

The CUC eNews

Newsletter of the [Canadian Unitarian Council](#)



August 2018, Issue 66

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Unitarian Universalist Congregations Keep Busy

While summer in Unitarian congregations might seem at quiet at first glance as activities have slowed or shut down, a closer look reveals there's still a lot going on. Here's a sampling of what Canadian UUs get up to during this time.

Lay services

Whether in the pulpit or on study leave, Unitarian ministers are still hard at work re-energizing, studying and planning for the coming year, but the season also offers an opportunity for more informal, lay-led services. [Westwood Unitarian Congregation](#) in Edmonton holds [Summer Serendipity Services](#), a friendly hour of reflection and discussion on varied topics, while Simple Summer Services at the Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga this year explore the seven principles.

"Looking for fellowship and a good discussion? Every Sunday in July and August, Westwood hosts our informal Summer Serendipity Services"

- [Westwood Unitarian Congregation](#)

Celebrating Nature

Many UU congregations have community gardens, places to enjoy some quiet meditative moments or sample nature's bounty. Some congregations celebrate with a [Lammas](#) or (loaf mass) service, a Pagan tradition that marked the first harvest of grain for bread. Today each congregation puts its own stamp on the ritual, with Vancouver [Unitarians](#), for instance, [celebrating the potato harvest](#).



Submissions to the CUC eNews:

Due by 10th of each month

Send to: communications@cuc.ca

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Unitarian Universalist Congregations Keep Busy (continued)



Registration is open for the Unicamp Young Adult retreat, September 14-17, 2018. [Find more information here.](#)

Enjoying the Outdoors

During our water communion services, the water shared is gathered from our summer experiences including camping, sometimes as part of a larger group of Unitarians. In southern BC, the [Northwest Wilderness Society Camp](#) on Kootenay Lakes started up in the 1960s by a small group of Unitarians as an undeveloped camp and retreat. While the affiliation with the Unitarians continues and many of them camp here, it welcomes everyone. A few thousand kilometers away in Dufferin County, Ontario, [Unicamp](#) occupies 50 acres of the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve. Whether relaxing at one of these camps or others, it's a chance to reconnect with self, community and nature.

Celebrating Pride

From coast to coast, in celebrations big and small, Pride events take place across the country over the summer, and odds are good the festivities will include the local Unitarians. A chance to reflect on victories achieved and still to come, Unitarian congregations often mark pride with a special service as well as marching in the parade. Who doesn't love a good party?

Check out what the Unitarian Church of Edmonton does for the [Edmonton Pride parade](#).

The [Vancouver Unitarians celebrated Pride](#) on Aug 5th this year.



Enjoying Music

A hymn sing is often among the services at Unitarian congregations in June, a chance to belt out old favorites and newer compositions. Music sometimes continues over the summer, though, with informal gatherings such as the UU Fellowship of Ottawa's [Summer Singing Sundays](#) offering a chance to celebrate song with no rehearsals or auditions, the only requirement being to show up.



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Shining Lights Winning Social Justice Initiative Offers Example to Other Congregations

The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton was featured in the [July eNews](#) as the first recipient of the CUC's Shining Lights Award. That article focused on their three chosen projects; this article shares the process that garnered the Award.

For many if not most Unitarian congregations, working towards social justice is an important goal. But sometimes it seems difficult to move beyond aspirations to action, to focus on a few targeted, realistic outcomes, and to find projects that the whole church will want to take ownership of.

This was the situation the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton found itself in in the spring of 2014 when it hired Rev. Carly Gaylor to lead a year-long process of social justice discernment. The outcome of the process, which resulted in the congregation choosing three social justice projects to focus on, won the congregation the inaugural [Shining Lights award](#), highlighting excellent and successful initiatives and programming by Canadian congregations. It's an example other congregations may be interested in copying, and indeed. The chance to learn from congregational success stories was one of the key factors behind the award's creation.



While every congregation will have its own journey, Hamilton's experience does offer some pointers on how to make the process as smooth and effective as possible. Here are some guidelines based on what they learned.

Be open

One of the keys to the success of Hamilton's initiative was that it worked hard to include the entire congregation throughout discernment process, through large congregational meetings, small group meetings, surveys, and more. Inevitably, most of the more than 100 social justice ideas received couldn't come to fruition. But organizers learned that congregants *will* support social justice projects that don't align with their own passions, so long as they were confident those projects were chosen in a transparent and inclusive way.

Offer lots of opportunities for action

Once the discernment process was complete, the Hamilton congregation needed to find a way to interest people in the projects chosen. To do so, they offered volunteer opportunities suited to a wide range of talents and passions. Volunteers with the [Eva Rothwell Centre](#), the organization the congregation chose to "adopt", could help out with everything from visiting isolated members of the community to helping out in the community gardens. Congregants interested in the other projects could help advocate for gender and sexual justice or affordable housing. With burnout always a threat to any social justice initiative, the more people that can help shoulder the load, the better.

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Shining Lights Winning Social Justice Initiative Offers Example to Other Congregations (continued)

Offer opportunities for more than just work

Even a broadly shared load, however, can still be tiring if a social justice initiative only seems to consist of work — people won't want to remain involved if there aren't opportunities for joy, fun, and reflection as well. Hamilton succeeded in this respect by ensuring its projects had a "social" as well as a "justice" focus, with initiatives such as a group read of [Ivan Coyote's](#) *Tomboy Survival Guide* followed by a discussion of the book and a Fall Festival to raise funds for the [Sacajawea housing project](#). In addition to raising awareness and funds, Hamilton Social Justice chair Gail Rappolt says these and other initiatives have brought together congregants who might not otherwise have been in contact.

Contact the CUC's Congregational Life staff, Rev. Linda Thomson and Joan Carolyn, at congregationalife@cuc.ca to find out more about this process and how it can work for your congregation.

Upcoming Events

Regional gatherings are an exciting way for Unitarian Universalists to gather, see old friends and make new ones, discuss important topics and learn from each other, and share meals and worship together. We hope to see you there!

Western Region Fall Gathering
Building Better Community
October 26 - 28, 2018
[Learn more and register here!](#)

Western Region Youth Con
mUUGles and Magic Con
October 26 - 28, 2018
[Learn more and register here!](#)

Building Beloved Community
 Western Regional Fall Gathering Oct 26-28, 2018

Explore Sessions On:
 Building Communities of Joyful Resilience
 Food for all, Justice for All
 Growing Solidarity Together

Our Children's Program welcomes you to meet
Tibert, le Voyageur
 All Youth are invited to exciting Youth Con!

Join other Unitarian Universalists for worship, learning, fellowship, and fun!

Guests Include:
 Rev. Jason Shelton
 Asha Philar, CUC
 Jenna Wirth of Aboriginal Youth Opportunities

Hosted by the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg
 603 Wellington Crescent, and the Canadian Unitarian Council

To register, go to cuc.ca Calendar of Events and click on Oct. 26 WRFG event

The **Central Region Fall Gathering** is coming up on **Oct 27, 2018. Save the Date!**

Information about the **Eastern Regional Fall Gathering** will be up online soon.

The [Events Calendar](#) on the CUC website lists all upcoming CUC events. Check it often to keep up on upcoming webinars and roundtables, training being offered, and gatherings and conferences.

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CUC Staff News

The CUC has added four new part-time members to its staff team to complement and enhance the work of growing vital Unitarian Universalist communities.

Margo Ellis is the Communications and Web Manager. Margo is responsible for creating a communications strategy for the CUC, overseeing its implementation, and coordinating the CUC's publicity, communications, social media presence and public statements. Margo also maintains the website, and is the energy behind the creation of the CUC's new website.

Reach Margo at margo@cuc.ca.



Erin Horvath is the Social Justice Lead and provides leadership and coordination of the CUC's social justice initiatives and activities, including working with the Truth, Healing and Reconciliation team. Erin will also be in contact with congregations about their social justice initiatives, and provide information and resources where feasible.

Erin can be reached at erin@cuc.ca.

Caitlyn Seale is the Administrative Assistant and works out the CUC office in Toronto, supporting Organizational Administrator, Ahna DiFelice. Caitlyn's role runs the gamut from administrative duties to financial management, and to event and staff support.

Caitlyn can be reached at caitlyn@cuc.ca.



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Casey Stainsby is the Youth and Young Adult Program and Events Coordinator, and will work alongside Asha Philar, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Specialist. Casey will concentrate on youth and young adult event coordination across the country, and provide support for youth and young adult communications.

Casey can be reached at casey@cuc.ca.

[Explore the new staff bios](#) on the [CUC website](#). Please extend a warm welcome to the incoming team members!

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Back row, left to right: Jane Ebberrn, Kiersten Moore, Michael Riess, Rev. Debra Thorne

Front row, left to right: Carole Cumming-Speirs, Tanya Cothran, Margaret Wanlin, Rev. Rodrigo Solano-Quesnel

Not shown: Chuck Shields

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