

THE CANADIAN UNITARIAN



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“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18)

Our CUC Vision of Interdependence

Rev. Dr. Steven Epperson

Unitarian Church of Vancouver

Vision statements are useful in religious organizations. Creating them serves to make clear the ultimate goal and purposes of the religious community; and they function as a guide to inform and shape inner spiritual and ethical lives, as well as institutional ministry, programming and outreach.

In May 2016, after a two year, cross-Canada discernment and consultation process, the delegates at our Annual Meeting approved a new Vision Statement for the Canadian Unitarian Council:

*As Canadian Unitarians and Universalists,
We envision a world in which our interdependence
calls us to love and justice.*

As I read it, the statement begins by naming and gathering us; it then states we have a global vision; and it concludes with an imperative: “interdependence calls us to love and justice.” (That visionary call brings to mind

the vision of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference: “To Save the Soul of America”—six words which inspired the SCLC to out-sing, out-march and out-pray their white oppressors. Don’t underestimate the power of a Vision statement, especially if those it inspires are willing to put words into action!)

Physical and biological sciences have shown that interdependence is a fact of nature and the cosmos. Ecological sciences (which inspired our seventh Principle thirty years ago) tell us that every form of life depends on other living things and on the non-living, physical environment as well—from the subatomic realm to the utmost bounds. In describing the extent and composition of the universe, astronomers now speak of a vast, non-random, interconnected superstructure of two trillion galaxies which *they* call “the cosmic web.”

I find the connection between the sciences and *our* statement of “interdependence” thrilling; and I appreciate that it accords with our Principles and Sources (i.e., “the results of science... the rhythms of nature...



The world, interdependence, love and justice: used as the logo for CUC Annual Conference and Meeting in 2011, this photo offers a resonant symbol for the new CUC Vision.

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the interdependent web”). But how do we move from a statement of fact (“interdependence”) to an assertion of spiritual and ethical duty (“calls us to love and justice”)?

I think that move is inspired by an insight of faith where the CUC Vision Statement reads, “*our* interdependence.” I take these words to be profoundly inclusive; they resonate with the invocation in earth-centred traditions when an elder prays: “*All my relations...*” My *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* defines “relation” as “the existence or effect of a connection, correspondence...or feeling prevailing between persons and things.” Doesn’t affective connection imply relationship and even kinship? And what happens if we believe this kind of relationship/connection extends across and between all living and non-living things?

Here we arrive at a precious heritage of our Unitarian Universalist faith: the deep-seated belief in the unity and interrelationship of all things in the heavens and the earth. Where there is relationship, I believe our faith speaks prophetically of consequences and responsibilities—the kind which call us to speak and act in meaningful ways that affirm and promote the practice of “love and justice.”

The *Book of Proverbs* describes virtues and vices in governance and leadership—see chapter 29, with the famous line: “where there is no vision the people perish.” Listen to a consequence of “vision”: “By justice the ruler gives stability to the land... and if he or she judges the poor with equity, the throne will be established forever—for a righteous person knows the rights of the poor, whereas a wicked person does not understand such knowledge.”

More than ever, we need “such knowledge”—the transformative knowledge of *our interdependence*—what Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called the “single garment of destiny... an inescapable network of mutuality.” Our CUC Vision of interdependence is a good place to begin to envision our world; the rest is up to us as we act with *love and justice* toward and with “all our relations.” 🍁

Happy Birthdays!

The Canadian Unitarian Council
congratulates the Unitarian Church
of Montreal on its 175th anniversary,
and the First Unitarian Church of
Ottawa on its 50th year at the
present home location.



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A Longer Song

Which of the many positive messages offered by religious leaders, humanists, and scientists around the world should I cite in the face of the current chaotic world political climate?

Jack Kornfield (*The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace*) and other mindfulness practitioners frequently end meditations with variations of these words:

May (I and all beings) be filled with lovingkindness.

May (I and all beings) be safe from inner and outer dangers.

May (I and all beings) be well in body and mind.

May (I and all beings) be happy and free.

Vietnamese Buddhist Thich Nhat Hahn says:

Peace is every step.

Our CUC National Voice Team reminded us recently (courtesy of Rev. Samaya Oakley) of the meaning of the UU flaming chalice:

Cups, goblets, and chalices have been used throughout history to symbolize the 'partnership way' of being in community—sharing, generosity, sustenance and love. The flame symbolizes witness, sacrifice, testing, courage and illumination. The two were joined as a Unitarian symbol by an Austrian artist, Hans Deutsch, in 1941. It was an underground symbol in occupied Europe—a promise of assistance for refugees escaping Nazi persecution. We use this symbol with honour and pride.

Our CUC Northern Lights Program team recently cited Rev. John Murray (1741-1815):

You may possess only a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it to bring more light and understanding into the hearts and minds of men and women.

These messages of kindness, fairness, courage, and mutual support resonate for me as a Unitarian, and I am grateful for their abundant expression.

I think it is safe to say that most Canadian Unitarians have been saddened and discouraged by the surge of intolerance, shameless lying, misogyny, unbridled self-interest,

and disregard for democracy that we have witnessed during the first weeks of the 45th Presidency of the USA.

Though our optimism has been shaken, we can nevertheless encourage our US neighbours and friends to work diligently to retain the system of checks and balances that has kept the USA on a democratic track thus far, especially the independence of its judiciary and the freedom of a press informed by facts.

In Canada, we shouldn't underestimate our vulnerability to manipulation by anti-democratic forces like fossil fuel oligarchies. We should remember that we too have racism and the undermining of democratic traditions. I believe it would be healthy for us to listen carefully to all among us who feel disenfranchised, be they oil patch workers threatened by loss of employment, young people fearing absence of meaningful work because of automation, or Aboriginal peoples still seeking justice after more than 150 years. And we need to speak out firmly against those individuals and groups who monger fear and try to undermine our inherent sense of compassion and fairness.

I believe that Canadians should advocate strongly for progressive taxation to support the Canadian institutions of public health care, public education, sustainable energy, and fair elections. We should advocate for identification and fair taxation of Canadians who shelter wealth in off-shore un-taxed accounts. And we should look to Northern European countries and our own Aboriginal communities for models of social democracy that affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Perhaps we thought that the arc of the moral universe was bending sharply toward justice, when, alas, it may be bending only gently that way and require from us a longer, deeper commitment—a longer song. If a longer song is needed, may we find strength together in our Canadian Unitarian Universalist community to help create one. *Our interdependence calls us to love and justice.*



Keith Wilkinson
President

Canadian Unitarian Council

"In the wake of recent North American events and incidents of unacceptable violence here in Canada, the CUC is more aware than ever of the need for dignity, respect and compassion. The following article reminds us that when times get hard, Unitarians step up."



Vyda Ng
Executive Director
Canadian Unitarian Council

Unitarian Universalists are no strangers to struggle.

From Selma to Standing Rock, we have advocated for civil rights, environmental protection, and many other causes. Canadian Unitarians have also worked for change here at home: as early as 1973, the CUC affirmed the right to die with dignity (finally legalized in 2015). A 1980 CUC resolution affirming abortion rights came eight years before the Supreme Court's decision.

Yet the current times seem particularly challenging. In the months following the recent presidential US election, many gains seem in danger of being rolled back. The climate of fear and hate in the US has many people wondering, "could it happen here?" After the February 2017 shooting at a Quebec City mosque, some worry it already has. Canadian Unitarians may be wondering how our faith and our commitment to justice, diversity, and inclusion should inform our response. Here are some ways we can act:

Remember our Principles and Sources

Our first Principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person, while our second calls on us to practice justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Taken together, these serve as a powerful reminder that all human lives matter—including groups who may feel particularly at risk. By providing welcoming congregations, by offering refugee sponsorship, by participating in the January 2017 Women's Marches, and many other initiatives, UUs live out our principles by being on the side of love.

This is difficult; we must strive not to see those who hold opposing views as the enemy, while seeking areas of common ground.

Work with other faith groups

In the civil rights campaigns of the 1950s and 60s, Unitarians were proud to march with members of other faiths, and it's equally important that we show up today. Unitarians participated in the January 2017 Women's March on Washington DC, coming together with people of many faiths and beliefs.

Indeed, connecting better with members of other faiths may be the single most important thing we can do to combat ignorance. Many UU congregations already have relationships with local mosques, but for those that don't, consider organizing a prayer vigil or an multigenerational meal, and invite members of local mosques, synagogues, temples, and churches. Sharing stories of multifaith action on Facebook is a great way to spread the word to those who are 'spiritual but not religious', demonstrating the valuable role of organized religion in working for social justice.

Don't lose sight of history

While the present era may seem uniquely difficult, remember that Unitarians—and humanity—have faced the sufferings of World War II and the Cold War. Struggles for causes such as women's rights and LGBTQ rights have not progressed without setbacks.

In 1978 the CUC passed a resolution for an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation, but it wasn't until the 1990s that most provinces began to amend their laws. Even then, few would have predicted that same-sex marriage would be legalized across the country in 2005, a move Unitarians campaigned hard for and which had five Calgary-based Unitarian youth parading on Parliament Hill with a 500-foot rainbow banner. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice." We are stronger together.

*Kenzie Love
for the CUC National Voice Team
The CUC National Voice Team consists of the CUC President, President of the UU Ministers of Canada, and the CUC Executive Director. Kenzie Love is a freelance journalist, member of the Unitarian Church of Calgary, and the new CUC Communications Coordinator.*

Annual Program Contribution & the AGM

An alternate calculation method for the Annual Program Contribution (APC) remains under consideration over the next year. For the AGM 2017, the CUC Board of Trustees will propose a motion to set the 2018 per-member APC at an amount sufficient to sustain the current level of CUC operations, and provide fair compensation for all existing staff within a balanced budget. This motion will be sent to congregations with the Official Call to Meeting in April.

Background in brief

Member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) contribute to the work of the CUC through Annual Program Contributions to the CUC. The APC is currently calculated by multiplying the number of members in a congregation by a set amount approved by them at each Annual Meeting of the CUC. The APC has been set at \$93 for several years. But this calculation method does not take account of relative prosperity or financial challenges of congregations or of regions, and it may lead to discouraging people from formally joining a congregation.

Additionally, over the years, it has resulted in a gradual decrease in financial support for the CUC, as congregational membership numbers have waned. Thus a revised, sustainable, and equitable APC calculation method is necessary, for congregations and for the CUC. In 2014, the board's APC task force explored alternative methods of calculation, in consultation with CUC congregations and their treasurers.

The result is a recommendation to calculate the APC based on a percentage of each congregation's operating expenses in the previous year. This will allow for an APC that is more accurately based on congregations' capacity to spend.

Reporting instructions were developed to ensure the revised APC would be established fairly across congregations' diverse accounting systems; they were shared with congregations in late January. Discussions were held regarding the implications of this alternate method.

Kristina Stevens is collecting the results from congregations, to forecast consequences of this alternate method. To request reporting instructions and to send your completed calculations, email: treasurer@cuc.ca.

*Board of Trustees
Canadian Unitarian Council*

Represent!

Taking Care of Business at the CUC Annual General Meeting 2017

When: May 13 11:30am-5:30pm (Eastern Daylight Time)

Where: First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto (175 St. Clair West) and online, via Zoom platform

For the first time ever, in addition to attending in person, CUC delegates from all over Canada will have the option of participating and voting online in the Annual General Meeting. Either way, please ensure your congregation is represented, with these few preparations:

1. Select your delegates

The number of delegates allowed depends on congregation size, with a minimum of two delegates per congregation. (A complete list of member/delegate ratios can be found in the 'Delegate FAQs' under 'Governance' then 'Annual General Meetings' at cuc.ca.)

2. Register your delegates

The registration deadline is April 1, 2017. A link to the online registration form can be found in 'Delegates—What You Need to Know', also under 'Annual General Meetings' at cuc.ca.

3. Be a member in good standing

Your congregation's Annual Program Contribution (APC) must not be in arrears; your congregation has held its own AGM within the past year; and there is a governance structure in place.

A schedule for orientation sessions in online participation and further information for delegates can be found in 'Annual General Meetings' under the link, '2017 Annual General Meeting Information'.



Beyond the Ballot: True Democracy is More than a Vote

In my elementary school in Mexico, my teachers had a hands-on approach to education. One year they set out to teach us two lessons in a single class project: a community kitchen that would teach us teamwork through food preparation, and a taste of democracy.

Each Thursday, one group of students would plan and prepare a meal for the rest of the class. But before assigning teams we were to choose a name for our community kitchen, by nominating a set of names and voting on them.

I proposed the name La Nutritiva—acknowledging what we'd been learning about balanced eating, while following the naming style of the low-cost diners where I often ate with my parents around Mexico City. In contrast with other proposed chic and trendy names, such as Sun & Moon, or Gifts of the Ground, many peers found my suggestion rather plain.

Still, when time came to vote, my submission won! Winning was validating, but others seemed upset. While my largely unpopular suggestion had won the most votes, it hadn't actually gotten a majority of the votes—or wholesale buy-in from the class. At that age, we didn't have the language to express it, but there was a sense that the system had failed. What had seemed the most fair way to make group decisions left most with a sense of unfairness.

This is probably why our Unitarian Universalist Principles contain specific wording for our fifth Principle: affirming and promoting the right of conscience and the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large. The fifth Principle doesn't mention voting or define ballot-counting systems. (And there's a whole science behind that!) In fact, the fifth Principle doesn't speak of democracy itself, but about the democratic process—an ongoing practice of relating to one another as we make decisions together.

Of course, voting is an inherent part of the democratic process—one tool by which the process takes place. The wording of the Principles is witness to the wisdom that, when democracy is reduced to a vote, it risks losing a more valuable way of relating, of hearing what matters most.

We have all lived through times when a vote has resulted in outcomes we find unfair. Not just because we were on the losing side, but because the outcome betrayed a larger truth that key voices were unheard.

Every year, Canadian UUs meet to make decisions affecting our denomination nationwide. **This year the CUC Annual General Meeting won't include the large-scale gathering we're used to attending. Many of us won't be there when the ballots are counted, but our voices have power.** Because they are not limited to presence in one meeting, or one motion, or one vote. Our voices are part of an ongoing conversation that spans the entire life of our vital communities.

We live democracy when we hold those conversations in our congregations. We live the democratic process when we talk to our boards, our delegates, our ministers. We live it when we take part in children's programming, teach OWL, or volunteer to serve coffee. We do democracy when we make our voices heard in society at large, by mail and on the street. And we do democracy when we seek to hear other voices. We are the fifth Principle when the democratic process is our way of life.

Rev. Rodrigo Emilio Solano-Quesnel is the half-time developmental minister at the UU Fellowship of Ottawa and also shares time in Toronto as a member of Neighbourhood UU Congregation.



Designed to represent the ideals of democracy and unity: conjoined crocodiles share one stomach, in the West African Adrinka symbol Funtunfunefu-Denkyemfunefu.

Innovative Ministry: Lori Kyle's New Horizons

This story begins when Rev. Lori Kyle, who had been working as the half-time minister at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Durham in Toronto, began a side project to supplement her income with a house painting service, when—as she puts it—“the Divine stepped in,” to turn her modest income-generating business into an innovative new community ministry project.

The idea struck Lori that she could expand her business and share the work with others in need, particularly new arrivals to Canada. After four months' investment of energy and resources, Lori's self-employment was reborn as New Horizons Painting, Inc. “It's for newcomers beginning new lives in a new land with new opportunities... New Horizons!” Lori explains.

“Over and over, I would hear that, although the initial experience of newcomers is challenging with many changes and hoops to jump through, the hardest part of all is getting a job once they've settled in.” Lori hopes New Horizons will help. “There is so much work out there, and so many people who need the work. The vision behind New Horizons is to be a conduit, linking as many people as possible to employment opportunities.”

When the idea took root, Lori felt it couldn't be ignored. “Just like my first call to ministry, it's been soulfully compelling... This is even more of a walk of faith, because I sensed how far out on a limb I would be going.” When Lori discusses the initial stages of the business, she reverently refers to “small miracles” helping her along. It was only people stepping forward with aid at key moments that allowed the endeavour to become real.

As a result, Lori's vision has transformed from a small business venture into an innovative form of ministry. “I'm a minister first—a minister who happens to paint.

Because I feel deeply called to establish newcomers' employment as community ministry, I'm now transitioning away from being a congregational minister, which is what I had always envisioned myself to be.”

While she admits to looking forward to weaving more traditional ministry into the project once the business side of the operation is more firmly established, even now there are no doubts about this being a spiritually-based endeavour. Already Lori has had opportunities to offer pastoral support to members of her new community, comforting those who've suffered death in their families, and offering support to those experiencing financial hardship. Finally, min-

istry is found in offering livelihood and sustenance to people starting new lives in a new culture.

Lori reports receiving abundant support for New Horizons from the UU community. As a recently ordained minister, she is still navigating preliminary fellowship while building and managing this new venture. “The New Horizons mission is reflective of our overarching

UU theology—about a way of being and doing in the world.... with the basis of our covenant being to live our faith: deeds instead of creeds. This approach to spirituality is very much aligned with what we are doing at New Horizons.”

From the first divine spark of an idea, through many small but significant miracles (such as skilled administrative and legal folks who have volunteered their talents), Lori feels that she is following a path that has been laid out for her. “I am convinced that this is a blessed endeavour that has little to do with me, other than me maintaining openness of spirit by continually saying ‘yes’... and the willingness to work hard.”

Looking forward into 2017, Lori is increasing New Horizons services to include house cleaning, lawn care,



Rev. Lori Kyle at work with Sharif Zewari from Afghanistan and Botros Toto from Sudan—part of the team at New Horizons Painting Inc.

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wallpapering, and small repair projects—meeting more needs and thus training and employing more people, with differing skill sets. She hopes to achieve this in part by reaching out to various Toronto area congregations that have sponsored newcomers:

Needless to say (New Horizons is) interested in being introduced to newcomers. And I am asking others to consider New Horizons for their service needs. The quality of our work is excellent, that's job one. But it's more than that.

Lori's deeply felt convictions were evident when she added, "We're doing something special here. And we would love for others to be a part of it by giving us the opportunity to meet their needs." More work means more people are earning a living and making a great start in their new lives in Canada.

*Sarah Baxter, eNews Editor
Canadian Unitarian Council*

(adapted from "Innovative Ministries: Lori Kyle's New Horizons" in CUC eNews, Feb 2017)

Rev. Lori Kyle can be contacted at: 416-509-5717; lori.kyle.painting@gmail.com;

www.newhorizonspaintinginc.com and on Facebook: New Horizons Painting Inc.

Be a CUC Friend

Friends of the CUC are donors who give directly to the CUC above their congregational pledges. Friends' donations range from \$5 a month to thousands of dollars, comprising a significant amount of CUC revenues. Donations support the CUC's role as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder for refugee sponsorships, the development of the Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Guide, and so very much more.

Become a Friend, or consider increasing your monthly donation, for the continuation of services to UU congregations and communities, creating a national community for UUs and those in the wider community who are seeking a spiritual home.

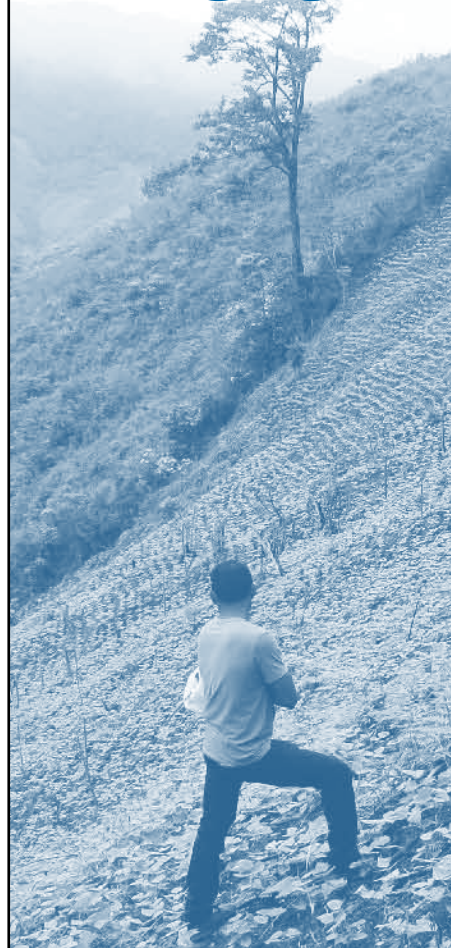
Donations may be made online:

<http://cuc.ca/giving-and-funding/friends/>

Cheques may be sent to:

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USC CANADA 

Housing for All: The Vision and Plan for Unitarian Commons

Not wanting to end up in a seniors' ghetto, seven UU members from congregations in the Greater Toronto Area founded Unitarian Commons—the name for a group, a vision, and a plan for building multigenerational, universal design cohousing.

What is Universal Design?

Universal design allows anyone of any age or ability to live in the housing. It accommodates a broad range of accessibility issues, including physical mobility, vision, hearing, and other difficulties. With the application of universal design to its building projects, Unitarian Commons aims to tackle two social health problems: isolation and barriers to mobility.

Over 4.4 million Canadians (one in seven) live with some form of disability. That's a substantial group of possible buyers who are generally overlooked by builders.

There is increasing concern in Canada about healthcare costs, as a result of chronic illness, disability, and an aging population. The pressure for suitable, accessible housing for the growing numbers of seniors, along with the ongoing need for housing for people of all ages with disabilities, creates a corresponding demand for affordable and accessible housing.

There is an assumption that universal design costs a great deal more than conventional design. However the cost of universal design in housing is only about 1% more, provided it is planned from the initial design stage. (Renovations to conventional housing cost tens of thousands of dollars more.)

With all these factors in mind, the Unitarian Commons team decided to build a non-profit, affordable, multigenerational, cohousing condominium, with the hope that its success will inspire replication across Canada. The group is not officially connected to any

particular UU congregation, and participation is not restricted to Unitarians. With the support of a letter from the CUC, Unitarian Commons has received a seed grant from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to help with the costs of creating a website, a business plan, a feasibility study, and not-for-profit incorporation.

Working with their partner Options for Homes (www.optionsforhomes.ca), Unitarian Commons is now seeking its first building site. At present, there are several possibilities, but none yet confirmed. The goal is for the entire building to be accessible to people of any age, with or without disability. With universal de-

sign, residents need not become homeless due to accident or illness, and if the need arises for personal care, in-home services can be arranged.

Meanwhile, Unitarian Commons is also partnering with the organization Older Women's Network (OWN)—advocating for the revision of federal and provin-

cial building codes to require that all new multi-unit buildings be of universal design.

Barrier-free housing is a human right. Visit www.unitariancommons.ca to learn more about the financial viability and attractiveness of housing that incorporates universal design from the planning stages. Fill out the survey to receive updates on progress. Connect with Universal Commons, or perhaps be inspired to develop similar housing in your own community.

Kate Chung

Member of the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, a founding member of Unitarian Commons, and volunteer on the housing committee of the Older Women's Network, Kate Chung is a grandma and a Raging Granny, long retired from social service work.



Cohousing that is non-profit, affordable, multigenerational, and of universal design need not be just a dream.

We, Canadian Unitarian Universalists,
envision a world in which our interdependence
calls us to love and justice.

Calling all creative UU Canadians! Two contests celebrate our new national Vision Statement

Faith Sermon Contest:

Write a new sermon/homily of 1,800 to 2,500 words on any aspect of the Vision Statement and its five attached Aspirations. Deliver that sermon to a Unitarian congregation before the contest deadline of Feb. 2, 2018.

Participants can be ministers or lay people and must be connected to a Canadian UU congregation. The winner will receive a \$150 prize, plus an invitation to present their sermon during the CUC ACM 2018 in Hamilton, ON.

Art Contest:

Create art that celebrates our new Vision Statement (not the five Aspirations). The art can be painting, sculpture, song, video, poem, or other medium. Participants should submit their original work or, if not possible, send photographs of the work.

Prizes of \$50 will go to the winning piece in three categories: ages 12 and under; ages 13-17; and ages 18 and older. Group projects are also welcome.

Deadline for art submissions: Oct. 1, 2017

Participants must be connected to a Canadian UU congregation. The winning pieces will be exhibited online. Full details of both contests are on the Vision-and-Mission page of the CUC website.

The Canadian UU Vision:

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.

These 5 Aspirations guide us in living out our faith:

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we are Deeply Connected, Radically Inclusive, Actively Engaged, Theologically Alive, and Spiritually Grounded.

A Second Litany in Time of War

friends, this is war,
it's a protest for our times,
a war that does not fight anyone,
a war that embraces everyone,
for only ideas are at war.

it's not easy to learn again
how to dream the world into being.
civilization starts in small ways,
& we will return it to corporate corners
where it has withered.

we will resurrect it
like any resurrection, speak to
what has died, in the world
or inside of us,
we will charm it back
into communing with us,

we speak in the name of freedom fighters
burned at the stake,
we will create the about-face
to set it on its proper path,
to move civilization forward not backwards,
to have it sit next to us
where it belongs.

we must go into gardens,
we must peek over fences, line by line;
we are the holders of tomorrow,
the keepers of dreams;
we need to reclaim
the spot where we used to stand.
& in this our big tent for all the world's people
we will dream slowly,
but dream we will.

Helen Iacovino

Helen Iacovino's poetry has appeared in five CUC poetry Anthologies, as well as a number of journals including *UU World*, *Canadian Author & Bookman*, *CVII* and *Atlantis*. She has been the Poet in Residence at Unicamp since 2012.

Since 1842: Unitarian Church of Montreal's 175 Anniversary



The Simpson Street church was home for the Unitarian Church of Montreal from 1900 to 1987.

The first formal meeting of Unitarians in Montreal was held in 1828 as its participants sought to share a faith without walls or creeds. The first minister arrived in 1832 from England and died within a month of arrival during a cholera epidemic. But persistence prevailed, and during an evening meeting on June 6, 1842, a proposal was made to form the Unitarian Society of Montreal. Funds were raised and discussions continued until June 20, 1842, when the Montreal Unitarians ratified their constitution and the church was officially born.

175 years later, the oldest Unitarian congregation in Canada is celebrating that birth. Festivities began January 15 and will continue for five months, concluding with a gala evening in June. A musical drama portraying our history will be the centerpiece of the gala.



Rev. Diane Rollert (left) chats with lead organizers of the 175th anniversary celebrations, Nancy Lorimer (middle) and Elizabeth Anglin (right).

Most of the activities will take place on Sundays, and include stories about our foremothers and forefathers by Rev. Diane Rollert and various congregants. We're including historical notes and quizzes in our weekly order of service.

Tours of historical artifacts are scheduled. Videos and photos are on display, along with a plaque listing the names of all our board presidents, up to the current year. Each month there will be a dramatic presentation on a pivotal moment in our history. Rev. Rollert will also be presenting a tour of historic Montreal UU sites in the spring—when we anticipate the blossoming of 175 daffodils, planted last fall.

We'll be welcoming former congregational ministers back to our sanctuary: Rev. Carole Martignacco, Rev. Peter Boullata, Rev. Meg Roberts, and Rev. Charles Eddis.

The March 28 service, *Remembering the Fire*, is planned as a 30-year commemoration of the fire in the Simpson Street church in 1987 (in which two firefighters died when the roof collapsed). We've rebuilt at our current location and continue to grow.



In the early morning hours of May 25, 1987, a five-alarm fire occurred at the Unitarian Church of Montreal on Simpson Street. Firefighters Pierre Létourneau and Jean-Pierre Longpré lost their lives fighting the blaze when the building's roof collapsed, burying them under the stones of the building's east side wall.

Besides honouring the past, we look to the future. On March 19 we're cosponsoring a multifaith panel, *Is There a Future for Liberal Faith in a Secular World?* Rev. Paul Rasor, Unitarian minister and erstwhile director of the Center for the Study of

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Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan College, will lead the panel. Netherlands-based Rev. Rasor is the author of *Faith Without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the Twenty-first Century*.

As we've neared this anniversary year, we've seen the arrival of the nine-member Syrian family that we have sponsored. They are rapidly settling into life in Canada. We anticipate the arrival of the second family in the next weeks. It has been a joy to see our values and commitment take such an active form in the world.

And in remembrance of that long ago Monday evening, June 6, 1842, which saw the proposed conception of the Unitarian Society of Montreal, our annual general meetings are still held on the first Monday of June.

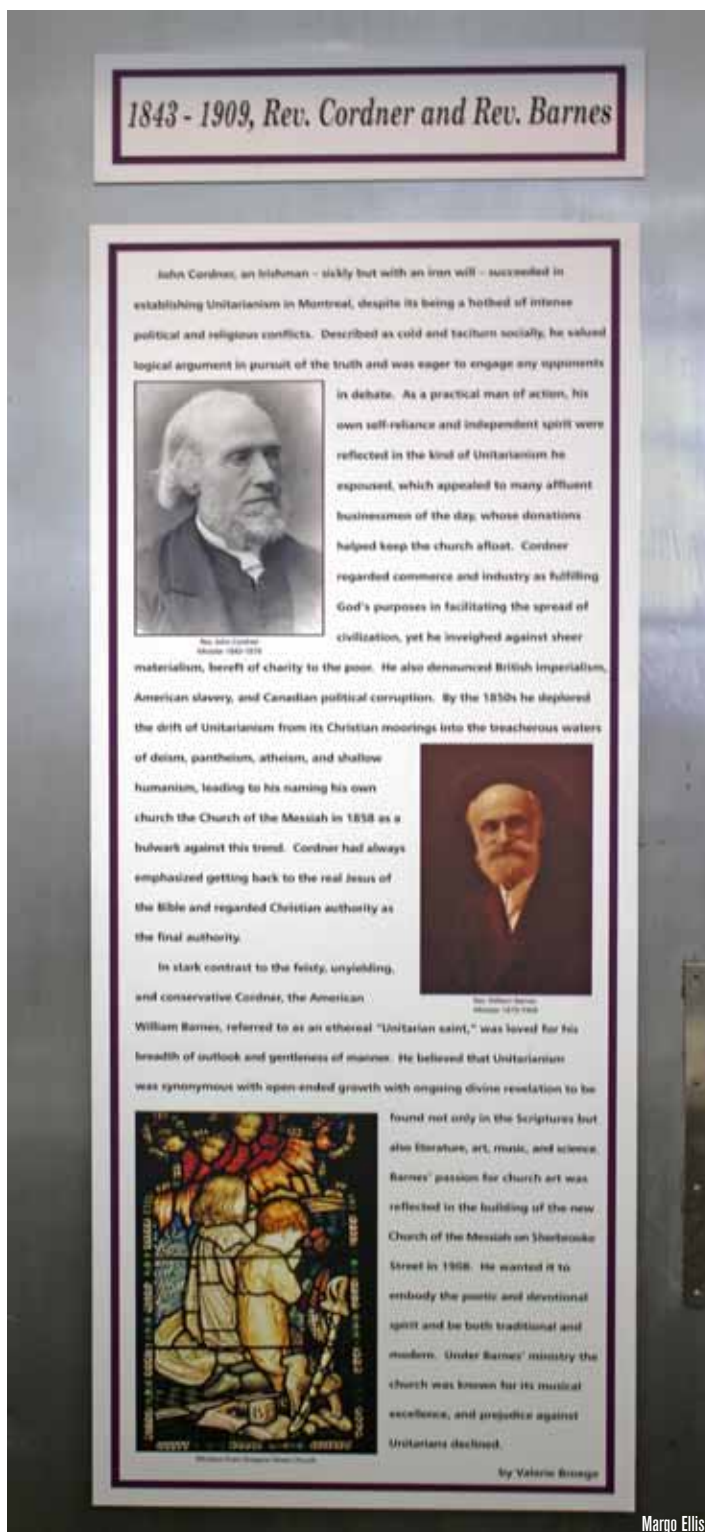
Margo Ellis
UCM Communications
Unitarian Church of Montreal
communications@ucmtl.ca



A special 175th anniversary edition of the monthly senior lunch.



Display tables showcase the written work of Church members and friends.



A piece of Church history: one of a set of panels hanging on the huge metal doors separating the sanctuary from Phoenix Hall.

An Ending at Prince Edward Island

At a semi-annual meeting in early January of 2017, the Unitarian Fellowship of Prince Edward Island agreed that it will cease operation at the end of its fiscal year, May 31, 2017. After several years of a stable, but ever-changing membership of six to eight people, and an inability to keep up with the administrative demands of a formal organization—or to find willing officers of a ‘charity’—we agreed it was time for a formal end. Ironically, we were profiled on the local CBC-TV station after the announcement!

We will continue to meet twice a month at the UPEI chapel until the end of May, alternating the disposition of assets and other necessary tasks with meetings for fellowship.

Our situation suggests the need for a Canadian equivalent of the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF), a virtual base for people who wish to be members of a ‘beloved community’ but who are far from the nearest physical congregation. With the recent rewrite of CUC’s constitution there is no longer a place for individual UUs within the CUC community.

Bunty Albert

North Hatley Hosts

UU Estrie was recently honoured by a visit from The Venerable Yuan Hau, a Tibetan Buddhist nun on a North American tour, who spoke to us about Impermanence. In February, volunteers from our congregation fed over 60 Bishop’s University students at a Friday Student Hospitality Supper. We participate in this local initiative with five other local churches. Once a week during the school year, students are welcomed to a free supper in Lennoxville. Their appreciation nourishes us.

On February 26 the service Spirit of Play was our 6th annual intergenerational get-together to play games and eat popcorn. It’s a great chance for everyone to mingle and get to make new friends.

We are planning for our annual Child Haven Dinner, which will be held at Shalimar Restaurant in Lennoxville, Tuesday, April 18. And a series of Literary Readings by well-known authors will take place on the first

Fridays in April, May, and June, following potluck suppers. There’s a lot going on for our tiny group. Check out our website and our Facebook page, and come join us in beautiful North Hatley, Quebec.

Phyllis Baxter

Ottawa First: Transition and Celebration

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa is now halfway through its first year of Interim Ministry, with lots of transition activities. To date these have included a fall ‘start-up’ retreat in October (facilitated by Rev. Linda Thomson of the CUC), a transition check-in in December, a RE visioning session in January, and a governance town hall in February. Also in January, Martin Settle, co-Executive Director of USC Canada, spoke at a Sunday service about how USC Canada has made itself stronger and multiplied its impact by eliminating all but one of its programs. We were challenged to consider what our congregation can learn from this transformation.

We are preparing to elect the search committee for our next settled minister. Transitions of this nature are a lot of work! In the area of social responsibilities we continue support Syrian refugees (one of our families welcomed a new child in February) and promote affordable housing.

Our activities on indigenous issues have included piloting the four-session version of the CUC Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Reflection Guide (THRRG) for adults, which included a moving presentation by an indigenous elder who is a residential school survivor. We also launched a three-part speaker and discussion series, and conversation is underway about extending our indigenous focus, because there is so much more to learn and do.

Our Fall Fair in November was once again a big success, building community among the more than 300 volunteers and generating net revenue of over \$45,000 for our operating fund. And in December our three choirs presented another inspiring concert with the theme, Let There Be Peace on Earth: a selection of songs from our fall season—celebrating community, strength, and gratitude.

Maury Prevost

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This year, First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa is marking the 50th anniversary of our award-winning building on Cleary Avenue. We have many accomplishments to celebrate and would welcome your presence at any or all of these special events.

An Evening with Tony Turner

February 10, 2017 – 7:30 pm, Worship Hall

Tony is an award-winning singer/songwriter, with songs that channel the ties that bind and also the spirit of the times.

Admission by suggested donation of \$5

Steinway Celebration

March 4, 2017 – 7:30 pm, Worship Hall

This professional-level concert includes four emerging pianists from the area, performing on the 10th anniversary of the purchase of our Steinway grand piano.

Admission by donation

Celebratory Dinner

April 22, 2017 – 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall

Reservations are required for this multigenerational potluck dinner.

RSVP Kathy Yach, cityviewwky@rogers.com. 613-224-6835

Admission \$5/adult (children free)

Multisensory 50th Anniversary Service

April 23, 2017 – 10:30 am, Worship Hall

Greatest Hits: Concert by 3 Choirs

May 6, 2017 – 7:30 pm, Worship Hall

Our three choirs sing their most popular repertoire.

Admission by donation

Open House: Celebrating 50 Years at Cleary Avenue

June 11, 2017 – 12:00–4:00 pm, 30 Cleary Avenue

Everyone is invited to drop in for displays, tours, activities, and refreshments. The focus will be on significant contributions by the congregation over the past 50 years.

Neighbourhood's Commitment and Care

This past fall Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation hosted wonderful events, such as our annual Silent Auction Fundraiser and Christmas Pageant Service, and participated in the mid-winter retreat, for which Yvette Roberts and Ahna Delifice ran a Lay Chaplaincy workshop. Several art shows were held in our Gallery spaces, including a group show titled, *The Human Condition Revealed*.

We've been working on creating not only a sustainable, caring committee, but a larger inclusive culture of caring, where we all help each other in times of strife and loneliness. We also have three year-long groups practicing a Circle of Trust, much like the Quakers' practice. Our Social and Environmental Action (SEA) committee has grown in membership to 30-plus members and has organized a virtual tour of a camp for Syrians in Sidra, as well as several speakers on Aboriginal rights and land treaties. All real eye openers!

This winter and spring boasts a city landscape group show, *Just Another Road Side Attraction*, featuring the artwork of ten participating artists Feb 19–April 9. Group shows in other media will run through Sept 10. Our Sunday Concert Series (tickets \$20) hosts the Hal Walker Trio on March 5 and Singing Out LGBTQ on April 2. All are welcome to these events. Join our community for music, environmental action initiatives, and art shows. For more information on weekly activities, including meditation, prayer, yoga, chanting, new moon rituals, talent nights, knitting/craft circle, and bridge, visit our calendar at nuuc.ca.

Lauren McKinley Renzetti

More Newcomers for Toronto First

Just over a year ago (Dec 2015), our first Syrian family arrived. By March 2016 all five sponsored families had arrived and it has been a very busy, amazing year. We are so happy to report that everyone is well; everyone is working and the kids have adjusted beautifully to school (some are at the top of their class!). We are going to miss all that delicious Syrian cuisine as we ease off our day-to-day contact.

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Catching raindrops: young newcomers visit their sponsorship community at First Unitarian Church of Toronto.

But we are not done yet! In October we submitted an application as a community sponsor for a Syrian family of five in Yemen. Our relationship with the Muslim Association of Canada has grown strong, and their resources are helping us apply to sponsor two more families: a Syrian family of nine in Jordan and a Syrian family of six in Egypt. It might be a while before these families arrive, but we are hopeful.

Susan Phillips

Refugees and Renovations in Kitchener

On January 12 Grand River Unitarian Congregation (GRU) welcomed its long-awaited Syrian refugee family to Canada—all seven members (grandparents, parents, and three kids)—helping them settle into a beautifully appointed downtown Kitchener home.

Now the adults are taking English classes and eager to determine how they can resume previous careers, while the children are thriving in school. On February 5

we formally welcomed them at a Sunday service, during which the members of the refugee task force spoke, as well as three family members, including the 12-year-old daughter. We enjoyed a potluck lunch afterwards and a reporter from the local paper wrote a very nice story in the January 6 edition of the Waterloo Record. GRU's members and friends have really come through during this process, with generous monetary support, donations of every item needed for the house, and offers to help the newcomers settle in.



Moments after arrival: this extended family of newcomers was sponsored by the Grand River Unitarian Congregation.

In other news, GRU has been collecting pledges to fund a much needed renovation of its downstairs classroom area; our growing RE program is bursting at the seams in the small classrooms. Larger classrooms will help the children's program and create more flexible space for adult RE and better office space for staff. We plan to have the work done during the quiet summer months of 2017 and begin the church year in the fall better equipped than ever!

Kristen Wilson



Refugee Task Force members Carol Burrows, Rona Goldensher, Louise Sims, and Kristen Wilson wait with a local relative of the newcomers at Pearson airport to welcome Syrian family of seven.

Winter Warmth for Olinda

Mid-winter in the 'Ontario sun parlor' was a mild time for us at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda. The extra time not needed for snow-blowing was applied to church activities. We finished replacing the manse windows and doors in December and held a used shoe drive for recipients in the Dominican Republic (soles4souls.org).

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Olinda UU members participated in two vigils for the Muslim communities in Kingsville and Leamington, January 30 and February 1. Our interim minister, Fran Dearman took a lead role in both events.

On March 8 our Annual Goods and Services Auction helped build reserves in the capitol fund for future renovations. The Olinda Choir joined the Ann Arbor UU choir March 11 and 12, for the annual international Big Sing event. On March 26 we'll host an international dinner at the church after Sunday service. Wilma Lamb, Leamington-area coordinator for refugee support groups, will be our guest speaker.

We continue with our ministerial search process. We look forward to the guidance of Rev. Stephen Atkinson, the UUA-appointed new Transitions coach working with Canadian ministerial search committees.

John van Abbema

Thunder Bay: Partners in Action

The Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship (LUF) started off the year with an enjoyable visit from members of the UU Congregation of Duluth, MN, our nearest UU neighbours. That was followed by a highly successful Empty Bowls/Caring Hearts dinner for the seventeenth year running. Thanks also to the work of several organizations and the support of the community, significant donations were made to Shelter House and the Regional Food Distribution Association.

The year has brought challenges as well. After the resignation of our Director of Religious Exploration, responsibility for the RE program has fallen on volunteers until the number of children rises enough to justify hiring a new DRE. Reduced membership and attendance has resulted in less revenue and the need to be very careful at budget time. Lack of accessibility at our otherwise comfortable church has us considering finding alternate space for the Fellowship.

Living our values, a number of members and friends of LUF participated in a vigil on January 31 in memory of the six men killed at the mosque in Quebec on January 29. A speaker from LUF delivered a message of support. On March 8 LUF will host, along with community partners,

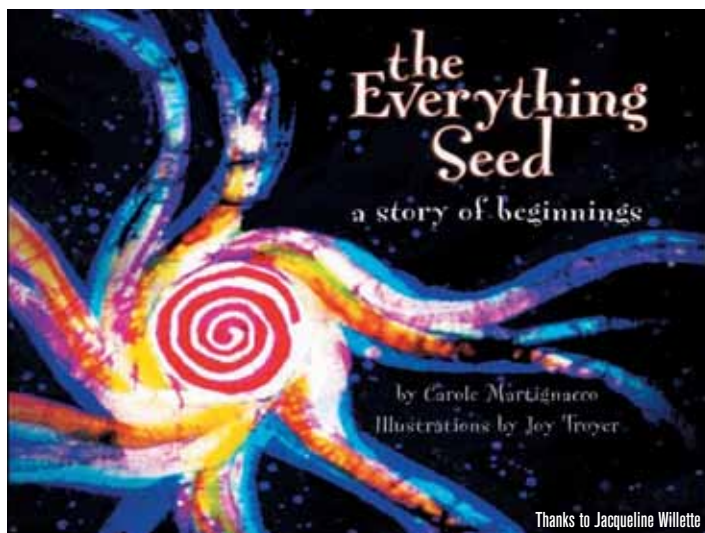
a Women's March through the downtown north core of the city. Our part-time minister, Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk, is offering a well-attended course on religious humanism.

As we deal with ongoing challenges, we will continue to be an active voice for love and justice in Thunder Bay.

David Belrose

Westwood is Sitting Pretty

On December 21 Westwood Unitarian Church celebrated the turning of the year at an all-ages observance, with music, refreshments, drama (including a grinchy couple throwing 'snow' balls), and a Sharing the Light ceremony. We've hosted a Winter Solstice Celebration for 29 years. Several years ago, we moved our celebration to Edmonton City Hall because our friendly, intimate sanctuary could no longer accommodate all the people who wished to attend. All proceeds are donated to a local charity.



At Westwood Unitarian Church the remounted production of *The Everything Seed* included props, lighting, and music, in a service to consider the 'inter-dependant web' of all things.

Every year, the choirs of Westwood and the Unitarian Church of Edmonton join forces to present an extra special Sunday Service for each congregation. January's worship theme being Canadian UUs Exploring Creation, Westwood decided it was time to remount its 2007 production of *The Everything Seed*, by Rev. Carole Martignacco with batik art by Joy Troyer. Joy gave us permission to use her slides to animate the visual effects; along with hand-made props, lighting, and music

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from Harmonia and Choreal, it was an inspirational service, inviting everyone to consider the interdependent web of all existence as they continue their searches for truth and meaning. We've been told that ten years is too long to wait between performances of this Big Bang Creation Story.

What do you do when the foam in your sanctuary chairs starts disintegrating? Westwood developed an Adopt-A-Chair program. Generous individuals quickly stepped forward to provide the majority of the funding for this expense, which came a few years earlier than forecast. Some people even donated a row of chairs! (And the unpacking party is reported to have been more fun than one might expect.)

Jacqueline Willette

Calgary Honours Activists and Associates



Chantal Stormsong Chagnon and Cheryle Greyeyes Chagnon celebrate in response to receiving the William Irvine Social Justice Award, during a service at the Unitarian Church of Calgary.

On December 12, 2016, the Unitarian Church of Calgary named Chantal Stormsong Chagnon and Cheryle Greyeyes Chagnon as the recipients of the William Irvine Social Justice Award. This mother-daughter activist team, and founders of the drum group Sisters from Another Mother, are regular participants and organizers of many social justice events in Calgary, especially ones focusing on women's and Indigenous justice.

In congregational activities, we recently honoured over 20 people who have been members for thirty or more years, we are participating in the Young Adult welcoming initiative, ran two successful Our Whole Lives

(OWL) programs, and our minister Rev. Debra Faulk had a lead role in Calgary's Interfaith Harmony Week.

John Michell

Kelowna Battles Islamophobia

Members of the Unitarian fellowship of Kelowna recently attended a vigil at our local Islamic centre to support victims of Islamophobia, to stand up for the rights of all people to be left alone (regardless of how they may pray), and to demonstrate that we are all part of a community that cares, wants us to feel safe together, and at home.

The vigil was well attended. The centre could not contain all that participated, so many of us stood outside, overflowing to the street. Let's take a moment to be grateful for our shock and fear, our ability to share empathy and pain across thousands of miles. This is a gift, evidence that for us, violence is not routine. Not every community is so fortunate.

Adam Clarke

Kamloops for Families and the Larger Community

A new program for families, Mess it Up, was launched in January at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kamloops (UUFK). At the first program there were eight adults and children, mostly teens and preteens, from three families. They made a collaborative artwork based on our home location in relation to the Thompson Rivers, and our life joys. There was food and a lot of fun for all. Everyone is looking forward to future programs.

Another program begun last fall was UUFK's monthly Theology without Borders program, which meets over food at a local fair trade eatery. UUs and people of diverse backgrounds and faith converse about spirituality, philosophy, religion, morality, and social ethics. The response has been positive and attendance is increasing. Feedback indicates that many find it thought provoking to consider different perspectives on universal issues and questions. Conversations often continue online after the program, with further sharing of thoughts and resources.

Barbara Bowmar

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Intrepid Unitarians at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kamloops brave a snow storm to dance, along with Camilla, Rev. McFadyen's service dog.

Strong Bonds in South Fraser

Since August of 2016 the South Fraser Unitarian Congregation has held its Moving Forward Together retreat for board and committee chair members, a choir retreat, and a Start Up workshop facilitated by Rev. Wendy McNiven. We also began are the adult small group ministry programs, and a Soul Matters thematic ministry as a pilot for the latter half of the 2017 church year.

Whether it's games nights, or a Friday evening social, South Fraser Unitarians love to gather. Many people travel 40 minutes or more to get to services and Tuesday evening programming. Another way people connect is through the choir and small strings group led by the very talented Sylvia Zeelenberg. Whether it's delivering a cooler filled with frozen foods for a family in crisis, delighting in the arrival of a newborn, or arranging for a walk along the beach after the service to welcome someone new, this is a congregation that delights in one another's presence.

Last fall fifteen people participated in the Tapestry of Faith program, Hindsight, Humour and Hope. Surrey-area Unitarians are also busy with many social justice activities in the area. One sits on the Board for the White Rock Social Justice Film Society, another works at the hospice, yet another works with the

Women's Center, many volunteer helping immigrants to Canada become familiar with our language, and others volunteer in kindergarten classes.

Through a process of consultation, the congregation has opted to focus time and attention on issues of poverty in the area.

Rev. Samaya Oakley

Victoria Braves the Snow

The First Unitarian Church of Victoria has been busy planning for the sabbatical leave of our dedicated, hard-working co-ministers, Rev. Melora Lynngood and Rev. Shana Lynngood. They will be away from March 1 to August 15 on a much deserved break, which ties in with vacation and study leave. We are also wishing a happy retirement to our nine-year office administrator, Karen Uldall-Ekman, as she embarks on life's next chapter. And out here on the Left Coast, we managed to keep our Sunday services happening as we dodged a few snowfalls. Gasp! The board and our many committees and teams actually had a 'snow day' on February 7.

We are blessed with so many active and creative members and friends, who continually strive to offer meaningful programs within our church community and to participate in many activities in the greater community.

Lorna Anthony

Canadian Unitarian eNews



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A New Language of Openness: Less God-Talk for Canadian UUs?

Rev. Gretta Vosper is a minister in the United Church of Canada, who has been making headlines recently for ‘coming out of the closet’ as an atheist. Coming out like that might be old hat in UU circles but it has caused real consternation in the United Church, whose leadership is considering de-frocking her. Vosper’s Scarborough West Hill congregation has vowed to follow her exit if she is cast out. In response, the CUC issued a public statement inviting her, and others of like mind, to join. At a Sept 2016 public meeting (youtu.be/o7rllnhDO2Q), Vosper said:

My experience of Unitarians is that they hang on to a language of reverence ... generally a theistic language. [Unitarians] still use the word ‘god’ and I don’t use that word anymore; I find it a barrier ... I would be proud to be judged by the Unitarian Principles. Clearly, they are beautiful, but it is mostly the language thing that is a barrier.

Vosper is not alone in finding this language a barrier to entry. For most people under 40 it is an anachronism that lacks personal relevance. We aim to be interfaith, but the current language of reverence reflects our Protestant Christian roots more than anything — and hides what we’re all about today.

You may know this from experience. How many people have walked into your ‘church’ for the first time on a Sunday, heard the ‘sermon’ from the ‘minister’ at the ‘pulpit’, while sitting among a ‘congregation’ singing ‘hymns’ that talk of ‘God’? They must be forgiven for thinking, despite assurances to the contrary, that it’s all a bit churchy. If they wanted all that, they could walk down the street to one of the other, better-known churches.

It should also come as no surprise if younger people head for the hills after checking out a UU service once. To reveal what UUism is really about, and discover that it actually reflects their modern values, requires a lot more digging on the part of prospective members. Not many bother nowadays.

The religious language is also divisive. The god-talk brings up old debates about whether god exists and

about the Bible, or the behaviour of Christians in history. These debates are exhausting and irrelevant to our Principles, to leading an ethical life with purpose and meaning, and to building a better world.

The Unitarian Universalist use of religious language is a barrier to non-theists and younger generations who are looking for supportive community in which to explore, express, and embody their values. Many of the ‘spiritual but not religious’ generations are looking for community and spiritual growth, and not finding it in traditional churches. Same goes for today’s freethinkers: humanists, agnostics, atheists, and others who are actively seeking community to help them find meaning and purpose in life. Wherever might they find this?

In recent years they have found it through Sunday Assemblies, Oasis Network communities, Hearth Communities, and institutions like the Calgary Secular Church, among others—organizations that are ‘radically inclusive’, with values that closely resemble UU values. Yet there is virtually no knowledge of UUism amongst their ranks—or vice versa. These people are choosing to do the monumental work of building their own communities from the ground up, rather than simply joining their local UU congregation. Why?

UU Rev. Megan Foley said in a 2010 sermon that Unitarian Universalism “is based on what we do together, how we want to act together. It is not based on what we believe or don’t believe about God.” We must evolve and remove language barriers to entry, so that like-minded people walking through our doors can actually find a home inside.

We need a new language that better reflects who we really are—a new language of openness.

Andy Blair

Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax





Invitation to India 2018

ICUU COUNCIL MEETING & CONFERENCE

Join the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) for our biennial Council Meeting & Conference to be held in North East India for the first time. The Unitarian Union of North East India (UUNEI) will be our hosts and invite us to join them for part of their community's Annual Meeting to start off our week together.

WHEN: February 10–17, 2018

WHERE: Khyndewso, RI Bhoi District, Meghalaya, India

So mark your calendars and plan to join our diverse and vibrant global faith community in empowering each of us to strengthen and grow our free faith around the world. See you there!

*Rev. Sara Ascher, Executive Director & John Michell, Treasurer
International Council of Unitarians and Universalists*



The Orion Vespers Project

*Nox in caelis stellatis pallia sapphirina tendit.
Ostendit noctifer ignes.
In cellis pisces, bacae et terrena dona.
Afflavit boreas, folium periiit.
Dormit tellus sub centone niveo.
Gratias agamus.*

Night is stretching her sapphire cloak
in the starry heavens.
The night-star shows his fires.
In the storehouses are fish and berries
and the gifts of the earth.
The north wind has blown, and the leaf is no more.
The land sleeps beneath a snowy blanket.
Let us give thanks.

*Rev Frances Dearman
from "Orion Project—Vesperae pro Serveto"*

The darkness of winter and responses to it are the subject of Rev. Frances Dearman's uniquely Unitarian Universalist *Vesperae pro Serveto*. The complete Latin text and English translation can be found at the First Unitarian Church of Victoria (FUCV) website.

Nicholas Fairbank, church music director, has been commissioned to compose the music for a four-part choir, piano, and six other instruments (to be chosen by the composer in consultation with the FUCV project management team).

We've used the Canadian League of Composers guidelines to determine a fair fee for this commission: \$14,000, plus \$500 for copying and other costs. We are applying for grants from the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Canadian Unitarian Council, and the Victoria Unitarian Church's Foundation, as well as inviting donations from individuals.

To hear a sample of Nick's choral composition, and to make a tax-deductible donation, see "Orion Vespers Project" in the February eNews at cuc.ca.

*Kristina Stevens
First Unitarian Church of Victoria*

Oh Henry

Fond Memories of Learning and Literacy

For four years, from 1998 to 2002, the Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna was asked to help with the grade four reading program at Bankhead Elementary in downtown Kelowna, BC. UUs Denise Brownlee, Grams, Laila Isaak, Helen Holyk, my wife Jessie Sterling, and I were recruited by teacher Wendy Groice, with the approval of other staff and the school principal.

Over these years, Jessie and I went every Wednesday morning from 10 am until noon to work with the grade four non-readers and struggling readers. After the first session, we brought oranges and candy bars for the kids. Their favourite bar was Oh Henry. Our favourite child was Henry.

Henry was a First Nations student—one of the non-readers. He was shy, but when he talked he was full of tales about his kittens, puppies, cats, and dogs. When he arrived at our ‘two-on-one class’, he was hungry and sleepy. After supplying Henry with an orange and an Oh Henry or two, we got down to work.

Jessie and I helped Henry learn to read by using the phonetic system... “A sounds Ay, B sounds Ba” etc. With the organized system in place—and food—Henry got focused. He even started to going to bed earlier. With Jessie’s expertise as a grade school teacher, we made rapid progress over the year of instruction. By June, Henry had developed confidence; he was so pleased with himself. We were pleased too.

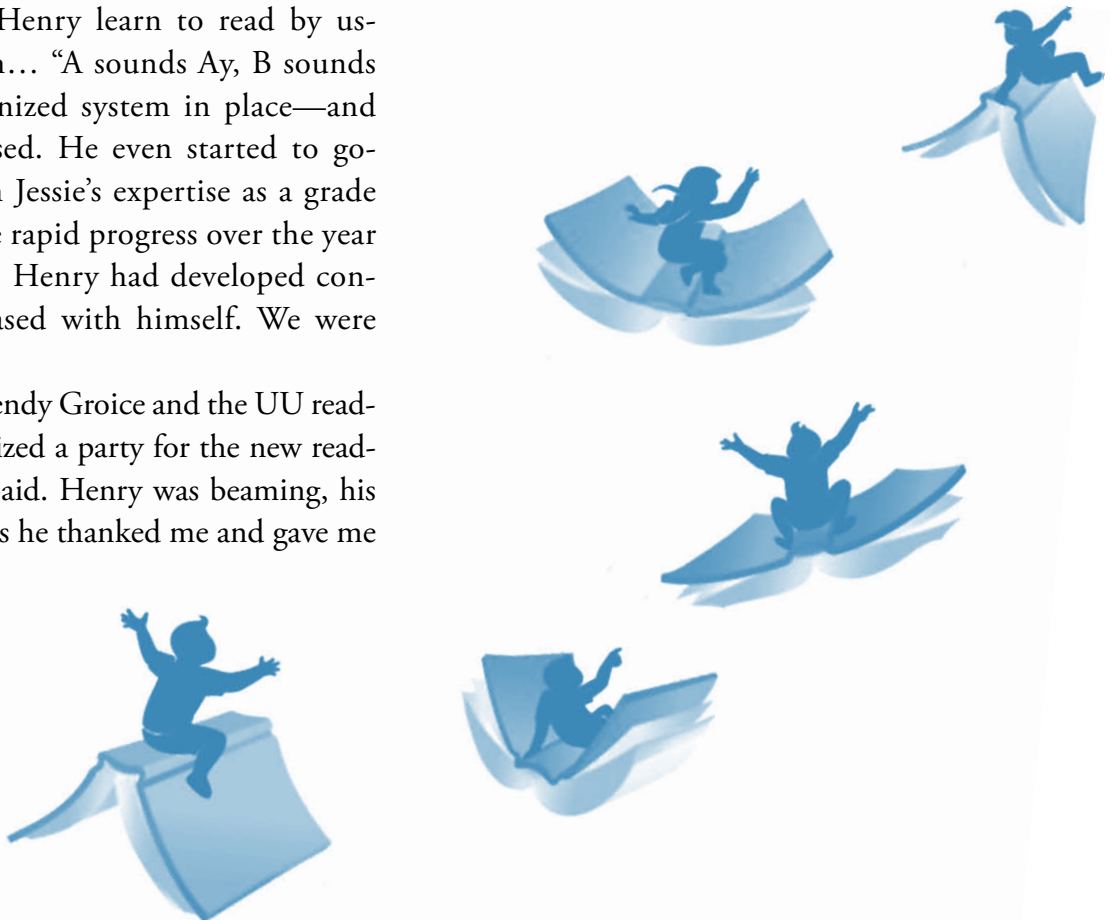
Grade four teacher Wendy Groice and the UU reading program team organized a party for the new readers, with cake and Kool-aid. Henry was beaming, his hangdog attitude gone, as he thanked me and gave me a hug around my leg.

The party’s guests of honour—the new readers—were given prizes donated by the Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna: books, so they would have plenty of reading material through the summer.

After a few years, Wendy was transferred to a supervising position within the school district and the teachers changed. We had new school regulations to abide by, including the requirement of criminal checks and special name tags issued by the school board. The abounding enthusiasm was missing and our services were no longer needed. But Jessie and I will always remember Henry, and how we rejoiced with Groice!

Sterling Haynes

At 88 years of age, Sterling Haynes is a retired country doctor, writer of poems, essays and haiku, and member of the Unitarian fellowship of Kelowna. He has written for many magazines, journals and newspapers. His books are available in hardcover and Kindle versions through Amazon.



“You may possess only a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it to bring more light and understanding into the hearts and minds of men and women.”

John Murray (1741-1815)

NORTHERN LIGHTS CHALICE LIGHTER PROGRAM DEADLINE: MARCH 31

The two annual deadlines of previous years have been combined into this one to streamline program administration.

The Northern Lights Chalice Lighter Program was created to recognize the generosity of Elinor Gill Ratcliffe and Dr. Phillip Hewett, who exemplify selfless giving to our Canadian Unitarian Universalist movement. This program supports Unitarian Universalists in building healthy and sustainable communities. It seeks to fund grassroots, transformative initiatives that nurture and promote Unitarian Universalism in Canada. Any project that meets this description, with a request for funds over \$5,000, will be considered. (For grants below \$5,000, consider applying to Sharing Our Faith).

Some Northern Lights examples are:

- Establishing first-time positions of minister, religious educator, music director, administrator, membership coordinator—demonstrating a transformative initiative.
- Capital improvements to buildings, increasing music program—all in the interest of strengthening the health and vitality of an organization or congregation.
- An emerging congregation’s application for an organizer or other organizing activities.
- Funding a creative project that does not fall into any of the categories listed above. (The project must clearly show it will result in the promotion of Unitarian Universalism.)

Who can apply for a Northern Lights Chalice Lighter grant? Unitarian Universalist communities of any description may apply. Applicants may include individual congregations of any size, established or emerging, as well as other Unitarian Universalist communities.

How does the Program Work? The program solicits and encourages individual Unitarian Universalists and other interested individuals, called Chalice Lighters, to financially support up to two transformative projects per year.

Projects come from Canadian Unitarian Universalist communities and congregations who submit applications. Applications are approved by the Northern Lights Chalice Lighter Program grant selections panel. Selections will be made once a year in April (application deadline March 31).

The Northern Lights-Sharing Our Faith review panel is comprised of CUC vice-president Jane Ebbern (team leader), UUMOC president Samaya Oakley, and CUC board member Susan Ruttan, with huge help from CUC president Keith Wilkinson.

Those whose projects are selected may issue ‘call letters’ to Chalice Lighters, describing their project. Individual Chalice Lighters send their pledged contribution directly to the grant recipient. All monies collected under the Northern Lights Chalice Lighters program shall go toward the project.

If the collection falls short of the identified goal as stated in the Northern Lights Chalice Lighter application, then the applicant receives only the amount collected. Grant recipients (or their identified charitable agent) provide tax receipts directly to the individual Chalice Lighters.

Will you join us in becoming a Chalice Lighter? Sign up at cuc.ca/northern-lights or by calling 1-888-568-5723.

Last year Northern Lights supported a project to create a CUC Truth and Reconciliation curriculum; a community choir run by Lakeshore UUs; a music ministry in Toronto; and an online resource for the creation of rituals.

Get involved—become a Chalice Lighter, or apply on behalf of your UU community project.

*Jane Ebbern
Vice-President
Canadian Unitarian Council*

Young Adults: see you in Edmonton!

Registration open for
Canadian Young Adult Conference

May 19-22
Westwood Unitarian Congregation
Edmonton, Alberta

Join us for a full-weekend Young Adult Con, with worship, workshops, shared meals, small group ministry, and Truth, Healing and Reconciliation programming. We'll have cross-over with the CanUuddle youth conference, including the Bridging dinner and worship.

Sunday morning circle-style worship will be at Westwood Unitarian Congregation.

Young adults are welcome to stay at the church. A sliding scale fee includes all meals, program, and accommodations between Friday and Monday.

Registration is open as of March 1, with an early-bird deadline of March 31 and a final registration deadline of April 28.

Website and registration:
cuc.ca/young-adult-con/

Travel subsidies available at
www.cuc.ca/subsidies

Facebook event page:
CUC Young Adult Con 2017-Edmonton

Canadian UU Young Adult Survey: Tell us your UU story!

Are you a UU young adult, about to bridge into young adulthood, or recently a young adult? Want to help us work with congregations as they improve the way they welcome, serve, and include young adults?

We invite you to fill out the UU Young Adult Survey at cuc.ca/young-adult-survey and tell us how you've been involved in UU congregations and communities, what makes you feel welcome, and what your ideal UU community would be like. The responses from this survey are key to helping us tell the story of young adults in our faith, and in showing congregations how to improve their young adult ministry.

cuc.ca/young-adult-survey takes fifteen to thirty minutes to complete, depending on the length of your answers.



CUC on Facebook

To receive weekly CUC updates in your newsfeed, 'Like' and 'Follow' the Canadian Unitarian Council Facebook page. Look for a new post every Monday!



Asha Philar

Above: Walking worship overlooks the ocean: UU Young Adults at the CUC Annual Conference and Meeting 2016, at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia.

Below: Canadian UU young adults collectively extinguish the chalice at the end of the walking worship, during the CUC Annual Conference and Meeting 2016 in Vancouver, BC.

ELECTION FOR YOUTH OBSERVER

Get your democracy on with the YOB Election: vote for the 2017-18 Youth Observer to the CUC Board

All youth (14-20) in Canada are eligible to vote for the next Youth Observer to the CUC board. The YOB is a really important position; they help represent youth at the national level, work with the CUC staff to promote programs and events, and connect with youth from coast to coast to strengthen our national yUuth community.

Voting for YOB will take place online this year, making it easier than ever to cast your vote. Register to vote anytime. Voting takes place March 24 to April 9.

Head over to cuc.ca/youth and click on "Youth Governance" to register to vote now!



Asha Philar

CanUdle XVII in Edmonton: Trust the YUUh!

Circle your calendars for May 19-22 for CanUdle XVII!

This year's edition of CanUdle will be held in Edmonton, AB, and as usual will feature youth from all across Canada, and possibly parts of the United States as well!

The theme this year is **Trust the YUUh**, and our staff team is working hard to plan this wonderful event. This year, we felt it was important to focus more on the youth community as there is no ACM, and because the youth community is an important and sometimes overlooked aspect of Unitarian Universalism. It is sure to be a weekend full of fun, laughter, games, discussion, thought, and above all, love and friendship. (The special kind that can only be found in the UU community!)

Our staff team this year consists of eleven fabulous people: **Sam Wells** and **Calum McInnis** (Co-Dean Dream Team Supreme), **Karoline Moore** and **Alex Trefzger** (Wonderful Worship Coordinators), **Gabrielle Rockenfield** (Rockin' Registrar/Memory Keeper), **Conal Maitland** (Charming Community Captain), **Evan Campbell** (Amazing Activities Coordinator), **Bella Gavanski** (Terrific Touch Group Coordinator), **Liv Gardiner** (Cheeky Chaplain), **Phil Nellis** (Awesome Advisors' Advisor), and **Casey Stainsby** (The Amazing CanUdle Coordinator). Check out the CanUdle Instagram page (@canudle) for more detailed introductions to these fine folks.

Registration for CanUdle is open from March 1 to April 28. The conference is capped at 65 people, so register early to avoid disappointment! Registration fees will be on a sliding scale this year, with a slightly lower cost scale available before the early-bird deadline of March 31. Travel and registration subsidies are available to help you get there! Visit www.cuc.ca/subsidies for more information, and contact Asha Philar (asha@cuc.ca) for fundraising ideas and other resources. If your entire youth group plans on going, start fundraising now! This is guaranteed to be a superb weekend for all involved, and we can't wait!

For more information, go to cuc.ca/canudle or the Facebook event page, CanUdle XVII—Edmonton 2017. Any questions? Feel free to contact Casey (canudle@cuc.ca) or either of the Co-Deans (samjwells98@gmail.com or calummcinnis@gmail.com). See you in Edmonton!



Oodles of CanUdle: Canadian UU Youth from across Canada enjoy their national conference in Vancouver, 2016.

Robyn Zanetti

Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Reading Guide

This has been an exciting year for the Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Reading Guide (*THRRG*), due to a successful Northern Lights campaign and crowd funding that allowed us to complete the guides. We offer our heartfelt thanks to all who gave their financial support.

As a result of an initial pilot program, the Adult *THRRG* has been revised and is being re-piloted in a six-session and an eight-session version. Gratitude goes out to the First Unitarian Church of Ottawa, Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, and the Sarnia Port Huron Unitarian Fellowship for piloting these revised sessions. We are working towards having the final versions up and available for congregations over the summer of 2017. Rev. Meg Roberts and Leslie Kemp are to be commended for their hard work and support to facilitators during each of these pilots.

The Upper Elementary *THRRG* is being piloted by the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and First Unitarian Church of Winnipeg. This part of the project should be available for congregations in the fall of 2017. Casey Stainsby has been the driving force on this level and has been instrumental in assisting facilitators through the piloting process.

The Lower Elementary *THRRG* is being written and piloting congregations are being sought: we anticipate a pilot with two to three congregations will take place this fall. If your congregation is interested in piloting the Lower Elementary *THRRG*, please contact the task force at the email below. We'd love to hear from you.

A Young Adult online pilot of the *THRRG* began in February and will run for 10 weeks, including watching various movies that deepen topics covered in CBC's documentary, *8th Fire*. The Guide will be finalized after this experience, and should be ready for young adult groups by late spring.

The Youth *THRRG* team created a Steering Group as well as a larger group to provide input. Currently we are looking at preparing two different guides for youth. The first will be based on CBC's documentary, *8th Fire*. The second will delve deeper and will follow the pattern of the Young Adult *THRRG*. These will be piloted in the fall of 2017 and we are looking for two or three congregations to do these. Again, please contact the *THRRG* Task Force to let us know you're interested.

THRRG Facilitator Trainings continue to happen approximately every two to three months. As the work of reconciliation can bring up sensitive feelings for some participants, we require that facilitators obtain congregational support prior to attending the Facilitator Trainings. In this case congregational support simply means that your minister or religious educator knows that you have signed up for the facilitation training and agrees that you'd make a good facilitator for this subject matter. This topic is sensitive in nature; facilitators must be able to constructively respond to group dynamics.

It is hoped that the final form of all *THRRG* levels will be available to trained facilitators in the spring of 2018. The *THRRG* Task Force has begun discussions on how to sustain and maintain the work of reconciliation within the CUC. Over the four years since the *THRRG* Task Force was founded, we have created a vibrant and growing network of learning communities across this country.

*Rev. Meg Roberts and Rev. Samaya Oakley, Co-chairs,
CUC Truth and Reconciliation Reading Guide Task Force,
and
April Hope
Social Responsibility Coordinator, Canadian Unitarian Council*

If your Congregation is interested in piloting a Lower elementary THRRG, a Young Adult THRRG, or you are interested in learning more about the THRRG task force, contact: reconciliation@cuc.ca.

Le début de l'unitarisme au Burundi

Installé actuellement à Saskatoon, le révérend Ndagijimana Fulgence a accepté de répondre à mes questions sur l'unitarisme et ses expériences comme pasteur au Burundi. Voici la deuxième partie de son article.

Jo-Anne Elder, Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

Alors que je poursuivais ma formation théologique avec les dominicains, j'ai pris connaissance de l'unitarisme à travers la magie de l'internet et j'ai arrêté de chercher. C'était ce dont j'avais toujours rêvé mais n'avais pas encore trouvé. Je traversais une crise de foi et la communauté traversait une crise humaine et la découverte de l'unitarisme a été pour moi, le bout de tunnel.

Après quelques années de discernement, j'ai quitté les dominicains, voyagé pour me changer les idées et je suis revenu au Burundi pour commencer l'église Unitarienne avec des amis. L'église a commencé comme un groupe informel de discussion se rencontrant dans des maisons et a fini par organiser des cultes dans des salles louées avant d'acquérir son propre building en 2011.

J'ai suivi la formation comme dominicain qui consiste aux études de philosophie et de théologie. J'ai quitté en dernière année de théologie. Pour être Pasteur Unitarien, j'ai suivi une formation personnelle qui consistait en des lectures, un programme de mentorat de plusieurs années et la participation à tous les événements organisés par le Conseil international des Unitariens et Universalistes (ICUU). L'église unitarienne de Bujumbura au Burundi a accepté de m'ordonner en 2011 après l'avoir servi comme pasteur non ordonné pendant 7 ans.

Le mouvement unitarien se reconnaît en deux vagues; la vague de la période de contact entre l'occident et l'Afrique dont la réalité actuelle se retrouve dans l'église de l'Afrique du sud fondée en 1867 et celle du Nigeria fondée en 1919. Les autres pays qui ont des églises ou fraternités unitariennes sont le Kenya, le Rwanda, l'Uganda, il y a une présence non ferme dans les 2 Congo (Brazzaville et Congo démocratique) et le Burundi. La deuxième vague est née après les années 2000 soit au hasard d'une rencontre ou suite à la magie de l'internet.

Théologiquement, la plupart des membres de ces églises sont des chrétiens libéraux et comme vous vous en doutez, les chrétiens libéraux peuvent se retrouver sur un large spectre allant des humanistes aux athées ou spirituels en recherche.

La différence essentielle entre les communautés Unitariennes au Canada et au Burundi et dans une certaine mesure en Afrique est la couleur chrétienne qui n'est plus foncée en Amérique du Nord et la diversité que cela apporte. Je trouve que les valeurs sont les mêmes et ces valeurs font que nous sommes fières d'appartenir à la même famille.

Pour mon avenir, je vais vivre dans 2 mondes : le monde occidental et le monde africain. C'est un équilibre que je suis en train de créer. Dans le monde occidental, je suis dans le processus de remplir les critères pour être certifié comme Pasteur Unitarien par la UUA et c'est pour cette raison que je suis en train de faire un stage au sein de la congrégation unitarienne de Saskatoon et un programme d'éducation clinique et pastorale au sein de l'hôpital Saint Paul à Saskatoon.

Je suis marié à Thérèse et père de Brown. Tous les deux sont arrivés à Saskatoon il y a peu longtemps.

*Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana
Unitariens de Saskatoon*