



First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa The Parkway Spire

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Deadline for next Spire submissions:
August 15, 2020



In Memoriam

Tellous McFadden, wife of the late John (2011), mother of son John and daughter Nanette ~ died 22 April 2020



Caring Contacts

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Pat's Ponderings ~ Rev. Patricia Guthmann Haresch



Recently, the Rev. Kathy Sage, Minister Emerita at the Kingston UU Fellowship, mentioned a classic story to me about a Lighthouse Preservation story. Online, I found a story that went something like this . . .

Many years ago there was a little village on a rocky treacherous seacoast, often battered by storms. Many ships were driven onto the rocks by the storms, and the lives of many sailors were lost because of the raging seas.

Eventually the people decided among themselves that they should establish a lighthouse and life saving station on a little peninsula on the coast to warn ships away from the rocks and to save the lives of those who were cast into the icy waters. They secured the necessary funds for their project and soon built a tower, set a beacon in it, organized a lookout system, bought boats and learned how to man them. Eventually, they were in business. The business of saving lives!



One day someone suggested that since they all spent so much time at the lighthouse, they should gather there occasionally and enjoy good fellowship. They began to get together there more and more often. In fact, many people began to build their homes near the lighthouse. Then when the lookout sounded the alarm, they were there, ready to go to the boats.

As they were spending so much time at the lighthouse, they decided they should make the place more comfortable. So they started a Lighthouse Preservation Society to draw members, and raise funds. They started a Property Committee to get heat and utilities in the lighthouse. The new Design Committee decided the gray walls should be painted a brilliant white. Paneling would be nice on other walls, eh? Rugs were selected to cover the bare concrete. A fine kitchen was

installed with the latest appliances. The lighthouse became an even nicer place to spend time waiting for the alarm to be sounded.

One night a fierce storm blew in, as storms had blown in for years. Many ships were tossed on the jagged rocks, and the volunteer rescue team at the lighthouse spent long hours picking sailors up from the bitter cold icy waters and taking them to the lighthouse. The sailors were fed and provided with dry clothing. This had happened many times over the years, but this time, after the storm subsided and the sailors had all left the lighthouse, there were some disgruntled members of the rescue team. The storm had just been too fierce and cold and dangerous. They were certain no other team had had such difficulties. Was it worth the risk? The Design Committee was not very happy. The sailors they had rescued left the lighthouse with soiled carpets. And the kitchen volunteers were upset that the kitchen was a mess, not to mention the new appliances. After a brief meeting, it was decided perhaps when they rescued people and they were wet, that they should be taken to the basement. Not to the nice upper areas. And after you save someone's life, you'd think they could show some appreciation and clean up the kitchen after themselves. Oh, and let's not even talk about the bathrooms.

Thankfully over the years, the lighthouse area on the peninsula had fewer and fewer serious storms. And the lighthouse became more and more a social center with committees, task forces, fundraisers, and picnics. Over time the Lighthouse Preservation Society became very focused on keeping the tower and its grounds spruced up, the committees populated, and the kitchen and social gatherings going, but there were fewer and fewer sessions to train rescuers. And after a while, the mechanisms to keep the lighthouse beacon had broken

Pat's Ponderings - cont...

down and no one committee felt it was their responsibility to restore the beacon. The preservation society held meeting after meeting to discuss the problem, but the meetings seemed to go nowhere. The beacon was out of repair and no volunteers could be found for the rescue crew.

Of course, eventually another fierce storm blew in, but there was no beacon light. The nearby ships were not warned of the rocky shores and crashed. Sailors called for help as their ships sank or were overcome by the waves. An alarm sounded to call together the rescue team, but there were no volunteers to gather. It was a tragic night.

The Lighthouse Preservation Society had preserved a lovely spot, and had successful fund drives, committees and teams, but they had forgotten their original lifesaving purpose.

Like the Lighthouse Preservation Society, sometimes the busyness of a congregation can steer us away from our purpose, our mission. In a strange way, like a fierce storm, this pandemic has brought into focus what we are about:

- Perhaps the business of lifesaving;
- Caring for each other;
- Reaching out to each other in a time of isolation;
- Seeking ways to help the community;
- Fostering hope for the future.

May we continue to kindle the light
May the beacon burn bright
May all be well . . .

~ Rev. Pat



Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live

~ Rev. Dr. Lynn Unger, minister for lifespan learning and editor of *Quest for the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Larger Fellowship*, an online congregation for isolated religious liberals.

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<https://www.facebook.com/lynn.ungar/posts/10157044035132584>

Religious Exploration ~ Neo Yaxley, Director of Religious Exploration



"It is spring fever.
That is what the name of it is
And when you've got it, you
want-oh, you don't know quite
what it is you do want, but it
just fairly makes your heart
ache, you want it so!"

-Mark Twain

I hope everyone is doing well and is finding their way through the time of COVID with their little ones. Spring has presented itself, and we are all aching to get out and enjoy her beauty. Signs of life are everywhere. Birds are chirping, streams are flowing, flowers blooming, and so, so much more. I love what Robin William said about spring, "*spring is nature's way of saying let's party!*" I hope all of your hearts are budding with the joy, and you have lots of opportunities to party with spring.

Religious Exploration Updates

Please check the e-UU for children's lessons and activities each Friday. To connect to the e-UU, follow the link to sign-up:

<https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/publications.html>

UU Kids Zoom Session

Our UU kids group, age range of 9 to 12, meets online every Saturday at 10 am. Our zoom sessions consist of a check-in, game and take-home activity. Drop-ins and new faces are most welcome.

For the Zoom link, check the e-UU or send me an email.

A big thank you to Brent Nicolle for sharing his time with our UU Kids. To lend a hand with our online sessions, please send me an email, and we can discuss how you can join in the fun!

Make the time,
be deliberate, grow



Youth Zoom

The Youth Zoom group has been coming together every Sunday to chat and play games together. Please note that there will be a schedule change. See e-UU for schedule change and Zoom link.

A big thank you to Lisa Sharp, Casey Price and Ren Martin-Doike for sharing your time with our youth. All you do is very much appreciated.

For Fun: Spring Riddle

What Am I?

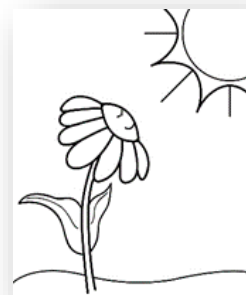
I'm yellow, but I'm not a banana. I can be over ten feet tall, but I'm not a giraffe. I have seeds, but I'm not a lemon. I can provide oil, but I'm not canola. I'm a plant, but I'm not a rose.

Looking forward to a time when we can gather together.

~Neo Yaxley

Director of Religious Exploration

dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Musical Interludes ~ Deirdre Kellerman



What a strange time we find ourselves in . . . one that has had a particular impact on our singing community. At the time of writing this (mid-May), research is only starting to come out about singing during a pandemic, but so far it doesn't look like we'll be singing face to face anytime soon.

However, not all is lost! As a conductor recently said to me: "*creativity is in our DNA as artists, musicians and storytellers*". I'm using new skills and creative muscles to move our musical community online, remaining a vibrant and important part of our congregation.

In our online services, you have heard musical offerings by singers and instrumentalists from our congregation, pulled together by the magic of technology! If you have a musical offering to share, please get in touch! I'd love to help you have your voice or instrument heard.

We are running our Summer Choir throughout June, July and August. Come one, come all! We will meet on Zoom every Thursday evening to sing the music that will be featured the following Sunday. Then, you'll be ready to sing loudly and joyfully from home (and even sing along in harmony!). This is a particularly great opportunity if you are a shy singer... mics are muted so you can sing from the privacy of your home. More information, including the Zoom link, is available on the music page of our website.

While our building may be silent, music is still alive and well in our spiritual community. I'm spending the summer figuring out exciting ways to make music together in a safe way come the fall. Thank you all for

your incredible support, love, and patience as we navigate this time as beloved community.

I'll leave you with a quote from Kellie Walsh, president of Choral Canada:

"If a choir is only about singing and performing - there will be no choir for a while. If choir is about teaching and learning, growing, connecting, community, cultural exploration and transmission, and innovating - we will find a way to have choir."

Yours in song,

~ Deirdre Kellerman

music@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Summer Choir
online edition

Summer Choir is back!

Join our Zoom rehearsals each Thursday to learn the music that will be sung the following Sunday.
Everyone is welcome!

Mics will be muted so you can sing as loud as you want!

Learn rounds, harmonies, and new hymns.

Thursdays starting June 4th, from 7-8pm

In This Time of Change and Reflection: Apple Pie Without Apples

A tragedy in my family, which does not factor into this story, nevertheless led to living my childhood and teen years with my maternal grandparents.

They of course, lived through the 1930's and WWII. (For their wedding in 1942, gifts included gas rations.) My grandfather went overseas and my grandmother did whatever the women left at home did – worked in the factories, raised the children and were really, really frugal.

With this frugality came an amazing creativity. You frequently had to learn to make something from nothing.

Growing up, I heard many of their stories. I got to sample some of that history. I recall one time we were served Apple Pie without Apples for dessert.

The pie was served with as much pride as it would have been had it been made with the freshest organic apples and premium cinnamon from Sri Lanka. It was in fact, a crust filled with soda crackers and cream of tartar. (Apples contain both tartaric and malic acid, which explains how cream of tartar mixed with sugar tastes like apples.) The pride was in the creativity required to have made something from nothing.

Was it the best apple pie I'd ever tasted? Absolutely not! I don't think the bakers of these pies during wartime thought so either. But the end product was convincing enough to give you 'all the feels' and the sense of normalcy associated with a piece of comforting pie eaten around a table with those you love. It was a simple pleasure, and all were grateful.



I think of that childhood experience often. I wonder when we lost the pride of accomplishment by creating something from nothing, or very little. We seldom fix anything. We buy solutions to our problems. We make many things more complex than they need to be. We deny ourselves the creative pleasure of repurposing something used or broken, of restoring its beauty and practicality, of making do.

We seem driven to do more creative and sustainable things when we are forced to do them.

Like now.

This time of isolation gives me time to think about this frugality/creativity partnership. With life-saving restrictions in place, we are all living on less right now – less socialising, shopping, vacationing, and for some of us, less money. We are embracing creativity and thoughtfulness in ways we were not, only two months ago! When some form of 'normal' returns, which of these things will we continue doing more of, and which ones, less? My hope is that this experience will allow us to continue delighting and enjoying the simpler things, the doing for ourselves and others, the creating from very little, the gratitude for a less-complicated life, the realization that time is as precious a currency as money. Can we be more frugal with our consumption and more generous with ourselves? We know it's better for our mental health and better for our planet.

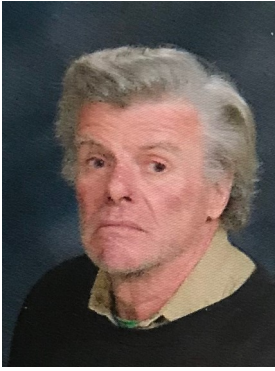
It doesn't have to be perfect. If we forge ahead with pride and conviction, I bet no one will mind that some of our apple pies don't have any apples.

~ submitted by Jen Brennan

Thanks, Merci, Miigwetch

♥ Maury Prevost would like to give a shout out to Lisa, Rev. Pat, Rick, Jen, Larry, and Michelle for their timely comments during preparation of the Estate Planning article included this edition.

Meet a Member: Ken Edwards



This series of brief bios of congregants was initiated by Isabel Burrows

Born in Michigan in 1934, Ken's family attended the Congregational Church, and since his mother ran the Sunday School, his attendance was mandatory! At age 15 Ken stopped attending and spent his remaining youthful years at

home reading and doing NOTHING else. When he was a student at Ann Arbor his father suggested he look up the Unitarians. There he found a theology he could tolerate . . . no cross and a common meeting ground for some religions. He has been with the Unitarians ever since.

Ken says his father's greatest achievement was connecting with possibly the only woman in the western world who would put up with him for 60 years. Ken was not so fortunate. Married and divorced twice, he has lived more than half of his life alone. Of his two daughters, he is in close contact with one.

From 1954 until 1967 Ken studied and worked as a physicist in Michigan, Tennessee, Princeton, California, and Iowa, one summer as part of a group trying to design a nuclear-powered aircraft. During Ken's college years, there were no girls allowed in physics and he is happy to see many women in the field today.

With a desire to walk to work, Ken bought a house within two miles of Carleton University, where in 1967 he joined the faculty there, remaining until July 1, 2000 when, thanks to the budget cuts of former Ontario Premier Mike Harris, he was retired.

In December 1999, Ken joined with his brother and sister in purchasing the farmhouse built in 1890 by their great-grandfather in northeast Michigan, a short distance north of the 45th parallel - straight west of Ottawa. He spends as much time as he can there in spring and summer. There are two UU congregations within 35 miles.

For a fellow so immersed in science, Ken has an outstanding interest in and memory for names, dates and places of ancestors near and far – amazing recall – I won't tell you all that I heard here!

These days he enjoys daily reading the Ottawa Citizen, the Toronto Globe and Mail and for a treat once a week, the New York Sunday Times. Ken has only stopped running, cross-country skiing and riding his bike in the last couple of years, but is still participating in folk dancing (though at a slower pace) at the Jack Purcell Centre.

I hope this gives you some topics for a chat with Ken after the Sunday service – you will be impressed.

~ submitted by Jo Saunders



Estate Planning and Legacy Giving in Pandemic Times

I recently updated my Will and Powers of Attorney, following the death of my spouse (a great example of when you need to do so), and my Will now includes a bequest to the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. I share this personal information in the hope that it will lead others to consider doing the same, especially as they reflect on how well the congregation has responded to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered many people to review and update their existing estate plans, or to initiate estate planning if it was not already in place. This includes Wills and Powers of Attorney for Property and Personal Care (or their equivalent; some of the terminology is different in Quebec) and financial plans. This is a good thing, because adults of all ages, even with no dependents, should have these documents, review them periodically, and update them as needed.

Not having these documents can have unintended consequences for you, your family, and other people or organizations you wish to benefit from your estate. For example:

- If you are unable to make decisions and do not have a Power of Attorney for Personal Care, you may receive medical care, such as CPR or be put on a ventilator, that you do not wish.
- If you do not have a Power of Attorney for Property, there may be issues with handling your financial needs at a critical time.
- If you die without a valid Will, you lose control of how the assets of your estate are distributed. This may preclude any charity being a beneficiary.

The FirstU Stewardship Committee is organizing some activities and resources to help people with estate planning. This includes an Advanced Care Planning workshop, a topic closely related to the Power of Attorney for Personal Care and role of Substitute

Decision Maker in Ontario law. One of these workshops is taking place May 22, shortly before publication of this article, but it will be offered again.

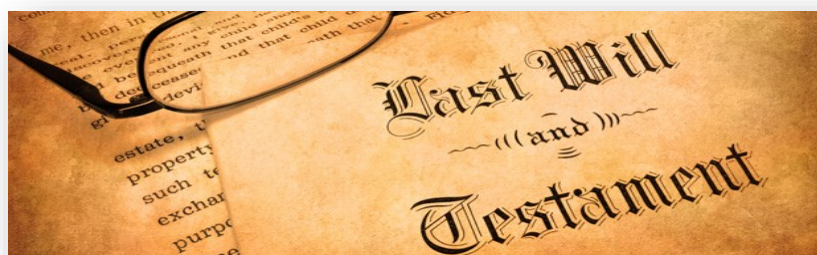
We are also planning a more general workshop on estate planning, including Wills and Powers of Attorney, with the assistance of a couple of lawyers in our congregation who will pass along their general knowledge on the topic. When it is ready, this workshop will be announced in the e-UU newsletter.

Estate planning also provides an opportunity to benefit one or more charities that you are passionate about, which can include the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, after your death or during your lifetime. Through the years, the congregation has benefited financially from a good number of legacy gifts, mostly in the form of bequests (gifts by will). It is also possible to name the congregation or another charity as one of the beneficiaries of a life insurance policy or other accounts such as an RRSP or RRIF or TFSA.

This is what we mean by “Legacy Giving”. Such gifts can allow you to make a substantial, long-term financial contribution independent of your current financial needs. More information on this subject can be found in the [Legacy Giving Brochure](#) on our website. The brochure includes some basic tips on estate planning, information on the benefits of legacy giving, and a simple form to request more information or share your plans.

For more information on this subject, contact Maury Prevost at mmprevost@sympatico.ca or 613-231-7391. Or, for more information on legacy giving to the congregation, you can also contact our Finance Manager, Michelle Jackson, at fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca.

~ submitted by Maury Prevost for the Stewardship Committee. This article does not constitute legal or financial advice.



Genealogy - My Crazy Hobby and Secrets My Great Granny Kept

For many years now I have been preparing family trees for people both within and outside our Congregation. To date I have done over 40 family trees for people here and another 20 for folks not part of FirstU.

I think all of us want to know more about the people responsible for making us who we are today.

I must acknowledge the great personal satisfaction I get from being part of a person's travel of discovery into their roots.

My own are in England and I'm afraid to say there is nothing or nobody outstanding there, unlike some. And I have acute ancestor envy for my wife Jennifer who has roots in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, the French Alsace and in the United States where many of her European ancestors migrated to.

I see doing research into a person's family tree as a great intriguing novel and I can't wait to turn the page to find out what happens next. Sometimes there are pleasant surprises and plot twists. Secrets are uncovered as well as skeletons. Regrettably sometimes there are brick walls. So to trace ancestors through time requires a little detective work and a lot of persistence.

The family tree binders that I produce contain table of contents, ancestor charts, detailed family trees, transcripts of censuses, family records of births, marriages and deaths, and a compendium of family pictures where available. I also produce a CD in the binder that holds all the electronic files.

My aim is to produce a family tree chart showing a person's paternal and maternal ancestors going back to at least their 4 x great grandparents.

To do this I need to uncover not just their ancestors, but all the other members of the family associated with them. For each ancestor I want to come up with their date and place of birth or baptism, the date and place of marriage and the date and place of their death or burial and what work they did.

If you are interested in my researching your roots, please contact me at baread@rogers.com. For all this I'm suggesting that you make a donation of \$200.00 to First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa.

Oh and I was also going to tell you about my great grandmother and the secrets she hid, only to be just now revealed to the family by her great grandson, me. But that will have to be another time.

~ submitted by Barry Read



To Brighten Your day...

*A UU family moves into a new neighborhood. Their little girl finds a new playmate, and they are happily getting to know each other. One day, the playmate says,
"We're Episcopalians, what are you?"*

*The UU child thinks for a minute and says,
"I'm not sure, but I think we're League of Women Voters."*

The Monday Afternoon Reading for Growth Book Club - Celebrating 15 Consecutive Years

Started by Katharine Elliott, our first meeting was in September 2005 in the library where meetings have, until recently, been held. Membership has fluctuated over the years averaging 8-12 per meeting, but a small core has steadfastly remained. We meet once a month on Mondays between 1-3 pm except in August. We read a wide range of non-fiction books, from *Amazing Animals* to *Zymosis* and everything in between. Each member chooses a book to bring to the club approximately once a year, and also brings light refreshments on that day. No fees are required. We try to choose books that are relatively easy to obtain and are not too expensive to buy.

We have followed a format, established from the beginning by Katharine,

which has contributed to the success of the club.

The meeting opens with a general discussion, some personal up-dates and a loosely named 'Business Session' when we talk about various possibilities of books we have read or heard about. We discuss the availability and interest and/or relevance of books suggested, for about half an hour, after which we get to the book of the day. The person presenting the book then gives a summary and comments about the book for approximately 10 minutes, followed by the next person who gives his/her opinion and reaction to the book for approximately 5 minutes, and so on around the table until everyone has had a chance to be heard without interruption; timing is discretely

monitored by Katharine. Then the discussion is open to all and we continue talking together, exchanging ideas, until the time is up.

For me these monthly meetings have been a wonderful revelation of fascinating new understandings and knowledge from books, many of which I probably would not have chosen to read, or never would have heard about. I have also enjoyed listening to the comments and insights from others in the group who might have different points of view from mine. And so we read for growth and enjoy good company at the same time.

New members are welcome. Read the book of the month and join us! Contact: elliott.katharine44@gmail.com

~ submitted by Angela Beale

Friday Reading for Growth (RFG) Book Club

Your friends in the Friday *Reading for Growth* book club send FirstU members and friends their best wishes for a safe and stimulating springtime! We gathered, via Zoom, on the last Friday afternoon of April to discuss Payam Akhavan's *In Search of a Better World*. In his 2017 Massey Lectures, Akhavan tells of the powerful human rights struggles he was involved with as an international human rights lawyer. "*Deceptive utopias, political cynicism, and public apathy*", he says, "*have given rise to major human rights abuses*" We ask: What can we do? His reply, ". . . without the knowledge of suffering without kindling a raging fever in



our hearts we will never set out on that wondrous journey in search of a better world." Payam Akhavan also reflected "*The unification of all peoples into a world commonwealth is not only possible but inevitable. It is the next stage of the evolution of humankind. Achieved by vision and volition or calamities that leave us no choice.*"

RFG members also wish to point to an au courant online talk by Malcolm Gladwell on The World After Covid. Gladwell spoke April 9th at the Toronto based Munk Debates.

Please feel free to join us via Zoom on Friday, June 26 for a lively book discussion on *Power Shift: The Longest Revolution* by Sally Armstrong, another CBC Massey Lecture available [here](#).

To attend this Zoom meeting please contact Andrew Drake:

andrewdrake235@gmail.com or Colleen Glass mcglass3@gmail.com.

~ submitted by Colleen Glass, on behalf of the RFG

Social Responsibility Council News

Unitarian GoGos Change Gears

We had to get creative, and we did! We had to overcome the isolation of a major pandemic: COVID-19. Necessity breeds creativity!

We used to bake, sell plants, plan parties big and small. We were quite traditional, and quite successful. The African Grandmothers and their communities relied on our fundraising to get through the worst effects of the AIDS pandemic, one that decimated almost an entire generation. Thus aging grandmothers came to be the prime caregivers and supporters to their families. It is hard.

So the efforts of the Canadian grandmothers and the Stephen Lewis Foundation have been crucial in sustaining them. We do not want to let them down now.

Most of our traditional ways of generating funds disappeared. What should we do? Adapt of course! Instead of past efforts we are "*Striding to Turn the Tide*" (of AIDS and COVID-19) in Africa by joining Canadian grandmothers virtually walking across Africa. Our four striders, Maxine Hamilton, Wendy Doyle, Sheila Green and Leslie Baird, have undertaken to cover the equivalent of the distance between Nairobi, Kenya and Kigali, Rwanda and beyond.

If you can support their efforts, on-line sponsorship is easy: go to <https://slf.akaraisin.com/GrandmothersPledges2020> to click on "Donate". It will bring up the Stephen Lewis Foundation website. You can donate to an individual or a team. You may choose the first

name of one of our striders to contribute directly via her effort, or to support the whole team, you can click on team, type "Ottawa" and click on the magnifier. It will list all the Ottawa teams, and you can choose "Ottawa Unitarian GoGos" and donate with a credit card. Donations over \$20 receive an immediate income tax receipt and you will help a very worthy cause and a grateful strider.

Instead of our usual Mother's Day Garden, Goodies and Gifts Sale we held a very successful Garden Plant Sale on a Member's lawn, taking orders and arranging for curb side pick up. We raised more than \$3700 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Another member, Holly Blair is producing one-of-a-kind paintings on chairs for customers who wish to donate to a number of charities, ours included. They are spectacular. Contact Maxine Hamilton for more information at: maxineh@sympatico.ca.

~ submitted by Maxine Hamilton, Unitarian GoGos



Poverty Action Working Group: What is a "Community House"?

Through the wonders of Zoom, our Sunday Forum in May brought Sylvie Manser to the Congregation. Sylvie is Executive Director of the Banff Avenue Community House,

in the south end of Ottawa. She has worked in the social housing community for over 34 years and we were thrilled that she could join us to explain the place of Community Houses in our city as she describes here:

Community Houses are social service organizations located within 15 subsidized housing neighbourhoods across Ottawa. From converted townhomes, they offer barrier-free, place-based programs and supports for individuals and families – especially those who experience marginalization because of poverty and unequal access to resources. These small organizations have become fixtures in the communities they support, helping thousands of families along the way through a broad range of programs, services and events.

Community Houses grew from residents advocating for space in their neighbourhoods to offer programs for children and youth, gathering spaces and community events. Although each Community House offers different programs and services to meet the needs of its neighbourhood, common services include: food security programs (food banks, lunch programs, community kitchens and gardens), children and youth programming (after school and summer programs, recreation, STEM), computer/internet access rooms, frontline crisis intervention and information and referral services.

Using a community-based people-centered approach, Community Houses use outreach and engage hard-to-reach populations. Most notably, the programs foster a strong

Social Responsibility Council (SRC) News, cont...

sense of belonging to a community that protects marginalized individuals from the multiple challenges when living in poverty. Not only does this positively impact the individual, it also benefits the community as a whole.

We are equally thrilled that members of our Congregation wish to investigate how to support this work. For more information, please contact Sylvie Manser: banffhouse@hotmail.com. To reach out to a Community House near you, a complete list is online at: <https://ottawacommunityhouses.com/community-houses>.

To learn more about the Poverty Action Working Group and how you can help, contact Chair, Kathy Yach at: cityviewky@rogers.com 613-224-6835. We would be pleased if you join us!

~ submitted by Kathy Yach and Katherine Gunn, Poverty Action Working Group

Environmental Action Working Group (EWAG)

Although our attention has been grabbed by COVID-19, the larger long-term issue remains. The Congregation selected “**Confronting Climate Crisis: Transforming Fear to Empowerment**” as our social responsibility focus for the next four years. The Environmental Action Working Group is charged with leading and coordinating work on this huge topic and is using the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Green Sanctuary program to help organize its work <https://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary>.



There are 4 main categories of action:

1. Environmental Justice
2. Worship, Celebration and Spirituality
3. Education and Learning
4. Sustainable Living and Resilience.

First steps are to establish baselines for campus sustainability and resilience; assess church policies and procedures; and assess congregants’ knowledge and actions.

The committee conducted a survey in February 2020 to assess congregants’ knowledge about climate change and views on what we should do. There were 79 respondents who demonstrated a good knowledge of climate change and its implications and many have already taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Key messages and areas for action included: reducing the carbon footprint of the church property; involving the broader community

and campus partners; learning how to influence policy makers; measuring carbon impacts; looking at options on how to live more simply; dealing with climate-induced anxiety; and learning how to become more resilient individually. The bright spot about COVID-19 is that we are learning to appreciate living simply!

A number of other actions have been undertaken. A Unitarians for Climaction Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Unitarians-for-Climaction-104133781203390/> has been created with readings and reference materials on relevant topics. A virtual Earth Speaks series has been launched with speakers at 9:00 a.m. on alternate Sundays. If you have a speaker/subject request, please contact Sharen Bowen: sharen@bowenassociates.ca.

As always, volunteers will be needed to help do the multiple jobs, but many hands make light work! Mike Fletcher, fletchmo2@gmail.com, as chair of the EAWG, will be pleased to help you find your niche.

~ submitted by Sherri Watson



**A FirstU Ottawa Member at the Forefront:
Tara Upreti Helping the Women’s Foundation In Nepal**

Tara Upreti, a long time First UU member, goes every year to help at the Women’s Foundation in Nepal. Tara and her sisters, Renu Sharma and Karmala Upreti, founded this NGO not-for-profit organization, in 1988. In January Tara headed to the Women’s Foundation, and has been on the front line of the response to Covid-19 and the lock-down in Nepal. Here is their up-date:

On March 24th, the Government of Nepal directed a lock down due to COVID-19, making it impossible for poor people to earn a living. Their wages are paid daily for physical labour, or they sell what they grow or make at markets, which now are closed.



Relief Distribution and Open Heart Kitchen during the Covid-19 pandemic by Women’s Foundation. Tara is in red below preparing food and serving to 600 people on April 28th.

On May 2nd 900 people were served, all with social distancing in the line-up, and sitting on the ground or taking turns on chairs.



The Women’s Foundation (WFN) & a local Social Group provided food for over 500 people on the first day of the OPEN HEART KITCHEN. Tara is in the rust coloured tunic serving food to people social distancing in the line.



Top: social distancing during food distribution. Bottom: Tara Upreti giving out rice.

BLOG Posted: April 25

“On April 23 and 24th, WFN distributed free rations of rice, dal, sunflower oil, beans, and vegetables to 327 families. WFN has supported about 3217 families by April 27 of the Covid 19 crisis. The relief distribution program is still ongoing. We continue to assess the situation and will give continued support as needed. We are committed to providing supplies to all the women in need during this crisis”, said Renu Sharma, the President of the Women’s Foundation Nepal.”



-Submitted by Tara Upreti and Leslie Baird

Social Responsibility Council (SRC) News, *cont...*

Child Haven During COVID-19

The heartwarming news from the last-minute cancellation of the March 13th Child Haven Fiesta at First Unitarian is that every ticket holder chose to donate their purchase price rather than seek reimbursement. The effort to organize our South-Asian themed evening of dance and music was rewarded by being able to provide Child Haven the ticket proceeds of \$1,580. It is hoped that such generosity will be ongoing as all of Child Haven's spring and summer fundraising dinners across the country have been cancelled. These events are the major source of funding needed to operate the six children's homes in India and one home in each of Nepal, Bangladesh and Tibet in China.

The volunteer internship program, which has been integral to Child Haven's success story has been suspended until safe to resume. These visiting helpers will be a missed

additional caring resource, but the homes are fully staffed by local people who run well-functioning and loving environments. These days the homes are practicing extra sanitation and limiting visitors to the compounds; and although off-site schooling is cancelled a child belonging to a large family has no shortage of playmates and engaging activities.



The following is an excerpt from the latest Child Haven newsletter:

“This crisis underscores the need to prioritize and invest in health-care, education, and housing for everyone. It illustrates that we are all one interconnected family on this earth with much more to gain from cooperation and collaboration than from hostility and malice. Child Haven will continue our efforts to uplift those among us who even before this virus were struggling, as millions do, with no health-care, adequate food or housing.”

Perfect for the season is this photo of boys from the Kaliyampoondi home for 300 plus children. For more information visit www.childhaven.ca and Child Haven International on Facebook for current news and photos.

~Susan Mellor, Member, Child Haven Working Group

JUSTnews—Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

Last December, I was asked by Bob Stevenson and Gary Campbell to help with the layout for the newsletter, *JUSTnews*, which is put together by the Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice. Since I enjoy this behind-the-scenes, detailed work, I readily agreed, and the latest edition of the newsletter has just been published on their website: cusj.org

I am very impressed with the thoughtful, stimulating articles submitted by people who care deeply about social justice in Canada and beyond. For example, Leslie Kemp includes an excerpt from her article about social

justice during the COVID-19 pandemic, which links most of the current social issues—from the failure of our long-term health care system; to the virus of capitalism. Other insightful articles address the plight of the Wet'suwet'en and their fight against the Coast Gaslink pipeline; our threatened Canadian waters and the climate catastrophe.

You'll also find a lovely tribute to Bob Stevenson written by Frances Deverell . . . and much more.

I invite you to check it out!

~ submitted by Jan Andrews

JUST

news

canadian unitarians for social justice

Volume 22, No. 2 Spring 2020

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*The operative words for citizen actions are organize and mobilize. CUSJ is part of the global green wave movement for change. I invite you to ride the wave with us. You won't find better company. Besides, my elementary home is riding on it."
-Past President, Margaret Rao

-read more from Margaret on page 5-

Image courtesy of [Thomas Colloff](#)

Water is Life:

~~Ripples Across the Land~~

The Web of Relationships: FirstU Relational Covenant

The seventh Unitarian Universalist principle reminds us to affirm our ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’

‘The interdependent web of all existence’ includes the many social interactions that are constantly occurring between people. Those interactions form the basis of our relationships with one another. And that complex web of relationships, in turn, forms a community. The health of a community, or the lack thereof, is dependent on the myriad of individual interactions, which are the building blocks of that community.

Over the past couple of (pre-pandemic) months, with the leadership of Rev. Pat, and facilitated by the Right Relations Team, the congregants of FirstU had an opportunity to provide input into creating a Relational Covenant. The Covenant was submitted

to the Board for approval and will be put to a vote by the members at the Annual General Meeting on June 21, 2020.

May we all do our part to remember and honour the following Covenant to maintain respectful, caring relationships with one another and promote a healthy, thriving church Community.

I will strive to honour our Congregational Covenant and our Unitarian Universalist principles by:

- *Speaking for myself with honesty.*
- *Being aware of how my words and actions may affect others.*
- *Listening. Assuming good intentions. Remembering that people differ in their perceptions, previous experience and communication styles.*
- *Interacting respectfully. Acknowledging other people’s views and confirming*

my understanding of what is being said.

- *Speaking directly to a person with whom I disagree rather than about them. Engaging a third party to mediate, if needed.*
- *Following through with actions on my promises and commitments.*
- *Serving as I am able with my time, talents and treasures.*
- *Celebrating our diversity by ensuring that all feel welcome and included.*

This Relational Covenant is intended to be a living document reflecting current language and approaches. It will be periodically reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect our best intentions of how we are with each other.

~ submitted by Lena Jones, Right Relations Team

The Parkway Spire Team welcomes articles that are of interest to the congregation with accompanying photos (high resolution jpg format is preferred). Photos with persons must be accompanied by permission for use. Articles should be sent unformatted and have a maximum of 400 words. We reserve the right to edit articles when necessary.

Send your submissions to spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Next Spire submission deadline: **August 15, 2020**



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