



Canadian Unitarian Council Conseil Unitarien du canada

Annual Report 2017

May 2018



President's Report

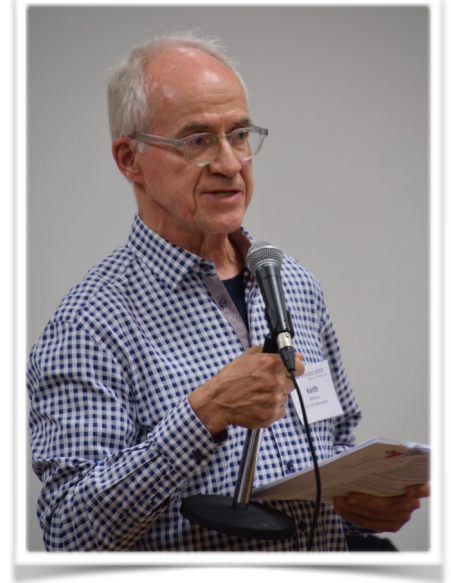
Keith Wilkinson

Why is it called a board?

What did the CUC Board do in 2017-18?

The Board's task under CUC Bylaws is to "manage" the affairs of the Council, and under current CUC Board Policy to do so not by direct action, but by proposing goals and strategic priorities and monitoring their implementation. As a result, the CUC Board's accomplishments are typically slow in becoming evident, and the work of one board flows over into the outcomes of subsequent boards.

The goals and strategic priorities developed by the 2017-18 Board are stated in the resolutions recommended to the membership for review at the May 2018 general meeting. These were formulated in 2016 through collaborative strategic planning activities involving the CUC Board, official minister and youth observers to the Board, and most CUC staff members. They were further discussed and adjusted by board, observers, and staff in 2017 for recommendation to the membership. We are hopeful that implementation of the current strategic priorities will be sufficiently advanced by year's end that new strategic priorities can be considered for 2019. This will be the work of the next board.



CUC Board of Trustees 2017

Keith Wilkinson
President

Jane Ebbern
Vice President

Tanya Cothran
Treasurer

Carol Cumming Speirs
Secretary

Susan Ruttan
Milton Orris
Danielle Webber

Maya James
Youth Observer

Rev. Debra Faulk
Minister Observer

Vyda Ng
Executive Director

Monitoring the implementation of goals and strategic priorities

Work of staff in key areas is detailed elsewhere in this annual report. The Board gave most attention to two of the strategic priorities that weren't advancing as well as we wanted – fund-raising and website redevelopment. At time of writing, these appeared to be progressing more positively. We considered advancement of our other strategic priorities to be strong – electronic communications through eNew, webinars, and national conversations; work supporting truth, healing and reconciliation with indigenous people; and emphasis on youth and young adult services to encourage the next generation of Canadian Unitarians. In the background, reliable and varied support of our forty-six member-congregations across four regions through our congregational engagement staff teams was also felt to be strong.

National Voice Team

The National Voice Team is comprised of the CUC Executive Director, the UUMOC President, and the CUC President and is mandated to speak for the Canadian Unitarian movement on important issues. Together this team continued to implement its guidelines intended to help make the choice of denominational statements appropriate, and their articulation more inclusive, particularly of professional ministers and monitoring groups who serve our movement. Three National Voice Team statements were issued in 2017-18:

- Appeal to the Association of Theological Schools and to the UUA Ministerial credentialing offices to take steps in curriculum reform to ensure respect for indigenous spirituality;
- Expression of support to the federal government for the proposed development of a national housing strategy;
- Based on the work of CUC's Criminal Justice Team, a statement of support for the families of Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine, and a call for judicial and jury system reforms with particular attention to justice for indigenous people.

Policy and structural reviews

The Board also reviewed and advanced several policy and structural matters affecting CUC's national functioning. We created, or continued from previous years, task forces in the following areas:

- Annual Program Contribution Task Force – Phase 2
- Fund-raising Integration Team (with UUMOC)
- Fund-raising Task Force
- Governance Model Task Force
- Vision Implementation Team



We also articulated a more collaborative role for the Board's Executive Director Contract Committee in the early review of major CUC initiatives and staffing decisions, and we made further revisions to the *Board Policy Manual* to make it more intuitive. Finally, we approved formation of an International Charitable Activities Task Force, but because of limited staff and volunteer time and energy did not animate it.

So...why is it called a board? Perhaps because it moves about as fast as trees – and hopefully, as steadily.

Keith Wilkinson | President | CUC Board of Trustees

Treasurer's Report

Tanya Cothran

The main source of CUC revenue in 2017 was from member congregations in the form of Annual Program Contributions (APCs). Income from events such as youth conferences and regional fall gatherings was used to help cover the costs of those events. Donations from individuals through the Friends of CUC fund made up an important part of revenue in support of CUC work.

In addition to engaging with congregations, refugee sponsorship and building vital religious Unitarian communities here in Canada, the CUC also has signed agreements with the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists and the UU-United Nations Office in support of the CUC's fourth charitable purpose: *Providing basic necessities of life, including food, clean water, clothing, medical and dental care and shelter, and education, tuition and school supplies to those in need.* These programs support the "Every Child is Our Child" program in Ghana, and leadership development for UUs in emerging member groups internationally.



Annual Program Contributions (APC) received from congregations in 2017 decreased very slightly from 2016. The APC has been declining each year since 2010 because the APC amount is based on a set dollar amount per member for each congregation, and membership numbers are declining all across Canada. There has been a 14% decrease in members at Canadian UU congregations since 2010. The delegates approved an increase in the APC from \$93 to \$100 for adult members for 2018, and this will help the CUC to be able to deliver the same level of service and compensate our staff in a fair way.

The chart on the following page shows the decline in the amounts transferred from congregations to the CUC for the past eight years, as well as the decline in membership.

The CUC Board and a taskforce had been exploring a model based for collecting APCs on congregational budget expenditures and have decided against that method for now because of the complexity of calculating the amount. Since the change would be very difficult to implement and monitor, we have decided to continue with the current method while we are considering other options. We are in an on-going discussion, with a new APC taskforce, about innovative, just, and sustainable ways to collect APCs from our member congregations.

The CUC finished 2017 with an operating surplus of \$37,807. This was mostly due to significant savings in program delivery and some staffing expenses, as well as strong support from donations from the Friends of the CUC. Event registration income was also strong and contributed to the surplus.

The CUC's financial holdings consist of the General Fund and the Endowment Fund. The other funds invested by the CUC are held for specific purposes and in some cases are the property of individual congregations. An amount is transferred each year from the General Fund to help pay for operations, based on a five-year moving average of return on investment adjusted for cost of living increase. In 2017, \$193,838 was transferred from the investment funds. This represents about 30% of total income.

ANNUAL PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION SUMMARY 2010 - 2017						
Year	APC per member	APC per youth/ young adult members	# Members	Full APC Amount	Actual APC Re- ceived	Percent of full APC re- ceived
2010	\$91		5,027	457,457	431,653	94%
2011	\$91		4,811	437,801	395,951	90%
2012	\$91		4,616	420,056	403,208	96%
2013	\$93		4,564	424,545	388,571	92%
2014	\$93	\$35	4,531	421,476	385,649	91%
2015	\$93	\$35	4,427	411,711	384,918	93%
2016	\$93	\$35	4,401	409,293	369,089	90%
2017	\$93	\$35	4,332	398,357	368,132	92%
	Percentage decrease between 2010 and 2017		14% members	13% APC dues		

The CUC values the covenant we have with our member congregations and take seriously the responsibility to be a beacon for Unitarian Universalist communities around Canada, helping them to thrive.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Cothran | CUC Board Treasurer



Minister Observer to the Board report

Rev. Debra Faulk

This is the 10th Year of the Minister Observer to the Board (MOB) role.

Value/mandate of the position:

Pastoral presence

- Being a non-anxious presence
- Lifting up the pastoral aspects of all situations

Theological presence

- Recognizing the significance of being a religious community
- Lifting up UU principles
- Calling us back to theological grounding

Institutional presence

- Direct communication link between UUMOC, Board and staff
- Sharing the fullness and nuances of congregational polity
- Holding the memory of the tradition
- Sometimes holding longer institutional memory than many Board or staff members
- Recognition of the capacity of Canadian ministers to support the CUC
- Enhance and deepen the relationships between UUMOC and Lay leadership
- Offering the possibility of the value of minis-



This year we have continued to develop relationships with CUC Board and Staff by:

- President of CUC Board and President of UUMOC (Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada), currently Rev Samaya Oakley, communicate directly and regularly
- Periodic meeting with the 2 Presidents, CUC Executive Director and the MOB.
- Begun the process to review/create the many Covenants (UUMOC with CUC Board; with CUC staff; with CUURE – Religious Educators) between Ministers and other Canadian UU Leaders

This year I supported the Ministers who serve on the CUC Board in offering a workshop as part of the ongoing need to address systemic issues of inequities, anti-racism, anti-oppression work that included a Privilege Walk.

UUMOC has the unique situation of being a Chapter of our professional organization, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association in the US, as well as a national organization in Canada. The MOB participates on the UUMOC Exec Team which this year is working with alternate ways of organizing (using Sala, Soul & Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age as a common read).

UUMOC continues to vision how Ministers can best serve and support the denomination nationally. This includes such things as the Confluence Lecture, the UUMOC stream at the ACM, shared monthly themes, as well as populating various CUC committees and initiatives.

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The S&P/TSX Composite Index (total return) ended the year on a six month winning streak as the benchmark index rose 0.9% through the month of December and finished the year up 9.1%. In the U.S., the S&P 500 Index added 1.0% in December, extending its 2017 rally to ten months and finishing the year up 14% in Canadian dollars. Across the world, stock markets were up. The EAFE world stock index was up 14.6% in Canadian dollars in 2017. Stock market performance worldwide was driven by three main factors:

1. Easy monetary policy settings - negative real interest rates, Quantitative Easing in Europe and Japan in 2015-16.
2. Fading headwinds - oil correction 2014-15, China slowdown fears 2015, European crisis 2011-13, taper-tantrum 2013, fiscal consolidation 2011-14, all behind us.
3. Fiscal stimulus - rising equity and house prices, rising business and consumer confidence spurring investment and spending, perceived positive fiscal stimulus from Washington.

These factors translated into very good economic performance. In Canada GDP was up a scorching 3.1%. Housing starts were up in eleven of twelve months (adding 217,000 new homes versus consensus estimates of 211,000 in December alone). The Canadian Business Outlook survey remained positive upon its most recent release. The sales outlook was healthy and capacity and labour pressures started to spur firms' employment and investment plans. Employment was strong all year. In December, employment rose for a third consecutive month (adding 79,000 jobs) bringing our year end unemployment rate down to 5.7%, the lowest level since comparable data first became available in January 1976. Oil prices rebounded up through \$50 barrel, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 2.1% (most recent reading) and the Canadian dollar rallied to 80 cents U.S. This type of economic performance will almost always push

The strong economic data, in particular, the CPI compelled the Bank of Canada to raise rates from their record low levels and given the positive economic backdrop most pundits are suggesting that there are more rate hikes ahead. The hikes themselves and the prospect of more to come drove U.S. 10 year bond yields up to 2.5% and Canadian 10 year bond yields up to 2.2%. The benchmark Canadian bond index (total return) was up 2.5% in

We look for the solid pick-up in global growth this past year to repeat itself in 2018 with global GDP growth to remain at six year highs. The U.S. economy is expected to grow at 2.5%, here in Canada we expect growth to cool somewhat to 2.2%.

Every OECD country is forecast to post positive growth this year and nearly every country's manufacturing sector is in expansion territory. This positive economic forecast should lift equity prices and continue to cause headwinds for fixed-income prices (as rates rise).

Investment Report (cont.)

Market Update

2018 has, so far, been a bumpy ride for investors as volatility has returned in full force. What started with equity markets building on gains from 2017 has since seen two steep corrections during the last couple of months. While there was plenty of positive fundamental news, much of it was undone by trade spats, presidential tweets and investor sentiment. In the first quarter, Canadian and U.S. equities, as represented by the S&P/TSX Composite Index and the S&P 500 Index, returned -4.52% and 1.99% (C\$) respectively. International equities, as represented by the MSCI EAFE Index, returned 1.32% (C\$) while emerging markets, as represented by the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, was up 4.28% (C\$). On the currency front, the Canadian dollar dropped -2.51% against the U.S. dollar, accounting for much of the rise in foreign indices priced in Canadian dollars.

"Our concerns continue to be focused on Donald Trump. Certainly there is geopolitical risk, also internal U.S. government risk that could cause markets to retract. Also, there is concern that NAFTA will be rewritten and other trade agreements will be scrapped." - Alan Harman

The biggest shock to markets came when President Trump announced that he would impose a 25% duty on US\$50-US\$60 billion of Chinese goods targeting aerospace, information and communications technology and machinery. The Chinese responded within hours, saying they prepared retaliatory tariffs on about US\$3billion worth of U.S. imports. These steps represent small economic relevance given the size of the global economy, but escalating fears about the potential for a tit-for-tat trade war between these two economic behemoths – which seems evermore likely - sent share prices in the U.S. and around the globe tumbling.

The Bank of Canada (BoC) increased its benchmark interest rate 25 basis points, to 1.25% in its January meeting. While broadly positive about the economy, the Bank did cite concerns regarding the "uncertainty about the future of NAFTA." Economic output unexpectedly contracted in January as the impact of tougher real estate regulations and oil sands shutdowns further applied the brakes to an already sluggish economy. Statistics Canada reported that real GDP declined 0.1% in January from December on a seasonally adjusted basis. The economy's January slump strengthened the case for the Bank of Canada (BoC) to hold off on further interest-rate increases for the time being. In January, the central bank projected first-quarter GDP growth at 2.5% annualized, a forecast that now looks optimistic. The BoC kept the rate steady at its March meeting.

The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) raised interest rates last month and forecasted at least two more hikes for 2018, highlighting its growing confidence that tax cuts and government spending will boost the U.S. economy and inflation and spur more aggressive future tightening. In its first policy meeting under new chief Jerome Powell, the Fed indicated that inflation should finally move higher after years below its 2% target and that the economy had recently gained momentum. This aggressive stance by the Fed, coupled with the BoC's more sanguine outlook is what caused the C\$ to decline, U.S. bonds to continue their slide and the pause in the Canadian bond markets (.50% as measured by the TSE Universe Overall Bond Index).

Investment Report (cont.)

In our opinion, there is still plenty of positive fundamental news in reserve to support an ongoing advance in equity markets. First-quarter reporting season starts in earnest in mid-April and the expected good news from companies will probably refocus investors back onto fundamentals. But it shouldn't stop there. We believe that the substantial decline in the corporate tax rate, record buybacks and an ongoing global economic recovery could propel S&P 500 earnings per share (EPS) by as much as 18%-20% higher this calendar year. That said, we anticipate significantly more volatility in 2018 than we experienced in 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Harman
Portfolio Manager
ScotiaMcLeod

CUC Portfolio Update

In 2017 the portfolio gained 12.85% net of all fees. A couple of relevant benchmarks to consider would be the TSE Total Return Index 9.10% and the TSX Universal Overall Bond Index 2.52%. The since inception net return is now 8.67% net (per year) vs 8.63% for the TSE and 3.01% for the TSX bond index.

Outperformance came from our overweight position in preferred shares on the fixed income side of the portfolio and a growing position in U.S. stocks (13% of portfolio) on the equity side (the S&P 500 Index – U.S. stocks - was up 14% in Canadian dollar terms in 2017).

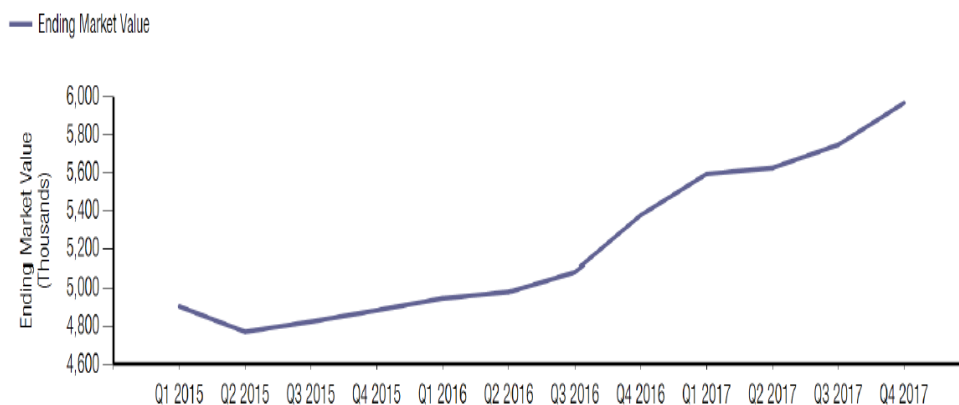
The asset mix at 2017 year end stood at 69.2% equity (just under the 70% investment policy statement maximum weighting) and 28.8% in fixed income (cash, bonds and preferred shares).

As we do not own equities in any fossil fuel/extraction industry companies (no energy or mining companies) the portfolio is “concentrated” in other industries, most particularly financials.

While concentration normally translates into higher risk I believe the risks of owning extraction industry stocks would be greater and believe that we are making both ethical and prudent investment decisions.

I expect to continue with our current asset mix in 2018 as it is consistent with our outlook for stock market outperformance of bond markets and rising interest rates.

Total Portfolio Change



As of Q4 2017

Ending Market Value

\$5,968,118

Executive Director's Report

Vyda Ng



In this report I will focus on areas not covered by the President, Treasurer, staff and other reports.

Revenue generation: “Sustainable revenue generation” was intentionally included as a strategic priority by the CUC Board because generating income takes concerted effort, and determines how much or how little can be done by the CUC staff team. Generating enough revenue for the complex work of supporting congregation and communities is increasingly challenging. As stated in the Treasurer’s Report, with membership generally declining across the country, relying on the current method of Annual Program Contributions is not sustainable, hence the need to explore different methods of calculation, and creative methods of generating revenue.

With very careful planning and doing things as economically as possible, the 2017 budget came in with a surplus of over \$37,000. This is due in part to successful event management which generated healthy revenue, temporary underspending in some areas, and the generosity of the Friends of the CUC.

Friends of the CUC are dedicated UUs who believe in and support the work of the CUC. Every year, they contribute directly to the CUC, which enables the work of growing vital Unitarian communities to continue. We are very grateful to the Friends of the CUC! At each National Conference, Friends are invited to a reception, where Board and staff members can thank them personally.

Communications:

The CUC website started its overhaul early in 2017 and had a change in web developers in late summer. The intention is to create site that is appealing and useful to newcomers and long-time UUs. As of December 31, 2017, plans are being made to launch the new site at the National Conference in May 2018.

The Zoom web meeting platform is finding increased use among congregations. This is the platform for web meetings, online training, webinars, and roundtable discussions. Congregations are able to access the CUC’s Zoom for their own meetings when members aren’t all able to be in the same room by emailing infor@cuc.ca.

A giant step forward was the online voting capability for the 2017 Annual General Meeting. Hosted by the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, this was the first time full online participation and voting was available to congregations and delegates. Evaluations from users indicated positive reception to this development, with suggestions for improvement.

“The Zoom process was impressive. I liked the on-line participation and I would happily do it again.” ~Online AGM participant

“I thought that Keith Wilkinson handled the meeting very well and was especially graceful and encouraging about the technical problems.”

Online AGM participant

Staff team

In late 2017, staff titles were changed to reflect their roles and portfolios more accurately. This was a question raised intermittently in the past, and the titles have changed subtly, but the team felt that this is a more accurate representation of the scope of their work. The shift is to name the group of four staff as the Congregational Life Team:

- Rev. Linda Thomson, Central and Eastern Regions Lead
- Joan Carolyn, Western and BC Regions Lead
- April Lilley, Social Justice Lead
- Asha Philar, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Lead

2017 saw many staff transitions. Because the staff team is so small, every staff transition is a major one, and there was a transition almost every month. Job descriptions, staff evaluations, interviews, hiring, exits, and all other human resource matters are managed by the Executive Director.

Those who left the CUC in 2017 include:

- Vidya Sudama: Bookkeeper
- Sarah Baxter: Staff Support
- Rawaa Shubbar: Administrative Coordinator
- Ariel Hunt-Brondwin: Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development



The staff team was joined by:

- Kenzie Love: Communications Coordinator
- Ahna DeFelice: Organizational Administrator

In addition, the following are contracted for specific tasks/initiatives; each position has a job description and terms:

- Amber Bellemare: THR Administrator; “We Are UUs” videographer
- Monica Bennett: Updated Welcoming Congregations material.
- Ann Cascarano: Website design.
- Margo Ellis: Website re-creation.
- Rev. Carly Gaylor: Welcoming Young Adults initiative. Completed Jul 2017.
- Jo-Anne Elder Gomes: Conference Convenor.
- Galit Korngold: Graphic Designer.
- Wins McDonald: Tech Support.
- Kaleb McNeil: CanUUdle Coordinator.
- Hannah Watts: Support for Social Responsibility position. Completed Dec 2017.
- Sam Wells: YA Regional Organizing Consultant – Eastern.

International Connections:

In June 2017, I attended the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in New Orleans. GA, as it is known, is on a much larger scale than the CUC's National Conference, with thousands attendance. It was a significant GA for American UUs, who were still reeling from high-level resignations of UUA



in

staff following allegations of racially-biased hiring practices. In the wake of this, the UUA has committed to looking deep and making changes. At that same GA, newly elected president, Rev. Susan Fredrick Gray, was confirmed.

The CUC has formal agreements with the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) and the UU-United Nations Office (UU-UNO) in New York, which is a program of the UUA's International Office. In compliance with Canada Revenue Agency requirements where Canadian charities can only send money outside of Canada in very specific ways to organizations which are not recognized as Canadian charities, these agreements specify how the CUC's charitable purposes can be furthered through these two organizations.

With the UU-UNO, Canadian support is for the "Every Child is Our Child" (ECOC) program in Ghana. This program works to empower women and children in the regions of Ghana most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. The program provides school supplies and National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) health care cards to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. ECOC and the Queen Mothers work to further the United Nations Millennium Development Goals of increasing access to primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, improving maternal health, and combatting HIV/AIDS. Collections from Canadian congregations are sent by the CUC to the UU-UNO for the ECOC program.



The agreement with the ICUU provides leadership development support for UUs from ICUU emerging groups around the world. Funds collected by congregations go towards attendance at the ICUU's conference in February 2018. These will assist UU leaders from areas like Rwanda, Kenya, and Asia.

CUC Staff 2017

Sarah Baxter

Staff Support & eNews Editor

Joan Carolyn

Congregational Life Lead:
BC and Western

Ahna DiFelice

Organizational Administrator

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

Conference Convenor

Ariel Hunt-Brondwin

Congregational Life: Youth
and Young Adult Ministry

April Hope

Congregational Life: Social
Justice Lead

Kenzie Love

Communications Coordinator

Kaleb McNeil

CanUuddle Coordinator

Vyda Ng

Executive Director

Asha Philar

Youth and Young Adult
Ministry

Rawaa Shubbar

Administrative Coordinator

Linda Thomson

Congregational Life Lead:
Central & Eastern

Lay Chaplain Program

The CUC's Lay Chaplain Program was conceived when the CUC was in its infancy for those congregations which didn't have a settled minister. Lay chaplains are trained and supported by the CUC to perform rites of passage such as weddings, memorials and child dedications. Today, the CUC's national Lay Chaplain Committee plans programs and training, approves lay chaplains appointed by their congregations, assists the Executive Director on matters pertaining to lay chaplaincy, and ensures that training material is current. Lay chaplain training is financially supported by fees remitted by lay chaplains for each rite of passage performed.

Political Activity and Compliance:

The CUC underwent a political audit by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) in 2015 and 2016. This was concluded with a compliance letter, but the political audit of sixty charities resulted in widespread demand for changes in CRA practices and the Income Tax Act (ITA). The CUC was part of government consultations and a group of charities acting to further change. The government's Consultation Panel on Political Activities issued its report in March 2017, with the following four recommendations which were proposed almost unanimously to them by charities. However, at the end of December 2017, the government has yet to act on these recommendations.



1. Revise the CRA's administrative position and policy (including CPS-022, Political Activities) to enable charities to fully participate in public policy dialogue and development.
2. Implement changes to the CRA's administration of the ITA provisions governing charities in the following areas: compliance and audits, appeals, and communication and collaboration.
3. Amend the ITA by deleting any reference to non-partisan political activities to explicitly allow charities to fully engage without limitation in non-partisan public policy dialogue and development, provided that it is subordinate to and furthers their charitable purposes.
4. Modernize the legislative framework governing the charitable sector

A group of charities continues to lobby the government to implement the recommendations, and to raise further awareness among other charities and the public on the importance of these changes.



In conclusion, I am deeply privileged to be engaged in this work which is fulfilling, challenging, humbling and full of surprises. Many people have told me that finding Unitarianism has changed their lives, and that is a great reason to do this work—because lives are transformed.

In faith, Vyda Ng, Executive Director

Congregational Life Team Report—Regional Leads

Rev. Linda Thomson and Joan Carolyn

A Celebration of Canadian Unitarian Universalist Strengths

1. **Stories of Strength!** We are excited to share two stories celebrating networking strengths.

In 2017, the Unitarian Congregation of Guelph began asking themselves if professional ministry might, after a long lay-led history, be a good fit. Linda was able to help them by providing background and information on the various types of ministry. After some consideration they approached the Grand River Unitarian Congregation about the possibility of a joint internship. The two congregations met, discussed their goals and determined that this sort of shared Internship was possible. Together they are now seeking the right student to supervise. One of the leaders from Guelph, which has in recent years been less well connected with other congregations, said, “I am so grateful for our relationship with Grand River and for our growing relationships with other congregations!!”

The May 2016 Canadian Unitarian Council Annual Conference carried with it many highlights, just one of which was the announcement of an Emerging Congregation in Nelson BC. It is a considerable journey for a new congregation to develop and one that involves so very many people. This story is shared to highlight just some of the many people involved and a very special occasion which occurred Oct. 22, 2017! Who are some of the people who were involved?

- All the members of the Nelson Unitarian Spiritual Centre
- Their Partnered Congregation, Beacon Unitarian & Beacon’s Minister- Rev. Debra Thorne
- An essential funding partner, Pacific Northwest UU Growth Fund and CEO Stan Jewett
- CUC Congregational Life Team Leads- Rev. Linda Thomson & Joan Carolyn
- CUC Exec. Director, Vyda Ng and the CUC Board



It’s been a busy year! The following list is just a glimpse into some of the wide ranging types of contacts with which we as Congregational Life Team Leads have been privileged to engage.

A. Use of CUC-trained facilitators to extend CUC support

- ♦ Three Western Canada congregational events facilitated by our CUC trained volunteers
- ♦ In Central Region there was one event facilitated by a CUC trained facilitator

B. More Congregational Interactions

- ♦ Workshops and Retreats- board and congregation annual visioning- BC, Central and Eastern Regions
- ♦ Retreats- Two Lay Leadership development weekends, “Serving with Spirit” East & West.

- ◆ Religious Professional Supports
- ◆ Staff/Minister Transition Interviews & Minister search process & contract
- ◆ Start-up workshops & arrangements
- ◆ Religious Professional links to Good Offices, Fair Compensation, Staff Performance Review materials etc
- ◆ Consultation regarding Local Board specific agendas- five [BC & Western] and four [Central & Eastern]



C. Speaking Opportunities & follow-up connections

- ◆ CUC Greetings and presence at: Congregational anniversaries, special events, Ministerial Installation and ordinations - BC & Ontario
- ◆ Five Sunday Service presentations- BC & Western Region
- ◆ Eight Sunday Service sermon presentations - Central and Eastern Regions

D. Webinars & Roundtables

- ◆ Topics chosen based on congregational requests, expressed needs by leaders and ministers
- ◆ Sermon/ Presentation Writing Workshop- 2
- ◆ With follow-up Coaching sessions- 4
- ◆ Theme Based Ministry
- ◆ Death of Sunday School
- ◆ Archives
- ◆ Membership Welcoming/integration
- ◆ Religious Language
- ◆ Alternative Worship

E. Celebrating our Canadian UU Strengths- Shining Lights Program implemented and the first award recipients to be announced at the 2018 Annual Conference.

- ◆ Networking regarding congregational best practices
- ◆ Membership Resources
- ◆ Annual Stewardship
- ◆ Governance
- ◆ Branding- Congregational community profile
- ◆ Endowment practices
- ◆ Addressing Change- Moves, Organizational Shifts, staff compliments, etc.

Challenges. We begin with two stories highlighting some of the challenges we face.

- I. Recently Andrea James, Director of Lifespan Faith Development for the First Unitarian. Universalist Church of Winnipeg shared a Sunday service, a primary element of which was dealing with broken relationships. There were wonderful stories, including the Intergenerational Story time and real lived examples from our Unitarian Universalist lives.

The challenge which this service addressed relates to a common human reality of times when our relationships with others are harmed- we may have been recipients and at times perpetrators of such harm. As a common human reality, how do we find ways in which to address harm done? How do we own our roles within that? What is the balance of addressing harm as well as continuing to live together in growing, constructive ways?

Challenges—continued

Canadian Unitarian Universalists are not immune from this human reality and the challenge to address this constructively is essential. We honour the many times that UU congregations, professionals and other groups have acknowledged the reality, sought help and committed to address the need. It has been a privilege to walk alongside people on this journey to, as one of the stories Andrea shared illustrated, “Fill The Cracks [in our relationships] With Gold”. It is when we commit to working together, with all our imperfections, that we open the door to grow into realities truly welcoming ever wider diversity.

As we continue to walk together on this journey toward healthier ways of being, we share words from Micky ScottBey Jones [<http://www.mickyscottbeyjones.com/>] as she invites us to consider an “Invitation to Brave Space”. It is space which will not always appear or be experienced as safe. However we are welcomed to bravely enter, engage the imperfections- our own, others and systemic- and work to make it a better reality.



II. While much about this work is very rewarding, there are of course challenges. The CUC is a small organization, and we do not have a large staff. And, congregations sometimes have specific requests that require responses beyond the expertise of staff. As a result, it is sometimes challenging to respond comprehensively. Not being able to provide the information and resources that is requested feels like a significant challenge. Happily we have, over time, built up a network of contacts, and know quite a bit about expertise that exists in the member congregations, through various non-UU Canadian organizations and also which our UUA colleagues hold.

We are also challenged at times, to connect with some congregations. Often congregations and staff have built a culture of engagement with us. At times that is eroded by changes in congregational leadership and time is required to build new relationships.

Another challenge is knowing how best to support congregations as they navigate changing demographic and economic trends. The cost of property, charitable giving trends, and generational and regional differences in ‘religiosity’ require us to rethink some long standing assumptions. There are many unknowns and all of us are challenged to develop constructive responses.

III. Together with related organizations, CUC staff continues to address challenges as we seek cooperation to build best practices. Some of the groups with which we are working include but are not limited to:

- ♦ UU Ministers Association/ Unitarian Universalist Association & CUC Regional Leads regarding changes to the Good Offices program of the Unitarian Universalist Association
- ♦ UU Ministers of Canada & CUC staff
- ♦ Canadian UU Religious Educators [CUURE] & CUC staff

IV. Emerging and Small Groups challenges- working with Canadian UU resource people and materials as well as the UUA in order to creatively link small, new groups in ways which simplify organizational demands

V. Large Congregation Challenges- Decisions and processes to address moves, changes in organization

Youth & Young Adult Ministry Report

Asha Philar

Summary of the Year:

2017 was an exciting and very busy year in the world of Canadian youth and young adult ministry. Throughout the year, about 210 participants from 24 congregations attended in-person and online events organized by the CUC, including youth cons, OWL trainings, webinars and retreats. These events are important venues for faith formation, community building and leadership development for youth and advisors, young adults and adult allies.

Financial accessibility was a priority for these events, offering a sliding scale registration fee, or a discounted young adult price at every event, and pushing for low-cost childcare or children's programs to allow parents to participate. Many young adults said that this made a big difference, which helped them attend the event, and showed them that their participation mattered. We have also continued giving out subsidies through the Supporting the Dawning Future Subsidy Fund to help youth, young adults and advisors attend events. To date we have granted over \$16,700 from the Subsidy Fund, with money received from event profits, donations and the Youth and Young Adult (YaYA) Ministry Budget.



Starting in January 2017, the Young Adult Welcoming and Inclusion Project helped congregations improve the way they welcome and serve young adults. With the help of the project's webinars, mentoring, consultations and resources, congregational teams were able to work on specific actions and make progress in their young adult ministry. This project and its resources have had a profound effect, and will continue to help congregations become the vibrant, multigenerational communities they want to be. Many thanks to project coordinator, Carly Gaylor, and financial support from the UU Ministers of Canada and the Unitarian Church of Vancouver.

As always, the CUC worked hard to connect congregations to each other, share best practices, collect and develop useful resources, and encourage innovation in UU communities. Adaptation and innovation are especially important in youth and young adult ministry, where we are called to respond to the unique needs of each generation, and changes in the world they live in. We know that Unitarian Universalist ministry is life-changing, often life-saving, and vital for today's society. In 2018, we will continue offering events and programs that connect young people to our faith and our principles. And we will continue supporting congregations as they provide a spiritual home for young people, and help them live out our faith in the world.

Key Definitions:

- ⇒ Youth: 14-20 year olds - usually participating in congregational youth groups and/or regional and national youth cons (weekend long events).
- ⇒ Young adults: 18-35 year olds - some based in a congregation and others only connected through regional and national events, and social media.
- ⇒ Youth advisors: Adults 25 and over who support youth ministry in congregations, help plan and lead programs, and accompany youth to youth cons.

2017 Event Highlights:

- ◇ CanUUdle: 50 youth and advisors - Edmonton
- ◇ Young Adult Con: 18 young adults - Edmonton
- ◇ Meaning Makers: 7 Canadian young adult participants, Rev. Marcus Hartlief and Asha Philar as facilitators - Texas
- ◇ Our Whole Lives Trainings (Elementary and Grade 7-9/10-12): 30 participants - Toronto
- ◇ Unicamp Young Adult Retreat: 21 young adults - Ontario
- ◇ Western Region Youth Con: 33 youth and advisors - Calgary
- ◇ Youth Advisor Training and Retreat: 9 participants - Toronto

The CUC's youth and young adult ministry work is guided by the CUC's Goals and Strategic Priorities for 2017-18. Below, we outline how Youth and Young Adult Ministry work supports each of the four Strategic Priorities.

A. Ensuring sustainable revenue generation is a priority in everything we do. All CUC youth and young adult events either break even, or make a profit that provides funding for the Youth and Young Adult Subsidy Fund. Sliding scale registration fees for CanUUdle, Young Adult Con and Unicamp Young Adult Retreat have helped us make events more accessible, and have been financially successful.



B. We continually optimize communications capabilities, using many methods to communicate with CUC membership. Asha has been working hard to put together resources and useful content for the new CUC website, and continue keeping the current website up to date. Regional email lists for youth, advisors and parents help us tailor communication and event promotion. We are continuing to use Facebook and Instagram to connect with youth and young adults, and use Zoom video conferencing to build community and offer learning opportunities across distance.

Asha moderates and participates in Facebook groups for youth advisors, OWL facilitators, Canadian youth and young adults.

C. We seek to advance social justice initiatives, supporting social justice workshops at youth and young adult events, like the Kairos Blanket Exercise workshop at CanUUdle and the Young Adult Con in 2017. Reflection guides are being developed and piloted to help youth and young adults engage with issues of Truth, Healing and Reconciliation.

D. Encouraging innovation and sustainability in our UU communities is the focus of all of our work with congregations. Through consultations, webinars and meetings, we provide ideas and resources to help congregations build vibrant and sustainable youth and young adult ministries.

Over the past year, Asha has focused on collecting and creating resources to help congregations train and support youth advisors, build their youth programs, and enhance young adult welcoming. We also provide support and resources for planning youth events, OWL trainings and high school OWL weekends, and encourage collaboration between congregations.

The **Young Adult Welcoming and Inclusion Project** was a big priority in 2017, and helped to push forward efforts in many congregations to welcome and serve young adults. In partnership with the UU Ministers of Canada and the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, project coordinators Carly Gaylor and Asha Philar worked with 7 congregations. Asha and Carly created a comprehensive process for congregations, which included a self-assessment, webinars, mentoring, actions and an evaluation. We are excited to have the final reports available for congregations, and a "welcome postcard" for young adults provided free by the CUC, which will be showcased on the new CUC website in the spring.

Social Justice Report

April Lilley

National Social Justice

Following consultation with leaders in our faith community, we are moving away from the Monitoring Group model toward action oriented teams. Terms of reference for a CUC National Social Justice Team and area specific Love and Justice Action Teams have been created. The framework for a national social justice team will help the CUC be proactive about upcoming issues and assist with coordinating our national efforts. The CUC's National Social Justice Team (Team) has an overarching role in Canadian UU social justice work, and is responsible for:

- Proactively identifying social justice issues to bring to the attention of CUC staff and the National Voice Team. These issues should be relevant to UU Principles and/or previously approved resolutions;
- Working with the CUC's Social Justice Lead to create and coordinate supports for congregational and UU community justice initiatives. Recognizing that integrated work is more focused and powerful, initiatives will take into account more than one area of focus and be driven by current issues;
- Supporting and communicating initiatives developed by Love and Justice Action Teams, and/or UU congregations and communities. These initiatives will build support for *a congregants personal journey in relation to current or emerging issues*.



Two successful outcomes of the shift towards this supportive and action oriented national focus have been our online discussion groups and our Love and Justice FaceBook group. The twelve online discussion groups and movie nights have engaged and supported members from a majority of our congregations. The FaceBook group provides opportunity for individuals to share their social justice successes and interests.

Monitoring Group Updates

In 2017, we had four active Monitoring Groups: Criminal Justice, Diversity, Environment and Peace.

Criminal Justice



In June, we were invited to meet with Marco Mendocino MP, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, to discuss a brief that we submitted to Minister Wilson-Raybould, in February. A lot of time and energy was put into reaching this point and we look forward to the opportunities and impact we will have through this partnership. Photo from left to right: April Lilley, Marco Mendocini, MP, Rev. Frances Deverell and Jeff Thomas.

Diversity

a. Truth, Healing and Reconciliation (see detailed report)

- Reflection guides all online on new Google Site
- We now have over 100 trained facilitators in UU congregations
- Online events and movie nights

b. Racial Justice

There was renewed interest and a sense of urgency around racial justice work within our congregations and the CUC. A portion of staff time and resources were devoted to supporting racial justice work resulting in the "Let's Talk Racial Justice" webinar series. This series has provided leadership for our congregations and members to engage with the real issues of inclusion in our congregations.

Environment

The group initiated a trial of Natural Resources Canada's Energy Star Portfolio Manager to validate its usefulness as a benchmarking tool to monitor and optimize a sanctuary's energy use. We began building relationships with climate justice groups in the UUA and external national groups in Canada. This work continues to grow as the National Social Justice Team considers coordinated actions that support climate justice and indigenous concerns.

Peace

Letters were written and sent in regards to the Arms Trade treaty and nuclear disarmament. The CUC also signed the Ceasefire.ca petition on nuclear disarmament. The Peace group researched the issue of autonomous weapons and prepared a position paper which is available for use by congregations.

In 2018, Love and Justice Action Teams will replace the Monitoring Group model. These are teams which form at the grass-roots level by those who are passionate about and active on specific topics. The work of each team is guided by Unitarian principles, and will be driven by the skills and energy of team members, while working with the CUC's National Social Justice Team and Social Justice Lead staff. Each Love & Justice Action Team will identify the goals of their group, and will exist as long as the common purposes of the team are relevant and the members of the team are active.

Refugee Sponsorship

In 2017, Unitarians across Canada continued to welcome newcomers from around the world. We submitted applications for 43 people from Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Cairo, Lebanon, Eritrea, Iran and Burundi. The government provides a limited number of allocated spaces each year which prevents our congregations from submitting applications for all those identified as in need.

The CUC continues to provide support to our congregations who have sponsored almost 200 people since 2016. We continue to receive daily requests from individuals in crisis and also have many congregations waiting to assist refugees they have already identified as in need of sponsorship. Although allocations from government will mean a limited number of applications for 2018, we expect an increase in allocated spaces for 2019.

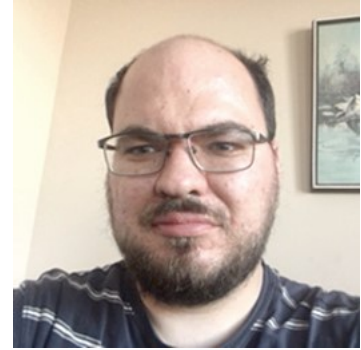
Sponsorship of LGBTQ persons do not require allocated spaces from the government under a special program called Rainbow RAP. There is a system in place to submit these unique applications and a waiting list of individuals in need of sponsorship.



Communications Report

Kenzie Love

CUC communications to its member congregations and individual UUs in 2017 continued through the monthly eNews, regular postings on Facebook, and the CUC website. There are over 3,200 subscribers to the eNews, although click and open rates remained at about 30% throughout the year. A survey published in the November eNews also drew relatively few responses. However, some commented that the length of the newsletter was a deterrent to reading it in its entirety, and that a shorter, snappier format would be more likely to draw interest. Experiments with the format will continue in 2018 in the hopes of increasing the eNews' readership and effectiveness.



Facebook proved a useful way of sharing specific content from the eNews, and original articles from this publication were among those having the broadest reach of viewers on this site. Comments in the reader survey also indicated these articles were among the most compelling features, and expressed interest in seeing more content about how various congregations are handling common issues. Discussion with staff found they concurred this was an area worth further exploring.

Consultation continued with Margo Ellis about ways to make the communications section of the

Truth, Healing & Reconciliation Report

Rev. Meg Roberts & Samaya Oakley

It has been a distinct honour and privilege to engage and support Canadian Unitarians as we journey towards reconciliation. In our fourth year of working as a task force, we cast our eye towards the future and new leadership.

Looking over 2017:

- The *Truth, Healing and Reconciliation (THR) Introduction to All Guides* has been finalized and has been uploaded onto the Google site used to house the guides. This is accessible to the public so please have a look: <https://sites.google.com/view/thrrq-introductiontoallguides/welcome>
- The *THR Reflection Guide for Adults* has been finalized with the addition of an online *Participants Guide*. Four congregations have engaged with this level: Beacon, Thunder Bay, Lakehead, and Neighbourhood
- Uploaded all finalized versions of the *THRR Guide* onto the Google Platform
- The *THRR Guide for Young Adults* has been finalized and uploaded onto the Google Platform
- The *THRRG Guide for Youth* has been drafted and editors have provided comments. We continue to look for congregations to pilot this level in the fall of 2018.



Truth, Healing
& Reconciliation
REFLECTION GUIDE

Truth, Healing & Reconciliation—continued

- The *THRRG Guide for Lower Elementary* was piloted by three congregations: First Victoria, North Shore, and Mississauga. Feedback is being incorporated into this guide. We are hoping to re-pilot this level in the fall of 2018.
- We have submitted a grant application to the Fund for International Unitarian Universalism to be able to take our work forward in the coming year.

There were five congregational facilitator training webinars held: Two in August, two in November, and one in January. In total, these were attended by 67 participants.

Two National Screenings of *Reel Injun* took place on November 22 and March 1st with a total 55 participants. We are proud to announce the CUC's partnership with the National Film Board of Canada for future events.

We were delighted that the CUC Board and staff support the work of reconciliation and have demonstrated this commitment by the hiring of a part-time administrator for the *THRR Guide* work. Without the assistance of Amber Dawn Bellemare, for her work in this area, we would not have gotten as far as we have with online resources. We thank her deeply for her work.



Projects currently underway include:

- The creation of an Elders' Guide for Indigenous elders who have been engaged by congregations to witness and be present as they engage in the work of reconciliation.
- A focus group of religious educators, ministers, trained facilitators, and participants who have used the online Participant Guides. The purpose of the focus groups are to gain feedback on the platform the guides are hosted on and get input on how widely we make the *THRR Guide* material available, i.e., to trained facilitators only, Canadian UU congregations and communities, or widely available to the general public.
- Our hope is to create a new team to take the work forward that would begin in the fall of 2018.

In this past year, the *THRR Guide Task Force* members included contributions by April Lilley (CUC Social Responsibility Coordinator), Casey Stainsby, Amber Dawn Bellemare, Marlene Blake Seale, and Leslie Kemp.

We are grateful for all the support we have received across the country as people have suggested resources to us, put us in contact with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous educators in these areas, and offered their moral support for the project. We thank the CUC staff for opportunities to share what we are doing as well as give updates on what congregations have been doing.

If your congregation is interested in knowing more and/or offering any level

