

# Conseil unitarien du Canada Canadian Unitarian Council

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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## **President's Statement**

**2012** was a transitional year for the CUC Board and staff. The first half of the year was devoted to dealing with an unexpected budget overrun in 2011. While we had an idea that there was going to be a budget shortfall around the end of November 2011, it wasn't until January 2012 that the full extent of the problem was disclosed. It quickly became evident that we would need to make some significant changes to our budget if we were to fulfill our responsibility of not exceeding the \$500,000 draw, that was approved by delegates in 2010, on the organization's unrestricted funds. The Board explored options with staff to reduce the budget, while maintaining the commitment to the four high priority areas that the Board had identified. It subsequently became clear that the only way to reach a balanced budget was for the staff complement to be trimmed. With much sadness, the elimination of 3 staff positions was announced just prior to 2012's annual meeting.

On the positive side, we were delighted to be able to announce Vyda Ng as our Interim Executive Director at the annual meeting. Vyda was quick to step into her new role, spending the remainder of the year focusing on staff development, at the same time as establishing a plan for delivering on the Board's priorities areas and connecting with the membership.

At the 2012 fall Board meeting, the Board again lifted up four of the or-

ganizational goals to be priority, specifically providing:

- resources for religious exploration and spiritual growth,
- resources to nurture leadership,
- resources for social sustainability, and
- resources for multi-generational appeal and relevant life-stage ministries

Other activities that have occupied the time and attention of the Board include:

- a review of our bylaws (mandated by legislation). This review resulted in the bylaw resolution that will be presented at this year's annual meeting.
- a review about how to best proceed with having a "national spokesperson" in our Canadian context. This also led to a resolution that will be presented at this year's annual meeting.
- involvement with the Active Democracy Study Group

The Board has chosen, very intentionally, to slow down the full implementation of the Carver Governance model having come to understand that the work involved with that implementation (both for the Board and the previous Executive Director) had served as a distraction for the Board in performing the oversight that was expected of it. Consequently, the Board decided at

the fall Board meeting to ask our current Executive Director to translate only the four high priority goals into an action plan that the Board can make public along with a plan to measure success in those areas going forward. Once that work is complete, it will be made available on our website for all to see along with the Board's plan for connecting with the membership.

The Board has also chosen, very intentionally, to hold off with the development of a long-term plan. We intentionally sought and hired an interim executive director knowing that there was a significant job to be done in the short-term; to bring the budget back into balance and re-evaluate the current staffing model in light of the resources we have available and the expectations and needs of the membership. Working on a long-term plan seemed inappropriate at this point in time.

As in most years, there were some comings and goings. John (Mich) Mitchell left the Board after 6 years of dedicated service. In our discussions with the Nominating Committee about finding a

replacement for Mich, we jokingly said that the most important qualification that the candidate would need was that she/he be able to sing, and to our surprise, the replacement candidate, Roger Rochester, not only sings but recites poetry as well! In addition, we welcomed Rev. John Marsh onto the Board as the UU Ministers Of Canada (UUMOC) Observer to the Board, replacing Rev. Kathy Sage.

As we move into 2013, the Board of Trustees is aware that there are several important tasks before us this year, including:

- Reviewing the executive director job description and preparing to conduct a search for a permanent executive director in 2014
- Continuing the task of getting back to a balanced budget
- Renewing the longer term visioning process

Respectfully submitted, **Gary Groot**, President CUC Board of Trustees "

2012 was a transitional year for the CUC Board and staff.

Gary Groot
CUC President

## **Our Vision**

The Canadian Unitarian Council is a strong, respected Canadian voice for a vibrant, liberal faith community, relevant to contemporary life in the twenty-first century. It takes a responsible role in the international community of Unitarians and Universalists and the interfaith community. It respects and affirms diversity both within and among its congregations, and within the Canadian mosaic. It connects, nurtures, and empowers Canadian Unitarians and Universalists and their congregations, and fosters the growth and outreach of the Unitarian Universalist movement in Canada. particularly in the areas of:

- Lifespan religious education
- Effective professional and lay ministries, and
- Active participation in national social issues.

## **Treasurer's Report**

In 2012 the Board worked to continue progress on the CUC's priorities within our budgeted income, by adjusting staffing levels and program offerings. An Interim Executive Director was hired and three staff positions were eliminated during the year.

#### **Financial Results**

Annual Program Contributions from member congregations continued to be the most important source of support for the CUC. Current donations and investment income from previous gifts made up another 22%. The transfer from the General Fund (deficit) for 2012 was \$179,000, lower than the \$211,000 budgeted. Of the \$500,000 allowable deficit authorized at the 2010 CUC Annual Meeting, \$76,200 remains to ease budget pressures during 2013.

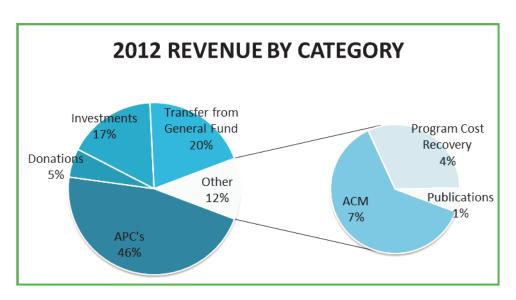
Expenditures concentrated on providing resources to support the following

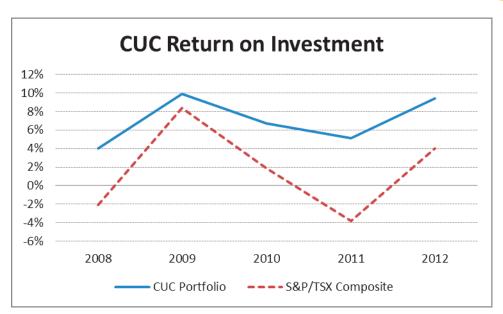
#### **CUC** priorities:

- religious exploration and spiritual growth,
- nurturing leadership,
- social sustainability, and
- multi-generational appeal and relevant life-stage ministries.

Support was provided to CUC member congregations, youth and young adult programs continued to be fostered, national and regional meetings were supported, and communications on issues of national importance were enhanced. The staff team accounted for 57% of expenditures, with a further 9% allocated to office and administrative costs, allowing staff to engage with congregations and communities in support of our priorities.

Actions to bring expenditures further into line with revenues were taken during the year, including the staff reductions mentioned earlier, reduced



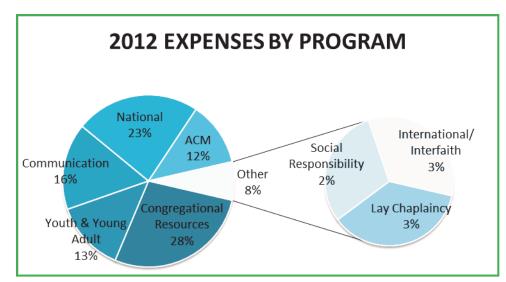


travel budgets and fewer in-person Board meetings. Opportunities for individuals to donate to the CUC were also increased. The Board is continuing efforts to decrease expenditures and maximize revenues while limiting the impact on member congregations, aiming at a balanced budget for 2014.

#### **Investments**

The value of the CUC's investment funds increased by approximately \$11,500 during the year to \$4,233,870, despite transfers from the unrestricted fund to support operations and to cover the deficit. Our investment advisor, Alan Harman, continued to apply socially responsible filters to the management of our portfolio, with consultation from Investment Committee members, the Interim Executive Director and the Treasurer.

> **Kristina Stevens**, Treasurer CUC Board of Trustees



"

Our investment advisor, Alan Harman, continued to apply socially responsible filters to the management of our portfolio...

Kristina Stevens
CUC Treasurer

## Our Mission

The Canadian Unitarian Council is an organization of Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist member congregations and individual members, acting to enhance, nurture, and promote Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist religion in Canada. The CUC provides tangible support for religious exploration, spiritual growth, and social responsibility. It represents our faith in the larger social and religious environments, which can be summarized as:

GROWING VITAL
RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES
IN CANADA

## **Interim Executive Director's Report**

2012 was a year of significant changes and transitions. On the staff front, three key positions were eliminated in order to reduce the amount of the deficit. Two key programs – Canadian UU Leadership School and Goldmine – were cancelled due to reduced staffing levels and increased workloads. As a result of the staff transitions and budgetary restrictions, much of 2012 was spent putting the CUC's house in order.

#### **Financial Management**

Work was done to manage financial and budgeting processes more consistently in order to provide transparency and accountability, and to provide Board and staff with regular reports. Delegates at the Annual Meeting in 2010 had approved a deficit allowance of \$500,000 to provide funding for growth plans; however, the expenditures in 2010 and 2011 were higher than planned, and subsequently resulted in substantially reduced budgets from 2012 - 2014. In line with the directives from delegates to return to a balanced budget by 2014, steps were taken to trim expenditures and increase revenue.

#### **Programs and Congregational Engagement**

Three Regional Fall Gatherings, youth and Young Adult conferences, lay chaplain workshops, congregational retreats and sessions, and staff consultations with congregations took place in 2012. A review of leadership development programming is under way, and locations for the Annual Conference and Meetings for 2014 and 2015 have been confirmed.

The Lay Chaplain program has undergone some review and updating to ensure that our processes for planning training, performing marriages, licensing, reporting income and retirement are accurate, consistent, transparent and timely.

Congregational Development Staff have engaged with congregations and worked in areas of visioning, conflict management, transitions, supporting lay and professional ministry, financial stewardship, and leadership development, among other areas. All this was undertaken with the aim of building congregations that are magnetic, attractive and resilient.

# National and International Connections

Enhancing the CUC's communications abilities has been a priority. The *eNews* was revived, and is now published every even-numbered month. The *Canadian Unitarian* is now a twice-yearly publication, and we have moved to a mostly electronic form of distribution, with hard copies going to members who prefer this method of delivery. Work continues to make sure that the CUC website is vibrant, current and a good resource for Unitarian Universalists and visitors.

In the fall of 2012, I spent time with congregations and leaders in the Western and British Columbia regions. I learned from leaders and ministers that members are deeply committed to their congregations and Unitarian Universalism, and are also concerned about sustainability, congregational health and financial stewardship. Most expressed a desire for more consistent relations and communications with the CUC, and to connect with other congregations and leaders.

The CUC has continued its relationships with Affiliates and partners. The CUC and Unitarian Universalist -United Nations Office (UU-UNO) agreement was renewed in 2012, and plans are in place for a Canadian UNO Advisory Council that will help to provide program and policy advice about UU-UNO activities in Canada. We continue to have relationships with our other Affiliates - UU Ministers of Canada, USC-Canada, the Canadian UU Historical Society, the Canadian UU Women's Association, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, the International Association for Religious Freedom, and the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists.

#### **Staff Team**

Your CUC staff consists of five full-time and four part-time people. Among us, we provide support, programming and communications to 46 congregations with a total of over 4,600 members. Work has been done over the past year to ensure that solid processes are in place to provide clarity around job roles, expectations, and human resource practices.

With the decrease in staffing comple-

ment, the work that was previously performed by those staff members has been assumed by the remaining staff members. This includes the communications portfolio, resource development and financial processes.

# Policies, Procedures and Governance

One of the Executive Director's responsibilities is to implement Board policy. Of necessity, some of this work has been delayed due to putting administrative, financial and operational structures in place.

The new procedure for Annual Meeting resolutions was implemented, with the result that seven resolutions will be presented at the 2013 Annual General Meeting.

In summary, 2012 has been a year full of challenges and opportunities. I am privileged to have been a part of it, and to remain engaged with growing vital UU communities.

In faith,

Vyda Ng Interim Executive Director

# **Board of Trustees**

**Gary Groot** 

President

Ellen Campbell

Vice President

Glenda Butt

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Kristina Stevens

Treasurer

Leslie Kemp

Social Responsibility Liaison

**Curtis Murphy** 

Rev. Jessica Purple Rodela

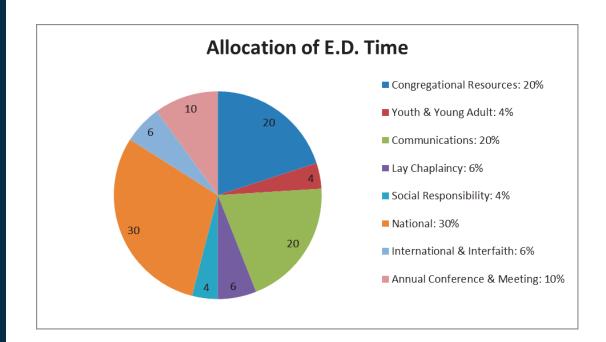
Roger Rochester

Rev. John Marsh

Minister Observer

Micaela Corcoran

Youth Observer







# Portfolio Manager's Report

Should a socially responsible investor divest of carbon stocks?

Bill McKibben, the famous environmentalist, author and social activist (350.org) has been on the road with his "Do the Math Tour" which reveals the most recent, alarming data on climate change. In it, he makes a number of suggestions - including that investors divest of all so-called "carbon stocks" as a means of pressuring the oil and gas industry. People have been listening.

At Harvard University, students voted 72% in favour of the University's Endowment Fund divesting of their carbon stocks. Unfortunately, the administration said no. Some smaller colleges, such as Unity College in Maine, have voted to divest of oil stocks, and others such as Hampshire College in Massachusetts, have adopted investment policy statements addressing the issue of climate change and oil/gas stocks.

The movement seems to be gaining momentum and with it some scrutiny. Two significant questions are being asked:

- By eliminating carbon stocks, is an investor missing out on potentially profitable investments and therefore limiting his/her need (and in some cases, including charities, fiduciary responsibility) to maximize return?
- 2) Does divesting actually change corporate behaviour will divesting of carbon stocks help slow climate change?

In terms of return, it has been my experience that not owning oil/gas drilling companies has not had a material impact on returns. I have argued that, when one considers all of the risks associated with this industry, it has not made them an overwhelmingly compelling investment. Our non-carbon portfolios have performed about the same as our portfolios that include carbon stocks over the past 10 years. Partly the math depends on what one invests in rather than the carbon stocks. In our case, it has put us in an overweight position of Canadian bank stocks which over the past 20 years has been a better investment than oil and gas stocks. Over the past 10 years the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE) oil/ gas sub-index has slightly outperformed the TSE index but has significantly underperformed the TSE banking sub-index.

But does divesting of carbon stocks have a positive impact on the environment? This is, after all, the reason behind McKibben's suggestion. I think it is a hard case to make. Climate change can be affected by public policy which can be influenced by lobbying government. By divesting, there is, theoretically less demand for a stock which negatively affects share price which may make it more expensive for a company to do financing. Also, there may be some negative publicity accruing to a company that is the target of a divesting campaign and this too may hurt a company's sales and profitability. But to actually change corporate behaviour, I believe investors have more power through active shareholder engagement than through divestiture.

Alan Harman. Scotia McLeod

Portfolio Manager for the Canadian Unitarian Council



Does divesting of carbon stocks have a positive impact on the environment?

asks **Alan Harman**, Scotia McLeod Portfolio Manager for the Canadian Unitarian Council

## Staff

Vyda Ng Interim Executive Director

Rev. Antonia Won Congregational Development BC & Western Region

Linda Thomsom Congregational Development Central Region

Kelly McDowell Congregational Development Eastern Region

Ariel Hunt-Brondwin Youth & Young Adult Ministry Development

April Hope Social Responsibility Coordinator

Jorge Moreira Technical Services & ACM Program Manager

Karen Claney
Office Administrator

Vidya Sudama Financial Administrator

## **Staff Reports**

### Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development

2012 was a year of renewed interest and commitment in Canadian regional and national Youth and Young Adult (YaYA) community and ministry.

Many of the seeds of connection and relationship building, sown in 2010 and 2011, came to fruition in the fall of 2012. There was a need to "pinchhit" considerably in the winter and spring around the coordination of the Symposium (including co-leading a workshop stream and coordinating the revived CUC subsidy program — projects that fall somewhat outside the usually recognized areas of YaYA ministry). Despite this, the summer and fall of 2012 brought a return to direct YaYA- focused work, and signs of hope and renewal in Canadian YaYA ministry. CanUUdle XII's solid turn out in 2012 in the face of a changed conference structure and a largely multigenerational format is one such example.

Opus was another. The five day Young Adult (YA) retreat, held at Unicamp, was a real highlight for the Canadian YA community as a small but committed group of YAs from Ontario and Quebec organized and hosted 60 YAs from Canada and the United States for a vibrant, spiritually alive (if somewhat rainy) retreat. The fall was an especially rich and energetic time, letting the year end on a high note. Fall 2012 included two YA retreats in September (one in Central region and one in the BC region) as well as four Youth Conferences, held in each region, three of which had upwards of thirty attendees.

Beyond events, 2012 was also a year for clarifying and prioritizing needs of congregations, and of youth and young adults themselves, about how to meaningfully minister to and with YaYAs. Two multi-faceted needs that were strongly identified are: i) more support for congregational Youth Advisors, and; ii) help with coordination and support of Our Whole Lives (OWL), a lifespan sexuality education curricula. Broader themes about 'the state of our YaYAs' also started to become clearer. In brief, my sense is:

Our youth are passionate about their UU youth experience, but waffle
between skepticism and cautious optimism about the 'adult church's'
ability to feed their spiritual needs and meaningfully and honestly live
out its principles.

• Young Adults very much want to be part of our radical and open tradition *and* they don't want to give up their spirituality and/or have to do church in the same way it has been practiced since the 1950s, to do so.

These themes suggest that there is much work for us to do as a movement; however, overall 2012 seemed to bring with it an increased awareness and enthusiasm for youth and young adult ministry — both within our congregations and in the extracongregational networks and friendships forming amongst our youth and young adults. Many of these relationships are being nurtured through online communications, often crossing provincial, regional and even national lines. Not letting geography be a barrier, this strong online community is pointing to the deep desire many of our youth and young adults have to be in a community of kindred spiritual siblings, to play, worship and serve together. Here's to another year of tender gardening, nurturing vital shoots and planting more seeds.

Ariel Hunt-Brondwin National Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development

# **Staff Reports**

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development (cont'd)

### Summary of Events for YaYA staff

Conferences & Trainings	Congrega- tional Consul- tations & En-	National Events	Professional Development
UU Allies for Racial Equity,	Meeting, Guelph, ON	Board Meeting, Bolton	"Children & Church" Confer-
Pacific North- West 2012 Con,	RFG planning, Ottawa, ON	Board Meeting, Ottawa	Anti-racism training, Texas
OPUS Young Adult Retreat,	Youth consult, Mississauga, ON	Symposium, Ot- tawa	Personality Di- mensions Train-
5 <sup>th</sup> Annual YA Weekend, Uni-	Meeting, Edmonton, AB	Mini-Con, Ot- tawa	
BC YA Mini-con,	Meeting, West-	Staff Planning	
BC Regional Youth Con, Van-	Skype with BC YAC, Victoria, BC	Youth / YA business meeting, on-	
	Meeting, Beacon, BC	Western Regional Fall Gath-	
	Meeting, North Shore, BC	Board & Staff Meeting,	
	Soulful Sundown Worship, To-	Central RFG, Mississauga	
	Meeting , To- ronto	Congregational Development Staff 3-day meet-	
	Meeting,		

# Congregational Development Staff – British Columbia & Western Regions

The congregations in the BC and Western Regions of Canada represent a large range of sizes and are situated in a spectrum of geographies. Nonetheless, there are several trends that are clear across the western half of the country. These trends seem optimistic in my view. Here are my observations:

- Congregations are dealing with large demographic change and its impacts on leadership. Many who held the reins of responsibility for years and decades can no longer volunteer or are no longer living. Simultaneously, there are signs that UU theology appeals to younger generations in different ways than it did for our elders. Congregations that are focused on enlarging the embrace of their community are showing signs of revitalization.
- 2. There currently seems to be a 'ministry movement' underway. Four congregations extended their commitment to ministry (Comox Valley, Nanaimo, South Fraser, Saskatoon); two more renewed their commitment (Beacon, Lakehead).
- 3. A good number of congregations worked at developing a relevant mission statement and/or a congregational covenant of right relations. Many of the mission initiatives resulted directly from the 2011 ACM sessions by Rev. Robert Latham. These dialogues have resulted in new or renewed understanding of congregational community and enriched the memberships in their processes.
- 4. Stewardship concerns exist in some congregations but not all. Congregations are experiencing a loss of income as a result of the passing of a financially secure and committed generation of members. It is becoming evident to congregations that a clear sense of purpose is important in fostering membership commitment, including financial commitment.
- 5. Small group ministry and theme-based ministry are related and growing trends.
  - a) Small group ministry (SGM) is based on conversations that are structured to manage group dynamics and encourage spiritual reflection and sharing. Lay led congregations are increasingly aware of the value of these formalized small groups in integrating new peo-

- ple. As a result, people are engaging in and enjoying deeper meaning in their congregational lives, no matter whether they are long-time members or new. One congregation (Salt Spring Island) is using an SGM format one Sunday a month under the guidance of a highly skilled and worshipful leader with good results.
- b) Theme-based ministry uses a chosen value as a time-limited point of departure for worship, small group ministry, religious education and more. Several ministers are trying out theme-based ministry in various ways. A theme provides a common point of reference for the whole community and has great potential for bridging isolation that happens even within congregations. This approach shows promise for the future by mitigating a number of problems characteristic of congregations.

#### **Board and Staff Meetings**

I attended 3 board/staff and 2 staff meetings in Ontario this year, equaling 17.5 days in sessions (including the Leadership Symposium), 10 days travel time, for a total of 27.5 days, and accounting for 50% of my time away from home in 2012. This was an increase of 2 trips to Ontario over 2011 and necessitated by the change in leadership.

Staff teleconferences occurred weekly, for 2-3 hours, and were a priority throughout 2012.

#### Other Initiatives

Time for other initiatives was scarce this year; however, I have been concerned about the sustainability of religious education positions in our smallest congregations. As an experiment, I organized a small mentoring project to pair religious educators with very part time positions in small, isolated congregations with an established Director of Religious Education in the hopes of providing support and connection. Unfortunately, these did not get off the ground

I also initiated a small survey of congregations with ministers and religious educators (Western and BC) to learn what range of funding is generally needed for religious education program expenses and professional development in these staff situations.

'In the Loop' is a newsletter I create for presidents, ministers, religious educators, newsletters and a few lay leaders in the BC and Western Regions. In 2012, this newsletter was sent 3 times.

Working with the congregations has been a bright spot in a difficult year for me as CUC Staff. The change of executive director and loss of a full-time congregational colleague required significant extra time spent on internal affairs. As well, Congregational Staff were asked to assist in developing program for the 2012 Spiritual Leadership Symposium. I made great effort not to let these additional organizational needs (and related travel) impact my commitments to congregations. One casualty was CUUL School West, a necessary disappointment.

Times have changed and circumstances of people in our pews have changed. Different circumstances give rise to different religious and spiritual needs, even within a religious tradition like Unitarianism. As an era of middle class stability and wealth in North America ends, many are struggling to find meaning and integrity in a world prone to shifting economies, political manipulation and corporate sleight of hand.

Two years ago, Board consultant Eli Mina recommended the CUC focus on 3 things: spiritual value, cohesiveness, and good governance. With the gift of this clear language, Mr. Mina names three valuable pursuits for both the CUC and our congregations. These pursuits can act as guides and touchstones that lead us to serve and celebrate our elders while welcoming our future with open arms and generous hearts.

People come to church for opportunities to engage one another, to search for meaning and spiritual value. They seek a place they can call their spiritual home; they hope for cohesiveness and have high expectations for fairness and openness in the community. Congregations in these two westernmost regions are facing today's challenges with grace and compassion as they rise to meet people's current needs and expectations, and they are seeing green shoots of renewed vitality. As we turn from one era to another, times are not easy but they are far from hopeless.

Rev. Antonia Won

# **Staff Reports**

Congregational Development Staff –
British Columbia & Western Regions (cont'd)

## Summary of Congregational Engagements – BC & Western Regions

Congregation	Board/lay leader mtgs in person	Minister mtgs in person	Primary areas of communi- cation	Preach- ing – (attendan ce)	Workshops and Facilita- tions
Comox Valley	Yes	Yes	Ministry tran-	1 (45)	
Nanaimo	Yes	Yes	Ministry tran- sitions, Con-	1 (35)	1 (6 pp)
Salt Spring	Yes	n/a	Member poli-		
First Victoria	Yes	None	General	1 (200)	
Capital	(phone)	n/a	Conflict		
North Shore	Yes	Yes	Fall Gather-		
Beacon	Yes	Yes	Ministry tran-		
Vancouver	Yes	None	None		
South Fraser	Yes	Yes	Ministry tran- sitions, con-		
Kamloops	Yes	Yes	Vitality	1 (20)	1 (14 pp)
Kelowna	(email)	Yes	Conflict		
Calgary	Yes	Yes	Mission, lead-	1 (70)	3 (75 total)
Westwood	No	Yes	General		
Edmonton	Yes	Yes	Vitality	1 (130)	
Saskatoon	Yes	Yes	Ministry tran-	1 (45)	2 (30 total)
Regina	Yes	n/a	Fall Gather-		
Arborg	None	(Phone)	Ministry tran-		
Winnipeg	None	Yes	General		
Lakehead	(skype, email)	None	Ministry tran- sition, wor-		
Red Deer	None	n/a	None		
Lethbridge	None	n/a	None		
Western Fall Gathering			Communica- tions, Wor-		8 (35 total)
Leadership			Power Stream		1 (80 pp)

### Congregational Development Staff - Central Region

2012 has been a busy year in the Central Region. Many of our congregations are asking themselves how they can engage new members, foster effective shared ministry, actively connect with the larger community, and provide programming that helps members and visitors better understand Unitarian Universalism and to deepen their faith. It is gratifying that those same congregations have, on many occasions, connected with the Canadian Unitarian Council staff, looking for support, guidance and resources. Working with congregations as they consider how to strengthen their liberal religious communities is exciting. I often feel like I have the best seat in the house!

CUC staff is also called on when things are not quite so rosy; when conflict is happening, when financial stewardship campaigns are sputtering, or when Boards or committees are struggling. Being asked to provide support at those times is also gratifying. Congregations that actively seek to improve or to heal are such good examples of our interconnected web, knowing that they are not alone and choosing to work with our collective association of congregations.

The chart below offers a partial listing of the work during 2012. This includes in-person consultations, visits, training sermons, brief postworship forums, full-day sessions and evening meetings. These estimates include the actual time spend in the congregation, but not preparation or travel. It offers some idea of the scope of work that is occurring in our congregations.

#### **Handling Congregational Conflict**

In order to help our members better understand the work we do, I'm providing an example of how we support congregations in conflict. Not all congregational conflict is bad. Conflict is an indication that people are engaged and care, and are considering changes. Conflict rarely occurs where the status quo is firmly entrenched.

My engagement often starts with contact from a president or Minister, and the presenting issue is framed as interpersonal conflict. The distress accompanying the contact depends, in part, on the level of conflict that is occurring. In the early stages, the conflict is often about a problem to be solved, or about different ideas or visions. Some coaching is offered to the leaders about how to foster conversation, get people talking to one another, and understand where common purposes unite them.

Sometimes though, it is evident that things are more complicated than a simple conflict, and so I'll begin to look further, talk to more people, and learn more about the stresses and changes the congregation is facing. Conflict is often a symptom of congregational anxiety. To allay this, I ask people to share their hopes and dreams for the congregation and their understanding of the situation.

Sometimes the conflict is rooted in unresolved issues from the past, or is a result of style and temperament differences, or the product of implicit norms and mission. I spend time finding out how the conflict is affecting the leaders personally and how it impacts the programs of the congregation. There is a strong organizational tendency in conflict situations to retreat to the time before the conflict, and not to make any new decisions. When this happens, it is a vote for the status quo. Change, in some form or another, is often at the root of the conflict.

There is also a tendency in our congregations to want to please everyone and make all of the members happy. This is usually impossible, and I often support leaders in setting clear boundaries. When boards and committees work diligently, or when congregational votes lead to a particular direction, there will likely be unhappy people when the outcome of that work is not what they want. We need to honour them and their feelings, but to rescind decisions because of an individual or a small vocal minority allows the congregation to be run by backroom politics and a minority – not exactly democratic.

A lot of my work in conflict situations is coaching leaders in these realities. I try to help them identify their own anxiety and fear that 'someone will leave'. Sometimes I facilitate conversations for individuals in conflict, for larger groups within the congregation, and occasionally for the whole congregation. This helps to make various points of view known to the larger body and circumvents 'parking lot meetings'.

Sometimes the level of conflict has escalated to a toxic level. Then, I often recommend that the congregation work with a mediator from the larger community. Often, when conflict is particularly intense, the 'resolution' frequently leaves more than a few people unsatisfied; the mediator is usually the focus of that dissatisfaction. Having a mediator from outside of our movement helps staff retain positive working relationships with the congregation, after the situation is re-

solved.

Conflict in congregations is tough. People are invested and care deeply about their faith communities. But conflict is a sign of life – an indicator that people are engaged and thinking. The issue is not to end conflict, but to help leaders engage it productively and positively, in service to the mission of the congregation. This work takes time, often involving many phone and e-mail consultations and sometimes several on-site visits. Helping congregations deal with conflict productively is one of the most important ways I can support vitality.

Finally, to all that have supported this work in 2013, I express my thanks. Helen Armstrong, after 2 years as the Central Region support staff, vacated the position in September. The care and attention she put into supporting congregations and their leaders made it easy for me to begin in this role, knowing that strong relationships had been cultivated. We all wish Helen the best of luck in future endeavors. To all of the colleagues I've had the privilege of working with in 2012, including those who are no longer part of the CUC staff, I extend my deep gratitude for your care and hard work. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve our living tradition, to engage with congregations in their transformative and world healing work. The congregational volunteers, Ministers and professional staff continue to inspire me.

#### Linda Thomson

Highlights of Central Region In-Person Consultations and Visits 2012				
Service Delivery Area (number	Approx.	Participants	Congrega-	
of occasions)	Hours	tions		
Vision, Mission and Strategic	12	20	3	
Congregational Wellness (x2)	16	25	4	
Financial Stewardship (x2)	6	12	1	
Congregational Transitions (x2)	4	71	7	
Worship (x3)	1		1	
Leadership Development (x1)	7	33	6	
Religious Education (1)	8	10	10	
Ministry (2)	6	21	3	
Regional Fall Gathering (Hosted by Unitarian Congrega-		90 (adult)	13	
Total	60	192	48	

## Congregational Development Staff – Eastern Region

Looking back on 2012, I am struck by how much happened within the CUC. A lot of time was spent regrouping, and then regrouping again as the internal landscape of the organization shifted and then shifted again. Given the changing context of the organization, it was not always easy for staff to clearly see how to be in relationship, or what we could reasonably expect from each other. Upon reflection, it is inspiring to see that in spite of all of this, a lot of good work still happened; fruitful connections were made and support was shared across the region.

In addition to assisting with the 2012 Leadership Symposium and Regional Fall Gathering in Ottawa, over the course of 2012, I provided support to congregations in the eastern region by facilitating board and congregational conversations on mission, vision, growth, conflict management, organizational change and revitalization. While in many cases I provided direct facilitation and consultation, in many other cases, my desk was more of a communications hub, facilitating connections between congregational leaders and resources on ministerial settlement, financial stewardship, and questions around governance.

I also had the pleasure of supporting Audrey O'Callaghan and publishing the "Wise Elders" small group ministry curriculum. This curriculum is designed for our senior members to reflect upon the lessons learned throughout their lives, share strategies for their current stage of life and honour the gifts they bring to their communities. Given the demographics of our movement, we felt that this curriculum would not only be of use in the eastern region but valued across the country. It has been posted on our website and is now available to all of our congregations.

There was a lot to celebrate this past year with Kingston moving into its new building, the installation of Rev. Norm Horofker, and the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax.

Across the region, I had many conversations about the demographic realities and changes going on in our congregations and the need to rethink how we go about the work of the church. There were also difficult conversations that were necessary to work through conflict and deepen our practice of living our principals in congregational life.

Many of our congregations are feeling squeezed with their financial and human resources. The most exciting and promising work going on the in the Eastern region, in my experience, is being done by congregations willing to shift from a needs-based planning model to assets-based planning. On those occasions when leaders were willing to let go of what was and open

up to what was possible with what they have, a very different story line evolved. With this shift in focus came remarkable energy enthusiasm, appreciation and purpose.

Some of my most rewarding assignments as Congregational Development Staff have been to facilitate Board of Directors and Leadership retreats in the eastern region. Not only have they allowed me to move into deeper relationship with the congregations that I serve, but also to serve in a way that builds capacity, enthusiasm, appreciation and purpose. If church is where we practice what it means to be human, our retreats and meetings are where we practice what it means to be a community. As a facilitator, it is my role to structure the conversation or retreat in ways that stimulate the creativity of the group, allow for diversity of ideas and opinions, and enable a clear way forward.

Planning for the retreat usually involves a number of planning meeting or calls where the planning team works out the time, purpose or ends sought after. Depending on the situation, retreats can include building a covenant of right relations, team building exercises, appreciative inquiry, and asset-based planning. Throughout the process, the facilitator researches and develops different ways the conversation can be structured to reach the ends articulated by the planning team. These 'means' are often played with and adapted as the event begins to solidify. Not including travel time, planning, delivering and reporting back on a leadership retreat takes approximately 30 hours.

CUC facilitated retreats can be a very enriching way for congregations and the CUC to be in relationship and work together to build vital liberal religious communities.

The current challenges of our national association are in many ways no different than those being faced by our individual member congregations. Given that there are more needs than we have the capacity to fill, planning based on needs can only be met with a Sisyphean struggle. As we move forward I look forward to exploring and cultivating what is possible with the time and resources that we have been given. It has been a tremendous honour and privilege to work and learn alongside the many remarkable leaders in our movement.

Kelly McDowell

### Social Responsibility Co-ordinator

The role of Social Responsibility Coordinator has grown this year, and with it, the CUC's ability to respond to the needs of our members, leaders, congregations and affiliated groups. My focus has been on making and building relationships with the leaders of our very knowledgeable and committed social action communities through re-establishing old connections and developing some new bonds of communication and information sharing. Our Social Responsibility community currently includes youth and young adults, as well as long time members who come from different areas of our vast country.

As Social Responsibility Coordinator, I provide a bridge of communication between our monitoring groups, the CUC staff and Board, and back again to our members and congregations. My work includes providing administrative support and coordination to the Social Responsibility Monitoring Groups. The Monitoring Groups are in place to monitor social justice events on a regional, national and international scale, and to highlight issues pertinent to Canadian Unitarian and Universalist Principles and Resolutions. Members of these monitoring groups complete this work through policy review, resolutions, letter writing and educational development.

The development and demand for social media communications has provided both new opportunities and challenges. While it engages and encourages participation of individuals of all ages, it needs monitoring and guidance to ensure everyone is receiving the same up to date information. I believe bridging communication and ideas among all of these groups, through all mediums, is essential to the growth and vitality of our congregations.

This first full year of being in this role has been very exciting for me. Social responsibility accomplishments in 2012 have included:

- The inception of an 11<sup>th</sup> monitoring group on Criminal Justice: a resolution to create a Criminal Justice Monitoring Group was passed at the 2012 Annual General Meeting. A new Yahoo e-mail group and corresponding web pages were created to assist in the implementation of their action plan.
- Letters on matters of national concern: six letters were sent to the Federal government and all federal leaders on the Arms Trade Treaty, Canada-China Investment Agreement, Death Penalty, Pipelines in British Columbia, Prison Chaplains and Affordable Housing. Copies of these letters are available on the CUC website.
- The resurgence of the Economic Justice Monitoring Group: following a call out at the 2012 Annual Conference and Meeting, the Economic Justice Group gained renewed support and energy, and has been busy

gathering an extensive list of educational and informative resources.

- The creation of the new Social Responsibility Website pages: an overhauling of the Social Responsibility website pages has resulted in a new and meaningful supply of information. Through this communication medium, we have, and will continue to provide, important historic documents as well as information on current and emerging issues.
- Renewed energy in the refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder role: the CUC is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), which allows the CUC to support its member congregations in their work with refugees when they resettle in Canada. Our commitment as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder was renewed, gaining 13 usable spaces for refugee sponsorship in 2013.
- Exploring educational material for our congregations: education programs are being discussed and/or developed by the Environment, Economic justice, and Criminal Justice Monitoring Groups.

It has been my pleasure to assist the Monitoring Groups with their administrative and developmental needs, and I would like to thank the Chairs of each Monitoring Group for their dedication and support. These volunteers are the backbone and voice of our social responsibility movement. I look forward to a continued, productive relationship with all who are involved in our diverse national interests as we work to further our coordinated efforts, actions and statements.

April Hope

## **Testimonials**

Congregational leaders were asked to provide testimonials to the work of Congregational Development staff, to illustrate the impact and effect of their work in nurturing congregational vitality.

#### **Kelly McDowell**

Kelly's role as the CUC's Congregational Development Resource Staff is fundamental to our small, lay-led Fellowship's ability to provide meaningful depth and vision in our congregational life. She connects us to the larger denomination, and brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and ideas as we regularly consult with her around congregational programs and initiatives.

Kelly has spent 2 weekends with us over the past 1 1/2 years. Her commitment to our process of developing a congregational Mission Statement was instrumental in helping to produce enthusiasm and energy for this important task. She facilitated the initial "Mission Possible" congregational retreat in which people felt heard and affirmed, and most importantly, committed to its completion.

She is currently helping us to create a new governance model in our Fellowship as we transition to our new home. She facilitated a very successful congregational retreat "Living Our Mission" in January in which participants felt involved, affirmed and willing to commit to the next stage. We are in the process of developing a follow-up retreat and once again we value Kelly's knowledge, her willingness and patience to work through framing the issues with us, her ability to think outside the box, and her skill in capturing and directing the ideas that come forward.

Without this kind of ready and effective assistance it would be very easy for our congregation to feel isolated and unsupported. This role is essential to sustaining and growing our denomination.

Elinor Mueller President, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa

#### **Linda Thomson**

When I became President of Toronto First, I had only the barest inkling of what the CUC provided in terms of support to leaders and assistance for congregations. However, within months of taking on this daunting role, I began to appreciate the richness of experience and talent just waiting for my call or email. The CUC Congregational Development team has been a tremendous resource to me, the leadership team as a whole and to the congregation. When the executive committee wanted to focus our Fall Leadership Retreat around team building, we contacted the Congregational Development team to help us plan and deliver the event. The retreat was successful beyond our expectations: an interactive and enjoyable workshop that brought a large, diverse group into better understanding of how we could work well together. Even those skeptical of spending a day on "team building" were enthusiastic at the end and we continue to draw on what we learned even now. Since then, we have asked Linda Thomson, the Congregational Development Staff for the Central Region, to provide other workshops and training to support various congregational initiatives. We have never been disappointed in the knowledge, expertise and care that we have experienced with Linda and the rest of the team. For me it has been like having a security blanket – to know I can ask for support, and that regardless of the issue, the response will be immediate, thoughtful and solution oriented. It is good to know I am not alone; that there is a resource available to which I can unhesitatingly go to for help, for encouragement, for guidance.

Margaret Kohr, President, First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto

#### Rev. Antonia Won

Growing volunteer burn-out and a sense of strategic drift – away from our mission and perhaps from UUism – compelled the board of Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation to call on the Rev. Antonia Won for help. Antonia emailed, talked on phone and Skyped with the board chair, while the board searched for a date that would work for all concerned.

Working first with a small group comprised of the board members and a few lay leaders, Antonia asked a number of simple, clear questions about participant experiences, desires, fears and expectations. Rather than directing 'from above' she helped us to derive our answers about Capital. She described what some Next Steps could look like, most notably bringing the entire congregation to the same realization. She also made it clear that Capital needs to get its house in order.

The members of Capital were impressed with Antonia's straight-forward manner and the directness of her workshop structure. Antonia was with us to help us come to our conclusions.... we know that when we are finished with our immediate tasks we can call on Antonia for guidance and assistance.

We at Capital sincerely appreciate the talents and skills of the Rev. Antonia Won.

Peter Scales

Chair of the Board, Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation

#### **Ariel Hunt-Brondwin**

For as long as I've been on the British Columbia Youth Adult Committee (BC YAC), Ariel has been the one with all the answers. Any questions we ever had about what to do or how to do it, who to contact or why, why we do it at all - Ariel had the answers, and gave them fully, clearly, quickly and always seemed to go that extra mile. She made it her job to make sure that we could do our work in an informed a way as possible, and with as little delay as possible. Ariel did not do our work for us: it was made very clear by BCYACs of the past that the Committee was meant to be youth-oriented and youth-led, and Ariel respected that to the letter. She provided the information and know-how that we needed and wanted, supported us in our own work when we asked for it, and took on a fair share of the work when we asked her to. Ariel has written up documents regarding the role of adults on the BCYAC, has been a major player in con-planning, (youth conference) especially with Spring Con 2012, has reminded us that things need to happen, and the inspirational source of so much good work the BCYAC has done.

Douglas Ennenberg Unitarian Church of Vancouver Past Chair of BC Youth Adult Committee

### **April Hope**

April hope has been a dynamic coordinator for social action this year. As a chair of a monitoring group she offered her help in so many different ways. With her support, the monitoring groups are navigating the CUC systems successfully. As a result, our Unitarian voice is getting out there with our message. Thank you April!

Frances Deverell Chair, Criminal Justice Monitoring Group

# Social Responsibility Monitoring Group Reports

As Social Responsibility Liaison for the CUC, I am inspired by the dedicated, hard work of the members of the CUC's Social Responsibility Monitoring Groups. These Monitoring Groups engage in community outreach, keep an eye out for policy developments in their respective areas and draft letters on issues to governments and political leaders for approval by the CUC President. This year, we were active in a range of issues from advocating for a national housing strategy to speaking out about our concerns about the Canada-China Foreign Investment and Protection Agreement. Monitoring Groups are also involved in drafting resolutions for discussion and voting by all CUC members at our annual general meetings.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the work of Monitoring Group members this past year. And I invite those of you who care about social, environmental, peace and diversity issues to become involved. We welcome all those who wish to speak up for a better world!

Leslie Kemp

Social Responsibility Liaison to the CUC Board

# Social Responsibility Monitoring Group Reports

Social Responsibility Monitoring Groups are in place to monitor social justice events on a regional, national and international scale and to highlight issues pertinent to Canadian Unitarian and Universalist Principles and Resolutions. Members of these monitoring groups complete this work through policy review, resolutions, letter writing and educational development. If you are interested in getting involved with any of our social action efforts please contact us at social-responsibility@cuc.ca

# Affordable Housing

The purpose of the Affordable Housing Monitoring Group is to advocate for a National Housing Strategy that would ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians. The Group's goals are to identify Unitarians interested in working on the issue of a national housing strategy; develop a coordinated and strategic approach to influencing public policy related to a national housing strategy; encourage congregations to become involved in education and advocacy activities; and write letters and/or statements to government and media for signature of CUC President. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group please contact us at affordable-housing@cuc.ca

This past year, the Monitoring Group focused its efforts on advocating for passage in Parliament of Bill C-400 which would establish a national strategy for adequate, secure, accessible, affordable housing. Bill C-400 was presented to Parliament in February 2012 by MP Marie-Claude Morin who is the Official Housing Critic in Parliament. (Delegates to the CUC ACM in 2010 unanimously endorsed a resolution calling on Parliament to enact this legislation.) At crucial junctures in the legislation process, Monitoring Group members and the CUC Board wrote directly to MPs urging them to vote in favour of C-400. As well, in November, UU ministers of congregations and fellowships across Canada were requested to publicly read statements to church members urging them to contact their MPs to vote in favour of passing the Bill through its crucial second reading .

Bill C-400 will come to a final vote in February 2013. We need to persist in our faithful perseverance. The Monitoring Group will continue its efforts. We will forge stronger, more effective links with faith groups and housing advocacy organizations in order to achieve our goals. We urge UUs across Canada to become involved in housing education and advocacy activities.

Rev. Dr Steven Epperson, Chair

# Choices in Dying

The principles of the Unitarian religion strongly support the right of individuals to make end-of-life choices for themselves and of the need for the larger community to respect those choices. Our principles also lift up the inherent worth and dignity of human beings which we consistently interpret as a call to improve and preserve the quality of life. A large majority of Unitarians hold that these principles guide us to a position of supporting the widespread calls in Canada for the legalization of physician-assisted dying. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at <a href="mailto:choice-in-dying@cuc.ca">choice-in-dying@cuc.ca</a>

This year's highlights included participation, with intervenor status, in the BC-based Supreme Court decision to support medically-assisted dying, a decision that is currently being appealed by the Supreme Court of Canada. Leaders in this initiative have been the CUC Board and staff, lawyer T. Dickson (probono) and members of this monitoring group.

Rev. Anne Treadwell monitors articulation of the resource list posted to the CUC website, <u>Social Responsibility pages</u>. Betty Donaldson hopes that Comox Valley will soon have a designated Green Burial site, 1 of 5 in the Vancouver Island area. She was invited to lead 5 separate "What is a Good Death" workshops by First Victoria Unitarian and Comox Valley Fellowship and will share the format upon request.

The CUC supports *Dying with Dignity*, a national charity working to improve quality of dying and expand end-of-life options. Wanda Morris, Executive Director of Dying with Dignity, has built the 2200-member organization to 11 Chapters, 9 of which have Unitarian addresses. Del Dickey reports that the Memorial Society of London movement seems to be faltering after 30 years but it remains a watchdog regarding the funeral industry.

Dr. E. Lisbeth (Betty) Donaldson, Chair.

# **Diversity**

The Diversity Monitoring Group was formed by the union of two groups, Anti-Racism and First Nations Justice. Its goals are to encourage diversity in Canadian Unitarian congregations, and encourage bridge building to other ethnic groups which form the mosaic of our communities. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at <a href="mailto:diversity@cuc.ca">diversity@cuc.ca</a>

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The Affordable
Housing Monitoring
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The Choice in Dying Monitoring Group had intervenor status, in the BC-based Supreme Court decision to support medically-assisted dying.

The **Diversity** Monitoring Group encourages diversity in Canadian Unitarian congregations, and bridge building to other ethnic groups which form the mosaic of our communi-

## **Criminal Justice**

This group's primary focus is to gather resources for a curriculum on criminal justice issues as outlined in the action plan of our 2012 resolution. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group please contact us at <a href="mailto:criminal-justice@cuc.ca">criminal-justice@cuc.ca</a>

We are following the impact of Bill C-10 on the Smart Justice Network, <a href="http://smartjustice.ca/">http://smartjustice.ca/</a>, where you will find excellent resources or you may sign up with Michael Maher at <a href="mijmmansfield@bell.net">mijmmansfield@bell.net</a>. Bill C-10 is an Omnibus Crime bill that combines amendments from nine separate bills that had failed to pass in previous sessions of parliament. It proposes fundamental changes to almost every component of Canada's criminal justice system. Bill C-10 has already received two judicial challenges to strike it down at the lower level and both cases are under appeal.

Incidents of poor care of the mentally ill in both prisons and immigration detention (including children) are common. An example is the case of Ashley Smith, the 19-year-old who died by self-asphyxiation in a Kitchener prison for women on Oct. 19, 2007. Failure to deal with mental health issues on the street continues to result in many preventable and tragic crimes.

In 2012, the Kingston Penitentiary was closed, and prison overcrowding is common. Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre works hard to avoid triple bunking. Corrections Services Canada has declared double bunking the norm. Some new prison cells are being added to existing institutions around the country. The criminal bench in Milton is seeing a larger case load because there are fewer plea bargains and more trials. The system is under strain—just as they were told it would be at the Senate hearings.

The costs of prisons continue to escalate. In the meantime, the system continues to resist a crime prevention and restorative justice approach in spite of solid evidence from studies that have shown positive results through "justice reinvestment" in Britain and elsewhere.

This monitoring group has proposed a new resolution to the CUC for 2013 on the situation for refugees in Canada, due to concern about current policies. The proposed resolution recommends humane and equitable responses to refugees, as new legislation has also taken away their rights to health care services.

Rev. Frances Deverell, Chair and Susan Berry LLB

## **Democracy**

The Democracy Monitoring Group holds to our fifth Principle of "The right of conscience and use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large." If you would like to serve on this monitoring group please contact us at democracy@cuc.ca

The Democracy Monitoring Group members, consisting of Rev. Frances Deverell, Sonya Ignatieff, and Philip Symons (chair), have worked at improving democracy locally in congregations through their Social Responsibility Committees, and nationally through the Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice.

Democracy issues that need attention include: the freedom of speech of government scientists and librarians, public access to scientific research and information, and dealing with dissent in our society. Information is available at Voices, (<a href="www.voices-voix.ca">www.voices-voix.ca</a>) a non-partisan coalition of Canadians and Canadian organizations committed to defending collective and individual rights to dissent, advocacy and democratic space.

Members of the Democracy Monitoring group are also helping to develop strategies for implementing proportional representation in our voting systems

# **Drug Policy**

Our Unitarian history calls us to pursue a more just world. Our faith compels us to hold our leaders accountable to the ineffective and harmful effects of current policies. In calling for radical change in Canadian drug policy, we are mindful of its victims. Addiction is a disease and consumption of drugs should not be a crime. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at drug-policy@cuc.ca

Popular opinion concerning cannabis legalization seems to be evolving in North America, as evidenced by the legalization votes in some US States. Attitudes in Canada seem to be moving in the same direction. In 2012, some British Columbia municipalities, and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed a resolution calling for cannabis legalization. *Sensible BC*, a campaign to decriminalize cannabis in British Columbia, is gathering petitions in September 2013 to seek a cannabis legalization referendum in September 2014. It is hoped Unitarian congregations will assist in the effort which is in agreement with our Alternatives to Drug Prohibition resolution passed in 2003

The Canadian Drug Policy Coalition is an umbrella group working for the measures advocated by CUC's Drug Policy Monitoring Group. The CUC applied for membership, and added the symbol of its chalice to the growing list of other supporters and their respective symbols to the following website: <a href="http://drugpolicy.ca/partners/overview/">http://drugpolicy.ca/partners/overview/</a>

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The **Criminal Justice** Monitoring
Group is following
Bill C-10 (the omnibus crime bill).

The **Democracy**Monitoring Group
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in society at large.

Popular opinion concerning cannabis legalization seems to be evolving in North America, as evidenced by the legalization votes in some US States. Attitudes in Canada seem to be moving in the same direction.

**Drug Policy** Monitoring Group

## **Economic Justice**

As Canadian UU, we affirm and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. It is therefore incumbent upon us to promote the principles and practices of economic justice within local, national, and international communities. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at <a href="mailto:economic-justice@cuc.ca">economic-justice@cuc.ca</a>

After a period of inactivity, the Economic Justice Monitoring Group has reformed. The Group is identifying economic justice resources that can be used by member congregations. This includes course materials for inhouse lifespan learning programs. The Group is also building a catalogue of relevant local, provincial and national organizations and initiatives so that congregations' social responsibility groups can form relationships and partnerships.

Areas that are being explored include inequality in income and wealth; the Earth Charter; the Occupy Movement; the Quebec Student Movement; Idle No More; and Canada's Banking System/Monetary & Economic Reform. UU passionate in these areas are warmly invited to join the Group.

Evelyn Hope & Kalvin Drake, Co-Chairs

## Gender & Sexual Diversity

The Gender & Sexual Diversity Monitoring Group seeks to uphold UU Principles in order to assist and support the safe and equitable representation and inclusion of sexual and gender minorities and their supporters in Canadian Unitarian Universalist congregations by offering education, representation, political action, and historical preservation. The Monitoring Group envisions that all Canadian Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations concretely reach out to and support communities who may be experiencing oppression based on their gender and/or sexual identities." If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at queer@cuc.ca

## **Environment**

Canadian Unitarian Universalists recognize that the ecological support systems upon which all life depends are threatened by industrial civilization. This is a profoundly moral issue; as a religious community it is incumbent upon us to foster the ethics and values that will ensure the continued existence of the beautiful and productive world that we know as our home. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at <a href="mailto:environment@cuc.ca">envi-ronment@cuc.ca</a>

In 2012, the Environmental Monitoring Group, consisting of Karl Perrin (Vancouver), Carolyn Garlich (Winnipeg), Margaret Insley (Kitchener/ Waterloo), Curtis Murphy (Montreal) and Forrest Smith (Victoria) as Chair:

- supported efforts to ensure CUC endowment funds were ethically invested;
- wrote the Prime Minister to express concern, and object to, the Canada-China Foreign Investment and Protection Agreement. The letter stated that all investors, foreign and domestic, should be subject to the same level playing field, including all the current laws and regulations protecting the environment, as well as to any future laws and regulations that may be needed to protect the environment;
- worked with Keith Wilkinson's (Vancouver) initial draft of an environmental resolution, and are sponsoring a "Climate Change Prevention and Mitigation" strategy/resolution for approval at the CUC 2013 Annual General Meeting in Calgary.

While success often eludes us, all feel heartened:

- by expressions of a collective wish for a durable future enjoyed by all; and
- the success of our efforts, along with those of others, in stopping the development of a quarry near Unicamp in Ontario.

Going forward, the real threat of "Climate Change" continues to be our focus along with "just do it" local action.

R Forrest Smith, Chair

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The Economic Justice Monitoring
Group promotes the principles and practices of economic justice within local, national, and international communities.

The Gender & Sexual Diversity Monitoring Group seeks to uphold UU Principles in order to assist and support the safe and equitable representation and inclusion of sexual and gender minorities and their supporters in Canadian Unitarian Universalist congregations

## Globalization

"The Canadian Unitarian Council agrees to encourage its members, individually as well as collectively in their respective areas, to study the consequences of globalization in our own lives and in the world at large in light of the UU principles, and articulate and act on ways and means to change the course of globalization to being ethically responsible, and to infuse into our world more democratic, just, sustainable and compassionate alternatives."

If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at <a href="mailto:globalization@cuc.ca">globalization@cuc.ca</a>

## Peace

The Peace Monitoring Group has a very long history of activities. In 2004, the CUC reaffirmed its commitment to work for Global Peace in the form of adhering to four resolutions: 1. Building a Global Culture of Peace; 2. Arms and Disarmament; 3. Defending Canada and Keeping Peace; and 4. International Responsibility to Protect. If you would like to serve on this monitoring group, please contact us at <a href="mailto:peace@cuc.ca">peace@cuc.ca</a>

The Peace Monitoring Group drafted a letter calling on the Canadian government to support a strong and comprehensive Arms Trade Treaty, and recommended that the CUC sign on to the Interfaith Declaration in support of an Arms Trade Treaty. Other issues that we are currently following, and may be responding to, are the situation in Mali and the role that Canada is or might begin playing, and the use of drones in warfare and the UN inquiry into their use.

#### Project Ploughshares, the Current Political Climate and the CUC

Canadian defence and foreign policy has radically changed. For the first time in our nation's history outside of the two 20<sup>th</sup> century world war periods, the Canadian government has ranked defence at the top of its foreign policy agenda. Defence as the first foot forward in international affairs is described in the current framework for bolstering the capabilities and equipment of the Canadian Forces through 2028, the Canada First Defence Strategy (2008).

Project Ploughshares is a non-governmental organization that works with churches, governments and civil society, in Canada and abroad, to advance policies and actions to prevent war and armed violence and to build peace. Its vision is in alignment with UU Principles, and the organization has consistently engaged Canadians and government to constructively articulate how human security provides an alternative and more effective approach to addressing insecurity than the traditional hard focus on state security, defending boarders, and military strength. The staff at Project Ploughshares convey their thanks for the ongoing support provided by the CUC.

Colin Read, Chair

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Canadian Unitarian
Universalists recognize that the ecological support systems
upon which all life depends are threatened
by industrial civilization.

**Environment Monitoring Group** 

The **Globalization**Monitoring Group encourages its members, individually as well as collectively in their respective areas, to study the consequences of globalization.

The **Peace** Monitoring Group drafted a letter calling on the Canadian government to support a strong and comprehensive Arms Trade Treaty,

# **Active Democracy Study Group**

The Active Democracy Study Group was mandated by the Council in 2010 to undertake a two-year national conversation regarding the democratic processes employed in the governance of the CUC. After initial challenges in recruiting a chair and study group members, a representative group was appointed and began work in March 2011.

2012 was a busy year for the Study Group. During the winter, congregations, special interest groups and individuals completed workshops and surveys, and in the spring, the Study Group analyzed the results. Looking at the results of the workshops and surveys, and drawing on their own research, the Study Group presented their recommendations to the delegates at the May 2012 Annual Meeting. These recommendations were also presented at the Fall Regional Gatherings. In December, the recommendations were submitted to the resolutions process, to be discussed by congregations and delegates in 2013.

#### Study Group members as of December 2012

Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz, Co-Chair, UU Ministers of Canada Representative, Western Region

John Hopewell, Co-Chair, BC Region

Gary Groot, CUC Board Liaison, Western Region

Rev. John Marsh, UU Ministers of Canada Representative, Eastern Region

Devin Murphy, Young Adult Representative, Eastern Region

Mary-Anne Parker, Religious Educators Representative, Western Region

Carol Cumming Speirs, Eastern Region

Vyda Ng, CUC Staff Liaison

With thanks to Christine Mishra, who completed her time as young adult representative on the ADSG in May of 2012.



## **Acronyms**

ACM Annual Conference and Meeting

AGM Annual General Meeting
CanUUdle Annual youth conference

CD Congregational Development
DLL Director of Lifespan Learning
DRE Director of Religious Education

ED Executive Director

IARF International Association for Religious Freedom

ICUU International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

MG Monitoring Groups

OWL Our Whole Lives (lifespan sexuality education curriculum)

RE Religious Education

RFG Regional Fall Gatherings

SR Social Responsibility

UUA Unitarian Universalist Association

UU-UNO Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office

YA Young Adult

YaYA Youth and Young Adult YAC Youth Adult Committee 46

The recommendations were submitted to the resolutions process, to be discussed by congregations and delegates in 2013.

Active Democracy
Study Group

# **Regions and Congregations of the CUC**

British Columbia	Western	Central	Eastern
Nanaimo	Edmonton	Huronia	Kingston
Capital	Westwood	Elora-Fergus	Ottawa First
Victoria	Calgary	Guelph	Ottawa Fellowship
Salt Spring	Winnipeg	Hamilton	Montreal
Comox Valley	Arborg	London	Lakeshore
Vancouver	Saskatoon	Niagara	UUEstrie (North Hatley
Beacon	Regina	Olinda	Fredericton
South Fraser	Regina	Owen Sound	Saint John
North Shore	Lethbridge	Peterborough	Halifax
Kelowna	Red Deer	Sarnia – Port Huron	Prince Edward Island
Kamloops	Lakehead	Stratford (emerging) Durham	
		Don Heights	
		Neighbourhood	
		Northwest Toronto	
		Mississauga	
		Toronto First	
		Grand River	
		Windsor (emerging)	

The CUC is an association of congregations and a community of inter-related communities. Our collective work together is only possible because of the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. We applaud and appreciate the engagement of all those who serve on committees, work to plan events and programs like lifespan learning programs, services, musical celebrations, workshops, fall gatherings, fundraisers, conferences, social justice initiatives, and who do the day-to-day work that keeps our congregations and our Council vital and growing.

Thank you!

## Canadian Unitarian Council • Conseil uniterien du Canada

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