funny/not funny thing happened when we were planning the Gathering. We had already decided to invite people from other faiths when we learned that a Mennonite group was having a Christian Truth and Reconciliation conference the exact same weekend. With the help of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, we reached out and met with the organizers, resulting in the addition of a Saturday evening joint event!

Other highlights of the weekend included a youth-led ingathering on Reconciliation across the generations, four networking sessions, our Sunday morning service, "Reconciliation and the Path to Becoming Ourselves", which featured lots of music, and something the congregation was especially thrilled about: Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz's installation as settled minister here in Saskatoon!

This Gathering was a wonderful opportunity to meet Unitarians from other congregations and create a new reality together. We were honoured to welcome you, and take this unique and meaningful journey together.

Erica Bird

President, Saskatoon Unitarians



On the bus at CanUdle XVI.

All Youth Central

The Grand River Congregation hosted a youth-friendly Central Regional Gathering at their building in Kitchener. Matt Meyer, (whom many Canadian Unitarians know from when he participated in the ACM 2014 in Ottawa) led a session called, Explore and Connect. Participants experienced the ways that music engages our hearts and bodies, in an integrated and transformative worship experience.

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I Take My Village

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There were also opportunities to learn and practise the art of leadership, and for participants to consider their personal experience of, and commitment to, Unitarian Universalism. All three programs were designed to include youth. Additionally, there was a Jr. Youth (12-13 years) program for Central Jr. Youth, to build relationships and have fun.

Heart, Heads and Hands in the East

The Lakeshore congregation hosted participants from the Eastern Region for a Fall Gathering under the theme, Heart, Heads and Hands. The Gathering explored issues related to the practical issue of Money and Meaning and the ways in which we live our values through social action. We relished this opportunity to join with others in a heartfelt exploration of current understandings and practices of Unitarian Universalism. Participants also spent the weekend singing, socializing, and worshipping together.

*Linda Thomson
Congregational Development staff
central and eastern regions*



The medicine wheel structure is used by some Native American cultures for health and healing.

Inside, there are ordinary streets
where I get to choose
the visitors,
the time of day
or night,
the sound of crickets,
the way drapes are pulled back
to let in the morning sun.

If I agree to meet at the usual place,
all I see are familiar faces
kibitzing, quarreling and kissing—
mothers, fathers and friends, the entire town
my grandfather brought over with his family.
How could we leave it behind?
Should we tell the children? They'll be wondering
why they're dressed for travel.

I'm sorting through the boxes
before my High River house is bulldozed
like so many, now, on our street after the flood.
Is that a prairie wind I feel coming through the open door?
Or the Bora, blowing in from the Steppes?
Whatever one, it'll fit right in my new home in the city.
Like those neighbours tucked away inside me
who never stop talking,
I carry my village, a noisy splendid burden—
even Mrs. Belinsky going on about her husband,
as if I could forget.

Cassy Welburn

Cassy Welburn is a Calgary poet and storyteller. She works part-time as a teacher to new Canadians and as writer/storyteller in Alberta schools. Her book of poetry, *Changelings* was released by Frontenac House in 2015.

Nanaimo: Welcoming, Messy and Non-Judgmental

Having completed a year long program designed for Unitarian congregations wanting to become more inclusive towards Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender people, the First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo (FUFON) voted unanimously to be an official Welcoming Congregation. Immediately upon achieving this designation, a large FUFON contingent participated in Nanaimo's first Pride Parade and festival this summer.



At First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo, fun graphics promote the Messy UU Church event.

The first session of Messy UU Church was a wonderfully messy event, with 15 children and 25 adults in attendance. Children, parents, grandparents, and friends enjoyed delicious vegetarian chili, accompanied by baked potatoes with all the fixin's. We listened to a story about the life-cycle of salmon and did crafts, illustrating the theme of caring for our planet and understanding the interconnected web of life, in preparation for Earth Day. Messy UU Church is being held on the third Friday of every month.

Marla Thorburn has been appointed interim executive director of our Winter Weather Shelter. Located in the lower level of FUFON's building, it is the only low-barrier homeless shelter in the city. The welcoming environment and non-judgmental staff have gained the trust of the guests over the years. The shelter opened November 1, providing clients with a bed, an evening meal and breakfast, dry clothes if necessary, and the use of laundry equipment.

Ilse Holling

Exciting Experiments at Victoria First

Lots of excitement at First Unitarian Church of Victoria (FUCV) as we ushered in our new church year. Intern minister Chris Wulff, his wife Ariel, and baby Rowan were warmly welcomed. The Iranian woman we are sponsoring arrived in August and, within a week of her arrival, met 60 UUs from Vancouver Island at our summer camp. We still await the family from Syria. A freshly decorated and equipped three-bedroom duplex is ready for them.

Like many churches across the country, the past few years have found the numbers in our children and youth classes fluctuating. As a new experiment, this year we have hired two part-time staff to develop new programs. Children ages four to Grade four have a choice of Spirit Explorers or Forest Guardians. The Spirit Explorers is an indoor program with art and craft activities. The Forest Guardians takes place outside on our five-acre, wooded property. Over the summer, volunteers rebuilt the yurt, and a nature playground was developed.

As well as the children's attendance being up, the volunteer numbers are higher, under the leadership of the professionals. The OWL program has over 20 youth registered, most of whom are from families not currently members of the church.

Our rural property is also home to grape vines and apple trees. Another experiment this year is to turn the grapes into 'Chateau' wine and the apples into 'Buut-leg' cider. We've been assured by the Liquor Control Board that we won't go to jail if the spirits are dispersed by donation on our own grounds.

Representatives from FUCV and the Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation enjoyed an informal and informative meeting with Vyda Ng when she was on the West coast this summer. Our many programs and activities would not be possible without our caring, competent, and creative staff, members, and friends.

Lorna Anthony

Closer Community for Kelowna

On June 4 and 5 the Kelowna Unitarians celebrated our 50th Anniversary with a Talent/No-Talent Coffee House that was gratifyingly filled with talent and humour.

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We had piano duets, guitar solos, funny songs, original songs and poetry, and even Hawaiian dancing with Elvis in the room. Sunday was a special service remembering our fifty years and our gratitude for the congregation we have become. We each received a beeswax tealight, wrapped in gold ribbon, reminding us to ‘Carry the Flame’ out into the world, followed by lunch.



Kelowna Unitarians gather on the church steps after the service, “Finding Gold”, celebrating their 50th anniversary.

Through the summer, member-led Informal Worship Circles focused on a topic, with small- and large-group discussions. They were very intimate and heartwarming.

We have unanimously voted to begin a search for a 2/3 time contract minister to support us in moving forward. Meanwhile, the worship committee will invite two guest ministers or student ministers per month.

Our Ingathering Water communion was beautifully led by student minister Rosemary Morrison, and Rev. Meg Roberts led a rich and affirming covenanting service where we welcomed 13 new members! Meg also gave us an excellent Soul Matters facilitators training, and we enjoyed our first Sharing Circle. The response was appreciation and a sense of hunger for this type of sharing. Two groups will continue from this auspicious beginning.

In October, Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana presented a sermon “Blessed by Strangers”. We are planning a fundraising dinner to help support him and his family through his ministerial fellowship.

Marilyn Raymond

Newcomers and Pride in Calgary



Newcomers from Ethiopia were welcomed at the Calgary airport on September 15, 2016.

The Unitarian Church of Calgary was thrilled to welcome our sponsored Ethiopian refugee family who arrived on September 15, exhausted but happy, after a two-day trip from Kenya. Since then they have rented and furnished an apartment, and have started English classes. Our Refugee Sponsorship Committee has been heavily involved in getting them settled.

We understand they love nature, and are thrilled to see the greenery and all the water we have in Calgary (like the Bow River and Fish Creek). Imagine what they’ll think of the mountains when they see them. They are also impressed by all the new cars, and the orderly traffic system. No word yet on how much they enjoyed our first snowfall!

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Calgary's Pride Parade was enjoyed by thousands of spectators as over a hundred entries—community groups, corporations, public services, etc.—moved through downtown streets.

Many Calgary Unitarians participated in the Calgary Pride Parade on Labour Day Sunday. Our famous Rainbow Banner was carried between two pedal-powered surreys. Thanks go to Penney Kome for coordinating our presence in the parade.

John Michell

Edmonton Welcomes RE Director, Walks the Labyrinth

Unitarian Church of Edmonton has a new RE director who is bringing energy and excitement to our programs for children and youth. Lauren Kay is one of those dynamic personalities who light up any activity in which she is involved. She has been an active member for several years, organizing congregational dinners, drag shows, and other events. She brings her great work habits and passion for the church into her new position.



The Keeler Hall labyrinth in the Unitarian Church of Edmonton is modeled on the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth. The usual practice in labyrinth-walking is a three step meditation process of entering, discerning and returning.

This fall the church is also starting to create regular opportunities for people to walk our labyrinth, which was built into the floor of our social hall last winter. We plan to open the labyrinth to the public one evening a month, with candles and quiet music—perhaps even some quiet drumming, as a drumming circle meets in the church the same night. A regular daytime walk is also being planned.

On October 2 the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and Westwood Unitarian Congregation held a combined service celebrating Campus Ministry. First they honoured Rev. Audrey Brooks, retiring after 10 years of service, and then the congregations jointly installed Rev. Anne Barker as the new part-time chaplain at the University of Alberta.

Rev. Brian Kiely and Susan Ruttan

Westwood Reaches Out

Westwood Unitarian Congregation in Edmonton, AB, has taken on a new challenge: campus ministry. In cooperation with the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, we are delighted to affirm Rev. Anne Barker as the new University of Alberta Unitarian Universalist chaplain.

Rev. Audrey Brooks established this role over the last 10 years and with her recent retirement, it was determined the position requires congregationally supported professional ministry if we are to continue to provide and expand meaningful UU services on campus. We believe Rev. Anne and the Westwood community have much to offer the university staff and students, and also hope to raise the profile of Unitarian Universalism in the larger community.

Westwood was established just over 30 years ago, as an outreach project of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, to provide a UU presence on Edmonton's south side. The location was chosen for its proximity to the university campus. Although membership has fluctuated over the years, Westwood continues to serve this area and provide a welcoming UU presence that we hope to expand further. One way of doing this is to provide services in the larger community. We invite all UUs and particularly any with former or current connections to the U of A to help us in this outreach ef-

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fort. Donations to Westwood Unitarian Congregation for this project will be gratefully appreciated, through Canadahelps.org, or contact president@westwoodunitarian.ca for more information.

Brenda Jackson

Intern with Experience for Saskatoon



Erica Bird

First Sunday in the pulpit for the Saskatoon Unitarians' intern minister, Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana.

This September, Saskatoon Unitarians welcomed their first ever intern minister, Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana from Burundi. Although he's already a minister, Fulgence is doing an internship to learn more about North American context, in preparation for credentialing with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

This is truly a global internship in many ways. Fulgence was unjustly imprisoned last year, and Unitarians from Canada took an active role in helping attain his release. Once it was clear that Fulgence could not stay in Burundi, the Canadian Unitarian Council was involved in his safe arrival to Canada. Then support poured in, from across the country and around the world, to fund the internship needed for him to get North American ministry credentials. People came together to donate more than \$ 25,000 in two weeks!

This year, the internship will be fully funded, so that Fulgence and his family can start a new life here. Fulgence's international experience will prove a great asset to the congregation, which is involved in several cross-cultural projects. He is also excited about travelling to preach in several Canadian congregations that have approached

him to come visit. Congregations interested in having him come speak can reach him at fulgence.ucs@gmail.com.

Liz James

Regina Signed Up and Ready to Share!

In May 2015 the Unitarian Fellowship of Regina was awarded a two-year grant from the Sharing Our Faith Fund. The grant helped us begin a consulting ministry project. Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz continues with us for the second year of the project. Rev. Karen has been working with us on a 1/8 time basis which is unusual but very welcome. We've been challenged to be our best selves and respond more fully to the needs of our own community as well as the wider community.

One way we are reaching out to the wider community is with events aimed at youth 11-13 years. In June we held a full-day retreat, with the theme Divergent Day. Seven young people from the congregation and wider community took part, with Rev. Karen and several adult volunteers. We're excited about two more events planned for the coming year.



Joanne Green

New website, new logo, new sign for the Unitarian Fellowship of Regina.

A second area of action has been our Communications Action Group, which is focused on projects to expand communications out to the local community. We've launched a brand new website (reginaunitarians.ca), completed a redesign of our Chalice logo, and installed a new sign that features both prominently.

Joanne Green

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Winnipeg: Strength in Interdependence

A few individuals at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg recognized that we are a small group and the task of holding out justice to global conflicts required an interdependent response. We joined REFUGE, a group of faith- and secular-community members in Winnipeg, and with them brought an extended family of three brothers, their wives, and 18 children to Winnipeg, to reunite with a sister living here.

REFUGE raised over \$120,000 to support these families in their first year in Canada. Our congregation contributed a fundraising dinner, furniture, food, clothing, along with multi-generational outdoor events to introduce our newcomers to winter fun outdoors. The adults attend English classes; the children attend school and volunteer at entry programs. While it isn't all smooth sailing, the families are thriving.

One year has passed since the brothers and their families arrived in Winnipeg. REFUGE has applied to sponsor six more family members currently living as refugees in Beirut. Our church is working to find housing, collect donations of money and goods, and plan for settlement activities once the families arrive. Guided by the vision of "interdependence that calls us to love and justice" Unitarian Universalists can find a way to share our privilege. (For more on the newcomers' story, see page 7.)

Marlene Schellenberg and Debby Lake

The refugee fundraiser dinner at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg was part of a collaborative effort under the organization REFUGE.



Olinda: Historic Past, Bright Future

The first Universalist congregation in Canada was formed in the small hamlet of Olinda, ON, in 1880. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda still stands proudly at the same four corners where it was raised in 1881. The Church serves a strong and diverse membership in the most southerly part of Canada, drawing congregants from the Kingsville-Leamington area, Essex County, Windsor, and even from Detroit, MI.

Sadly, we lost Rev. Christine Hillman, our minister of 14 years, to cancer last year. We are fortunate to have Rev. Frances Dearman join us this September to serve our community and help us through the process of finding a new settled minister.



The Ray Stone Quintet graces services and events at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda.

Our small church loves its music. Four talented pianists in our membership rotate on a weekly basis. We are also blessed with member Ray Stone's string quintet, consisting of friends who are Grosse Pointe Symphony members. In October, our social responsibility committee participated in the annual cleanup of Point Pelee Provincial park.

John van Abbema

Creating Dialogue in Peterborough

One year ago the Peterborough Dialogues was founded by Axiom News's Peter Pula and Ben Wolfe of the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough (UFP). The Dialogues is a unfolding series of conversations, leading to change in individuals, which supports the goal

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of transforming communities. It starts with holding space for deep listening and being present for others. It encourages a new kind of dialogue and media making. Practices are drawn from Appreciative Inquiry, Six Conversations That Matter, and Open Space Technology, to name a few.



'Hands-on' group work at the Peterborough Dialogues, with members of the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough.

As the number of participants in the Dialogues grew, we started to see its influence around town in various activist groups: how they led meetings and drew participants into action. Peterborough-Kawartha MP and Minister for Democratic Institutions, Maryam Monsef, uses the dialogue practice in her town hall meetings.

At UFP we wanted to integrate these practices too. With the roots of dialogue established, facilitators trained, and a new toolbox of practices, we moved forward this past spring. We've hosted community conversations on RE, belonging, and accessibility, and are planning more. The UFP board used a similar practice at our annual retreat in September, under the leadership of Ben Wolfe.

The Dialogue process is emergent, making the results less tangible than action-oriented meetings. It requires ongoing work, continual engagement, and patience. But the practices of deep listening and personal sharing are an effective means of building trust, opening up (especially among strangers) and invigorating community.

Scott Donovan

Accessibility & Greening in Mississauga

After a successful Capital Canvass Campaign in 2015 and a grant from Employment and Social Development Canada, the Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga (UCM) is very pleased to announce the completion of a new accessible lift. Two other projects have been completed this year: the installation of automatic door-openers on our washrooms, and the replacement and upgrading of the roof on our leased building. More projects are planned for future years. We are very thankful for the generosity of our congregants and the federal government.



Ted Kloosterman, president of the Unitarian Congregation of Mississauga, takes the first ride in the new accessible lift.

On May 30, 2016 the Greening Initiative of the Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga (UCM) received a 'Green Award' from the Halton-Peel Chapter of Greening Sacred Spaces. Presented by MPP Kevin Flynn, this award recognizes the commitment of UCM to low impact development and naturalization of our property.

Over the past six years, volunteers have planted a wide variety of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, and removed invasive species. Two rain gardens were installed: a large bio-retention swale in the parking lot, to clean and moderate the flow of water run-off from the parking lot and property, and a smaller rain garden typical of a home installation.

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Along with a huge berm covered in native planting to feed birds, attract pollinators and small mammals, this beautiful garden provides a serene and attractive barrier to the parking lot. Expertise from the Greening Corporate Grounds program of Credit Valley Conservation, funding from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Applewood Garden Club, and volunteer contributions, have transformed this property and improved environmental awareness in the process. For further information contact Carole Berry at UCM: 905-278-5622.

Joan Hill and Carole Berry

New Staff and Newcomers for Toronto First

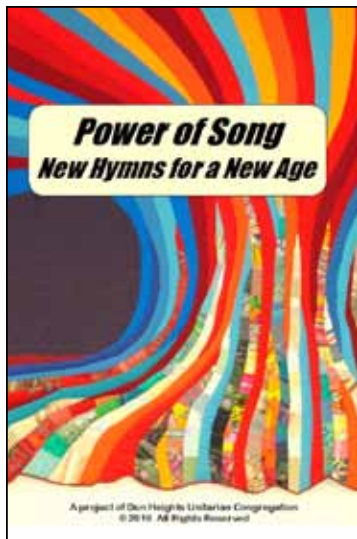
In support of our growing membership and Sunday service attendance, First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto have added to our staff. We are fortunate to have Rev. Lynn Harrison in the new position of Minister of Community Engagement. As a teaching congregation, we also warmly welcomed Danielle Webber as intern minister. Both assumed their roles in August.

In addition, we have been livestreaming our Sunday services since May.

Toronto First is also thankful for the support of the CUC in the safe arrival of five Syrian families, whom the congregation is sponsoring. Our members voted unanimously in May to sponsor more families as resources are available.

Susan Phillips and Art Brewer

Don Heights has got Space and Song



Don Heights Unitarian Congregation (DHUC) is now the proud owner of its own space. Recently DHUC purchased the unit at 18 Wynford Drive that had been its rented headquarters for the past dozen years. When the building converted to condominium offices, the board executed an agreement to purchase, backed

by solid majority support from the congregation. Next come renovations, for which planning is underway.

Another big piece of news: DHUC's all-original and beautifully presented songbook entitled "Power of Song: New Hymns for a New Age" has just been published and is available (\$25 + shipping/handling). It's a collection of 30 wonderful songs written by music director Sheila White and members of the Don Heights Singers, including DHUC President Janis Daly and past-president Audrey Chin. Chris White of Ottawa wrote one of the selections. Proceeds from this fundraiser will be dedicated to support congregational music.

Among the titles in *Power of Song* are new, seasonal songs for Christmas, Thanksgiving, Winter Solstice, and Spring Equinox. Lyrics centre on themes of peace, hope, love, joy, nature, equality, justice, and dignity. Also included are an Eid-inspired tune and an anthem based on the seven Principles of Unitarianism. For details, email Sheila White at words@rogers.com.

Sheila White

Ottawa First: Life is Good

At First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, life goes on as we deal with flux and change. We had a rich summer of excellent services, and attendance was up for the second year in a row.

In June we said good-bye to our minister, Rev. John Marsh, and in August we welcomed our new interim minister, Rev. Dr. Paula Cannon Gable. She joins a seasoned team of professionals in Lifespan Learning (Liz Roper, DLL), Music (Deirdre Kellerman) and administration (Carolyn Turner and Jen Brennan), arriving just in time to help plan celebrations for both Canada's 150th birthday and our congregation's 50th anniversary, in our beautiful building on Cleary Ave.

During the summer our justice work continued. Our second Syrian refugee family arrived and our team worked to find them housing, English classes, access to health care, and other services. We installed a ramp into our NOW room, making our building 100% accessible. We continued our work to assist

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Indigenous women leaving shelter, by providing furnishings and household goods.

Others volunteered at the day shelter, and elder Albert Dumont gave a service on Aboriginals in the criminal justice system. Thanks to the dynamic work of our DLL, young adults and elders, we had a vital presence in Ottawa Pride.

Rev. Frances Deverell, whose ministry is in environmental sustainability, and Rev. Linda Goonewardene, whose ministry is in addiction treatment and recovery, represent Ottawa First on the Capital Region Interfaith Council, which promotes dialogue, connection and public interfaith worship.

A welcome-back retreat in the fall encouraged close ties and engagement with our music and lifespan learning programs for the new worship year. Our OWL program ran sessions on the theme of Consent, for adults and youth. We revitalized our choir program with a new choir for beginners and families who just want to sing for fun. In October we held an all-congregation retreat to remember our history, enjoy deeper community, and revisit our vision and goals. In the meantime, everyone in the church is gearing up for our big annual fundraiser—the largest church fair in Ottawa. Life is good.

Frances Deverell

Ottawa Fellowship's Developmental Minister

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa has hired Reverend Rod Solano-Quesnel as our Developmental Minister. Rev. Rod was formally welcomed by the congregation on September 18. Rev. Fred Cappuccino, Minister Emeritus and the Fellowship's founding minister, led the congregation in pledging our support to Rev. Rod, and our shared path for the next two to three years.

Rev. Rod will spend alternate weeks in Ottawa. By mid-November, having had a few months to get to know each other, we will hold a full-congregation workshop to plan the goals of the Developmental Ministry.

Laura Evans

UUEstrie: Greater Visibility

Greetings from UUEstrie, in the beautiful Eastern Townships of Quebec. As the only church congregation at the Sherbrooke Pride Festival, we had an information table outdoors and were quite visible. Our newly renovated bell tower now has a red roof, matching our doors. Other projects are being completed to bring our building into compliance with the most current fire code.

In September, two Sunday services were held outside our building. The morning of September 11 was too windy for the planned walk in the woods, but we enjoyed a friendly, social time, lunch, and a walk along the road before heading home.

On September 25 we encouraged the community to attend the service in Derby Line, Vermont. The First Universalist Parish of Derby Line is just across the border. Gabriella Brand from North Haven, CT, inspired us with her talk on deep listening. After a hot lunch, several of us went to George and Toni Weller's farm for a tour and a visit.

Our new board attended a CUC webinar on legal training for boards on September 17 and enjoyed relating to UUs across Canada.

We have begun small group discussions on our monthly themes, under the guidance of Rev. Carole Martignacco. Planned events for the fall and winter include concerts, coffee houses, presentations and readings, student suppers, Welcome Families get-togethers, film discussions, a Non Violent Communication workshop and solstice celebrations—all to strengthen our congregation and bring our values into the wider community.

Phyllis Baxter



Rev. Rod Solano-Quesnel is welcomed by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa, in September 2016.

Connect the Dots

I want to be a part of the Vision Implementation Team to encourage Canadian Unitarian Universalists to share their ideas about our interdependence with all life on our planet. This Vision journey will bring us closer, making us powerful advocates for a more caring world. An ever-growing intellectual and emotional awareness of our interdependence will strengthen our feelings of kinship toward people, oceans, animals, and birds.

We can explore interdependence through conversations with children about the origins of their breakfast porridge, milk, and orange. Through social action conversations we can contemplate the connections between the destruction of rainforests, beef production, and vegetarian choices. These conversations may give birth to inspirational artwork, posters, songs, sermons, and essays.

Try thinking of some action of yours that affects only yourself. I couldn't find anything. Even the simple act of cutting your lawn has ripple effects. Each summer, a single gas-powered lawnmower produces 106 lbs of greenhouse gases. By naturalizing your lawn and minimizing grass cutting, you can help decrease greenhouse gases (check the facts at cleanairandyardcare.ca).

So many seemingly insignificant individual choices can slow down or speed up climate change. Climate change research has many examples of how a healthy environment is dependent on mindful human choices. Sound like the butterfly effect? Try connecting the dots between several million lawnmowers, greenhouse gas emissions, rising global temperatures, melting icebergs, rising sea levels, and flooded Bangladeshi villages. Can our understanding of the interdependence of humanity lead us to life choices that may save lives on the other side of the Earth?

Another way of thinking about interdependence is to consider the impact of earlier experiences—interdependence understood by a knowledge of history. For example, my grandmother was a Home Child who came to Canada in 1840, as a nine year-old orphan. I think my strong feelings for orphan children and adoption were partly shaped when I learned the secrets of Granny's childhood. Learning about snippets of our own history, or reading books like *Anne of Green Gables* as children,

helps us develop empathy, which leads us to support acts of love and justice.

Hearing stories of residential schools and experiencing the Blanket Ceremony, call us to take a more active role in truth, healing, and reconciliation. Listening to stories of earlier refugees being mistreated, helps us be more welcoming to newcomer Syrian families. Watching movies like *Milk* and *The Imitation Game* opens our eyes to the hostility experienced by LGBTQ individuals and how we, as a society, have used ignorance and shaming as a stepping stone to injustice, inequity, and a lack of compassion.

Knowledge of the past moves us forward on our journey toward a more loving and just world. In contrast, judgmental thinking, ignorance about colonialism and sexual and gender diversity, keep us stuck on our own lonely islands.

How might contemplating our interdependence with the earth—with other species, between generations, in our workplaces, and with our governments—deepen our understanding of a Canadian UU Vision?

Imagine if the artists, musicians, writers, philosophers, and activists amongst us committed to helping us bring this vision alive for UUs in Canada—and for anyone who wants to know who we are and who we long to be.

In the coming two years, your Vision Implementation Team will be inviting your thoughts about ways we can encourage creativity and dialogue about living our Canadian UU vision. We will be seeking ideas from RE leaders, from music groups, from Sunday Service Planning groups, from Youth groups, from ministers, and even from coffee hour discussions.

There is no single correct way to implement our vision. Living our Vision can begin with us spending some time alone with these words: We, Canadian UUs, “envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.” How can our awareness of our interdependence contribute to this more loving and just world?

Lorna Weigand
CUC Vision Implementation Team



Interdependence: when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The Heart of the New Vision

Interdependence is a word that few of us use in everyday conversation, but is powerful nonetheless. We, the UUs of Canada, embrace our connections with all people, creatures, and nature. That embrace leads us to a deeper commitment to the great web, and a better understanding of the work needed to preserve it. So where does ‘interdependence’ take us?

- First, to a deeper appreciation of Aboriginal culture. Many of us come from European heritage, which focused on ownership and exploitation of nature. Traditional First Nations cultures function as part of, and with respect for, all nature. With global warming and other environmental crises, we need to find our way back to living gently on the land.

Expressive depictions of interdependence are found in the work of Aboriginal artists. I particularly love the paintings of Norval Morrisseau; his images feature humans living in harmony with bears, birds, and plants. We all need each other, Morrisseau seems to be saying.

- Second, to a deeper understanding of the refugee crisis. We can be proud of the Canadian UU response to the Syrian refugee crisis; many congregations have helped bring Syrian families to Canada.

But the refugee issue calls for justice as well as love. It’s not enough to rescue some Syrian families. As a privileged country, Canada needs to do more to make the countries of Africa and the Middle East good places to live.

I’m happy to see that Canada is investing more troops in United Nations Peacekeeping; that’s a good step forward. Our understanding of interdependence makes us appreciate our global obligations.

- Finally, interdependence rejects the ‘build a wall’ politics emerging among rich nations of the world: the Brexit vote in Britain to withdraw from the European Union; the French hostility to Muslim bathing suits; the terrifying rhetoric of Donald Trump in the US presidential election. Here in Canada, Ontario MP Kellie Leitch has talked about screening immigrants for “anti-Canadian values” in her campaign for the federal Conservative leadership.

We must be ready to speak up for our vision of interdependence—to celebrate the blessings each new immigrant group brings, recover relationships with those who first inhabited Canada, and pledge our commitment to work for an interdependent world.

So that’s our vision: interdependence, which leads us to love and justice. My hope is that Canadian UUs will think about the new vision, talk about it, incorporate it into their spiritual and social justice life. Maybe some will follow the example of Norval Morrisseau, and draw pictures.

*Susan Ruttan
CUC Vision Implementation Team*

CanUUdle XVII

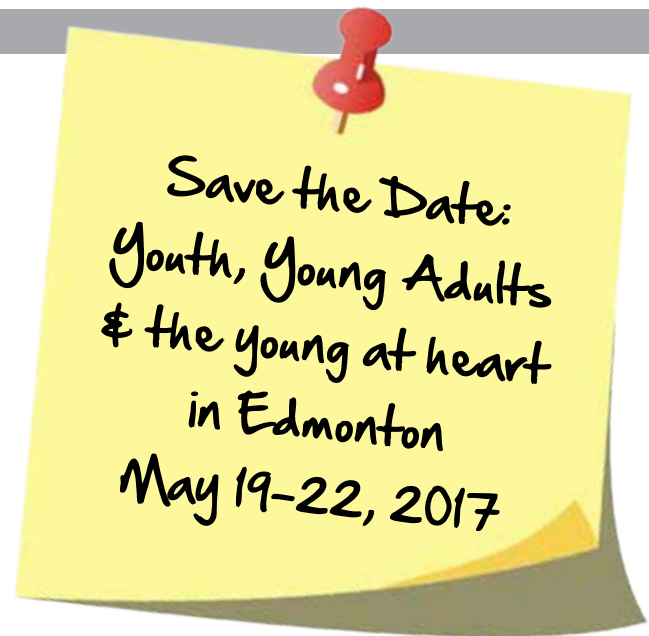
We couldn't wait another two years to do it again. CanUUdle XVII is being hosted by the Unitarian Church of Edmonton on the May 2017 long weekend. The CanUUdle national youth conference is at the heart of our national UU youth community, building friendships and developing leadership skills for our UU world. Last year over 80 youth and advisors participated in Vancouver.

"Everyone was so loving and people got to be themselves with no strings attached. It was incredible. I lost my voice many times and have only gotten 1 hour of sleep in the past 35 hours. I have no regrets."

"This past weekend has reaffirmed all of the reasons why I am proud to call myself a Unitarian Universalist. Though my UU family is spread near and far I know that you are all there for me whenever I need to talk."

"I got 12 hours of sleep over 3 nights! I felt things deeply. I laughed. I cried. I hugged. I longed. I felt old, wise, valued. I love CanUUdle."

CanUUdle XVI participants gather in Vancouver, BC.



YA Conference 2017: Love and Justice

Hosted by Westwood Unitarian Congregation in Edmonton, AB, the Young Adult gathering is planned and run by young adults. In addition, a limited number of spots are available to the 'young at heart' of all ages. We want to invite older adults into meaningful relationship with young adults.



Early morning labyrinth walking at the first Meaning Makers retreat, held at UBarU Camp and Retreat Center in Mountain Home, TX.

Meaning Makers: Quest into Young Adulthood

When youth bridge out of Youth group and into young adulthood, there are several life changes that occur. Many will leave home for further education, travel, and work. Many travel away from their home congregations to new cities, full of new faces and different communities. Along with all this newness, there is usually a lack of spiritual guidance. Where, in their busy studying, working, and socializing lives, is there space for spirituality? How can we lead a spiritual life in our early Young Adulthood?

These have been the questions circulating in my head this past year. I recently bridged from Youth group, expecting to join my Young Adult peers, only to find that they were spread out over the country. Many of them were busy with their lives at school or work. I felt lost in the in-between. I wasn't the age of the youth, nor was I the age of my congregation members, many of whom have their own kids or grandkids attending the fellowship. There was little in the way of programming for emerging young adults.

This is where Meaning Makers came in. I applied to the Unitarian Universalist Association program in late 2015. Meaning Makers is a year-long program involving virtual small group ministry and mentorship.

This program explores questions such as, "Who am I and how can I live my Unitarian Universalist (UU) faith in the world? The mentorship aspect creates space for both a YA and an older UU to share their wisdom with each other. Meaning Makers uses the book *Becoming* by Kayla Parker, sharing its readings, words, and reflections.

This past summer I joined 23 other YAs and facilitators on a retreat at UBarU, just outside San Antonio, Texas. We came together as young adults from across North America, to create a space to feel connected and to build a spiritual community.

As I have been growing into young adulthood, Meaning Makers has given me a space for my spiritual growth and a way to feel more connected with young adult communities across Canada and the US. As this program continues, I encourage anyone who is an emerging YA to apply and seek out young adult communities. We are here, and we welcome you!

Carter Mahoney

Carter Mahoney has been an active member of the Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough and its youth group for the past five years.

UU Ministers of Canada: Read On

Unitarian Universalism invites learning about diverse and numerous topics. Our living tradition draws from many sources. As a result, we encounter a plethora of texts that express a range of philosophical, religious, moral, and values-based beliefs and perspectives.

Given the breadth of UU sources, the discipline of homiletics (sermon-writing) in the UU tradition can easily lead Saturday night ‘sermonators’ to panic and nearly drown in a vast sea of ideas and texts. UU ministers face the challenge of wading through deep inspirational and literary waters.

Most ministers do a considerable amount of reading—for their own pleasure, to support and enhance their professional skills, and to inspire and direct their voices. In 2014, Meg Roberts and Stephen Atkinson proposed a new national program, UUMOC Reads, that encourages ministers to be more intentional about what we read, why we read it, and share titles that we find to be particularly useful or powerful.

Modelled after the CBC Canada Reads program, UUMOC Reads exposes ministers to peer-recommended literature that potentially nourishes self-development and speaks to vocational needs, as well as offering choices for fulfilling reading pleasure.

During the program’s debut year, ministers were invited to recommend a text in the area of ‘professional topic education’, relating to UUism, the Canadian UU movement, or the upcoming ACM theme. Recommendations for a second text, a ‘wonderful read on any topic’ would feed our creative selves. Submissions were collated by a committee; ministers were then asked to vote electronically. The final choices were *The Inconvenient Indian* by Thomas King (non-fiction) and *The Orenda* by Joseph Boyden (novel).

Other nominated titles in 2014-15 included:

- *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East* by Sandy Tolan
- *Life After Life* by Kate Atkinson
- *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink
- *Pastor* by Eugene H. Peterson
- *God Revised: How Religion Must Evolve in a Scientific Age* by Galen Guengerich, minister All Souls Unitarian New York City

- *Active Hope: how to face the mess we’re in without going crazy* by Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone
- *Listening with the Heart: A Guide for Compassionate Listening* by Carol Hwoschinsky
- *Anatomy of an Epidemic: Magic Bullets, Psychiatric Drugs and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America* by Robert Whitaker
- *What Then Must We Do? Straight Talk about the Next American Revolution* by Gar Alperovitz

For 2015-16, in the spirit of the fifth Principle, a ranked ballot system was implemented thanks to organizers John Marsh and Rodrigo Emilio Solano-Quesnel. Ministers were invited to suggest titles, which were sent to the membership via survey for ranking. The following lists were intended for use by UUMOC ministers, as well as for potential study in groups within their local chapters or other literary communities.

‘Professional Development’ titles (as ranked in order by participating members):

- 1- *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande
- 2- *Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality* by Kathleen Montgomery, ed.
- 3- *Indigenous Nationhood Empowering Grassroots Citizens* by Pamela Palmater
- 4- *Back to the Red Road* by Florence Kaefer and Edward Gamblin
- 5- *We Were Not the Savages* by Daniel M. Paul

In the category of ‘Enjoyment’ the ranked titles were

- 1- *Medicine Walk* by Richard Wagamese
- 2- *The Knowledge; How to Rebuild Civilization in the Aftermath of a Cataclysm* by Lewis Dartnell
- 3- *Bonnie and her 21 Children* by Her Long-Suffering Husband Fred Cappuccino, JBS (Just Barely Surviving)

Our members hope to continue UUMOC Reads as a means to connect with and support one another, and to inspire our personal lives, professional practice, and prophetic ministries.

Rev. Helen McFadyen
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kamloops

Being Bolder, Cautiously Indigenous Aspirations at Toronto First

In 2012 the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto founded a small working group, the Aboriginal Awareness Group (AAG). Its first bold move was to draw half its membership from the congregation, with the other half comprising Aboriginal members from outside the congregation. In 2013, Aboriginal members of the committee felt that the AAG should be directly focused on Toronto First's needs and objectives, with respect to Indigenous issues. In leaving the AAG, they agreed to stay on as advisors. This learning was a caution that recalled the ancient Socratic wisdom: know thyself.

AAG's objectives were focused on informing the congregation about Indigenous issues and concerns from Indigenous speakers and experts, through shared events (such as Powwows and smudge ceremonies), and interactions such as community involvement and volunteering. Only then, based on enhanced cultural sensitivity, would the AAG propose additional activities grounded in new-found awareness.

In the years since 2013, the Aboriginal Awareness Group has carried out a number of initiatives, including hosting speakers, workshops, and films on Indigenous topics, attendance at and support of

the annual Powwow by the local Native Men's Residence (NaMeRes) as well as volunteer activities at NaMeRes and KI (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation), also known as Big Trout Lake First Nation (nearly 600 km north of Thunder Bay, ON).

In the spring of 2015, the report by the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided a poignant opportunity for the AAG to broaden and deepen awareness at Toronto First. In response to the TRC findings, the AAG hosted a Participatory Workshop in November 2015. Delicious Aboriginal cuisine was offered, and break-out groups discussed topics such as What is the TRC? and Reconciliation in the Arts, which were reported back to the plenary. (Background readings are now posted on the congregational website, under 'Eco/Social Justice', then 'Aboriginal Awareness Group'.)

The hall was filled to capacity. The break-out groups were animated, engaged, and productive. Original ideas and new perspectives went well beyond the AAG's expectations. All participants agreed the experience was salutary. The summary, take-away lesson: be bolder, cautiously.

*Lee Doran
Aboriginal Awareness Group
First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto*



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Être unitarien au Burundi

Récemment installé à Saskatoon, le révérend Ndagijimana Fulgence a accepté de répondre à mes questions sur ses expériences comme Unitarien au Burundi, en Afrique. Voici la première partie de l'article qu'il a écrit pour Canadian Unitarian. La deuxième partie paraîtra dans le prochain numéro.

Jo-Anne Elder, Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

Je suis né d'une famille catholique et c'est seulement à l'âge de 3 ou 4 ans que j'ai découvert qu'il y avait d'autres églises. J'ai commencé à voir des personnes qui passaient près de notre maison le dimanche qui allaient prier dans une église pentecôte.

Au Burundi, les religions sont le christianisme avec ses nombreuses branches divisées essentiellement entre l'église catholique romaine (de loin majoritaire avec plus de 60% de la population), églises protestantes traditionnelles, les nouvelles églises évangéliques, et les nouveaux mouvements religieux que certaines personnes appellent, avec une dose de mépris et d'amalgame, les sectes. Il y a aussi un Islam modéré et qui lentement mais sûrement pénètre les centres urbains et sait très bien fidéliser ses fidèles. Il est extrêmement rare de voir des conversions massives de l'Islam vers d'autres églises.

Les églises au Burundi aujourd'hui ne sont pas en danger pour des raisons doctrinales. Elles sont en danger pour des raisons de justice sociale et pour le dire clairement, pour des raisons politiques. Le Burundi est un petit pays pauvre et dont la colonisation a privé des structures fortes d'administrations. Après l'indépendance, les églises et notamment l'église catholique a pris beaucoup de pouvoir. L'église catholique est majoritaire, possède quasiment la moitié des terres cultivables, et a une administration forte, ce qui lui confère un statut solide dans un pays fragile. Après le courant du vent démocratique des années 90, les églises évangéliques ont profité de la liberté de culte pour fleurir. Les témoins de Jéhovah qui travaillaient difficilement et étaient accusés de tous les maux ont commencé à travailler en plein jour.

Aujourd'hui, le pouvoir dictatorial en place ne tolère pas les églises qui parlent pour les droits de la personne humaine, qui critiquent le parti au pouvoir actuel qui est devenu un monopartisme de fait en désorganisant les partis d'opposition et en exilant les leaders de ces partis. C'est ainsi que des pasteurs reconnus de grandes églises évangéliques ont fui le pays, certains prêtres catholiques ont dû fuir le pays et une tension forte est perceptible, même visible, entre l'église catholique et le gouvernement mais aussi d'autres églises qui ont osé lever le doigt pour critiquer ce qui se passe.

*Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana
Unitariens de Saskatoon*