



First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa The Parkway Spire

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Deadline for next Spire submissions:
February 15, 2022



In Memoriam

Doris Helena Jelly, partner of the late John Day, mother of Janet Hodges ~ died September 11, 2021 (age 89)

Thomas Edward (Ted) Elliott, husband of Katharine and father of David and Louise ~ died September 28, 2021 (age 76)

Laura Golden, mother of two sons ~ died November 11, 2021, in Mexico

Also in our thoughts:

Godfrey Paul Holtom (Paul), last surviving son of Edith and Fred Holtom ~ died August 15, 2021 (age 99). The Edith Holtom Peace Lecture Series was established at First Unitarian in Edith's memory.

Lurline Isoline Wright, mother of five ~ died November 6, 2021. Lurline formed close friendships at First Unitarian, especially while attending and volunteering in the Seniors' Groups.



Caring Contacts

"We respond to your phone calls and emails when you wish to alert us to a need or concern, or when you want to celebrate a joy"

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From the Spire Editor...

With each Parkway Spire issue deadline drawing near, I wait in anticipation as your articles trickle in, some early (hat's off to those!), some right on time, and some needing a wee bit of leeway past submission deadline. What's heartening is that articles continue to come in,

that our congregants have a desire to share their stories, thoughts, fears, dreams and personal insights, ensuring a good read for all on publication day. I hope this sharing of ideas will continue for many years to come.

May you be safe, healthy and peaceful, as you join friends and loved ones during the coming holiday season.

Joyous greetings to all!

~Marg Lee, Spire Editor



From the Board of Directors...

What does the future hold?

Did you know that FirstU Ottawa and other Canadian Unitarian Universalist congregations had been dreaming about how to offer online ministry before the pandemic arrived? We always thought it would be hard to do and expensive. Then the pandemic hit, and suddenly we had no choice – we jumped in and started offering our ministry online.

For those of us on the board, we had no idea if anyone would want to participate this way. This has been an anxious 18 months for those of us making decisions for our congregation. We really appreciate all of our leaders who made the effort to learn how to use Zoom; to keep on smiling; and those who have reached out to our members to keep in touch with them through these lonely times.

As we enter into our second winter of the pandemic, we have reason to

believe that we are turning the corner. Ottawa has one of the highest rates of vaccinations in Canada, and our numbers of active cases since September have been falling, despite the return back to school and daycare. Yes, there are still cases but our situation is so much better than it was a year ago. We have hope.

Recently, I have heard some members express their relief that we are "getting back to normal". But what does "normal" look like? From what we can tell, there are still a large group of people who are not comfortable with attending in-person meetings or activities. And some people, for a variety of reasons, just can't participate in person. Will we keep offering some of our programs and services online as we enter 2022? What do worship and ministry look like for the long term?

We have reopened for Sunday services for fully vaccinated adults and people are starting to come back with about 40-50 people attending each week. Interestingly, we are seeing about 100 people watching the weekly service online via YouTube. We are carefully watching these numbers as well as the continued participation in our Zoom Hospitality Hour.

It seems that people of all ages appreciate the availability of online options. We would love to hear from our members what they think about this and we will be providing opportunities to gather everyone's feedback in the near future. As always, please feel free to speak to any board member on Sunday or at Hospitality Hour – or send us an email.

~ submitted by Lisa Sharp,
President



Signing in early with Rev. Eric and Ann

I was not surprised to see Rev. Eric and his wife, Ann, logged in early for our Zoom video interview. What did surprise me was that after an hour's worth of answers to pre-submitted questions, I already had two defining insights into this exceptional couple. And they came to me in those minutes before the scheduled interview...

Because I hope to convince you of this, I intend to share my own personal experience of Ann and Rev. Eric. I will begin journalistically enough, by making two factual statements. I will then attempt to describe them as two characteristics that I feel are worthy of a profile piece of our new Minister and his wife. Here we go:

1. My interviewees are already logged in and snuggled up on their couch when I log in, about five minutes early; and
2. I quickly become a digital fly on the wall to one of the most intimate and longest-running conversations a couple can have—the details of their first date.

It was a cold November Saturday evening in COVID times, meaning we did not have any other plans. Not like back in those social Saturdays of the pre-2020 era. Instead, it was the perfect mutual time for the three of us to come together. I immediately noticed our similar attire: warm, thick cotton hoodies and shirts, and the mutual smiles that are still so key to human interactions, even when through a screen. Ann and Rev. Eric were sitting casually, Ann with her dog gently nestled under her arm, and Rev. Eric at her side, all squeezed together on their orange couch. Or was it red? Colour seems to be another casualty of digitized socializing so please forgive me this missed detail.

Despite the pixilation, I immediately felt like I had just been invited into their actual home. Like we were sitting close, sharing a warm drink, and continuing a conversation from the week before. Not a bad place to be while sitting on a video chat service, a few minutes before a scheduled interview was to begin. To summarize my first profile piece insight, I would describe my interviewees as unpretentiously prompt, with a hint of what French Canadians call “chaleureux/chaleureuse”.

After mutual greetings, there were jokes about how well my interviewees had rehearsed their answers, and we briefly explored the possibility of a point system based on the Newlywed Game, where each spouse

answers for the other to show how well they know each other. This immediately brought up the topic of Ann and Rev. Eric's first date.

“It was at a café, we both can agree on that,” Rev. Eric said.

“And we agree on the food we ordered,” said Ann, with Rev. Eric adding, “but we still don't agree on whether (we were sitting) inside or outside,” and without taking a breath between statements, he added: “but, of course, Ann is right!”

It is easy enough to be charmed (like I was) by the witty back-and-forth of this teasing between two intimates. But in typing up my notes for this article there is a word in the middle of this exchange that now sticks out for me, a small detail I had overlooked. The word is “still”. I encourage you to go back and read the exchange again. You may also note the active verb tense used; both of these minor details, it seems, speak of a much greater ongoing conversation. What “still” tells me is that after the many years since this historical day ended, for these two people it “still” exists in the present.

Ann and Rev. Eric's ability to evoke their first date and mention it so quickly into our video call, is another example of their unpretentiousness mentioned earlier. But it says a lot more. It gives me a sense of the eternal experience that Ann and Rev. Eric must “still” be having with each other. That first date never ended. And they both are “still” talking about how it's going, with each other, with whomsoever is lucky enough to join them, and one or both of their dogs, on their orange/red couch.

~ submitted by Mike Lloyd



Religious Exploration ~ Neo Yaxley



We are relieved to have the privilege of gathering once again on Sunday mornings. Our routine is back in action!

The amount of time we have spent apart was made very evident when seeing the transformation of our Religious Exploration children. Some were unrecognizable; changes in height, mobility, speaking abilities. It was beautiful to see a mother with a new baby, babies who are now toddlers and kids who now seem like teenagers.

We will continue to hold our Religious Exploration programming outdoors with a couple of stations inside so children can warm up if need be. Our current focus is reconnecting children with one another, the staff and our space after being away for so long. In the new year, we will start to work on monthly themes, which will be centered on UU faith-based curriculum. Themes will be posted in the e-UU, on Facebook and in our classroom. Please let us know if you have a unique skill or activity you would like to share with the children. We would love to have visitors from upstairs!

Current Schedule

Service starts at 10:00 am. Parents are invited to bring their children to the children's playground at 9:45 am. Parents are asked to pick their children up by 11:15 am. Please dress your child in weather-appropriate clothing.

It is good to be back together again!

Neo Yaxley

dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Musical Interludes ~ Jenn Berntson



It's been a whirlwind three months settling in as music director at FirstU! I've very much enjoyed starting to get to know the building, instruments, the hymnals and music library, and most of all the congregation.

I've enjoyed some special music services, particularly getting to collaborate with so many singers on hymns, and with our guest instrumentalists on Folk Song Philosophy and United Nations Sunday. Our three choirs have been wonderful through some challenging and exciting times; we've been online, making our best with Zoom rehearsals! We've been outdoors, competing in our song with birds (on the nice days) and garbage trucks (on the less nice days)! And we are now in-person and indoors, getting a chance to enjoy the beautiful acoustic and space of Worship Hall. It's been a joy, especially to record some material for the congregation, which you will be hearing during our services in the coming month. And I'm planning to release some of the choir's recorded music as an online "concert" - stay tuned for details.

We're starting to wrap up our fall season of music-making for the choirs - but if you are interested in joining, please reach out to me at music@firstunitarianottawa.ca!

We are especially looking for new members for Chalice on Thursday nights, and anyone is welcome to join us.

With song,

Music Jenn

music@firstunitarianottawa.ca



Meet a Member: Joycelyn Loeffelholz-Rea



Joycelyn was born 90 years ago amidst the exuberant flora and fauna of Jamaica where pumpkin vines grew everywhere. She enjoyed an excellent education in the British style system which was free there until 15 years of age. But there was no electricity in the school so she often had to move to the door to read by the light coming in. The teachers, however, were wonderful. "I often wish I could go back and tell them what they made of me." It was here she developed a personal sense of self and a lot of self-confidence. From school she went straight into nursing training at the university hospital.

Joycelyn came to Canada in 1960 and found work at the veterans' hospital in London, Ontario. A year later she met a young East German farmer, Paul Loeffelholz. Despite his poor English, which she found difficult to understand, he kept coming to the hospital residence where she lived to invite her out. Within a year they were married. Soon after, they bought a 100-acre farm in Dunvegan (for only \$5000!) It was in nearby Maxville that she met Fred and Bonnie Capuccino. Joycelyn and Paul were raising goats and Fred and Bonnie came to learn more, introducing her to a lot of their friends, families with children, and Unitarians. Joycelyn worked later at a hospital in Hawkesbury. She moved there and left her husband in Dunvegan.

By this time Joycelyn had three children. One son was already at Fanshawe and her other son was accepted at Canterbury to study dance. Joycelyn was still working in Hawkesbury so she had to commute to Ottawa. As soon as she could, Joycelyn retired, moved to Ottawa and joined this church.

She met her second husband, Chuck on-line via a kind of dating service. Despite Chuck being a smoker (at first), they discovered they had a lot in common, their kids were the same age, both were aspiring writers, their first grandchildren were born on the same day and they were both Unitarians! They were married in April '93.

In Ottawa, Joycelyn's artistic life flourished. She went to a lot of readings around town and took a couple of weekend courses with Ruth Latta. Bradley Ralph really encouraged her art. She had an exhibition at the church and her apartment walls are covered in her paintings. Brian Kopke encouraged her writing. She went to Jamaica and kept a journal, which became the first chapter of her book "Island Interlude". She also wrote a history of our church. She has written five books of poetry and this summer presented a service of her poetry in church. Twenty years ago she started "Arts Night", a long running and very successful feature of our winter program. Joycelyn also started the Women's Group and the Minority Awareness Group.

"I've really had a good life, my family, my church."

~ submitted by Margaret Zielinski



Thanks, Merci, Miigwetch



Thank you, Anita MacLean!

Indeed, Anita, what would the Global Justice Action Group (GJAG) have done without you? It was 2015 when our long-serving chairperson resigned. You were the only one willing to take on the role of GJAG Chairperson!

Right from the start you took this function very seriously. You were the spirit behind events we organized, getting actively involved in several Indigenous projects, including invitations to Indigenous speakers and in the creation of the Indigenous-led Ajashki Food Security Garden located on the FirstU Campus, which produced its first harvest last month. You took the initiative to educate our Congregation on the Israel/Palestine situation and ensured our Congregation would support Pathways to Education and 'Students Will All Graduate'

enabling vulnerable youth the chance to continue their education after high school.

Yes, we have to thank you for your six years of calm and steady leadership as Chair of our expanding Committee when the Unitarian UN Committee folded and joined the GJAG a few years ago.

We all appreciate that you always allowed time for anyone wanting to share the floor to express their thoughts.

We are grateful you will continue as an active member of the GJAG and we hope you will participate for many years to come.

~ submitted by Ria Heynen on behalf of The Global Justice Action Group

Feature Article: Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation



From: [Onondaga Nation](#)

When I was 21, I travelled out west with my younger sister – to ‘find myself’ and explore Canada. We took the train, the bus and sometimes hitchhiked from Ottawa to Vancouver Island.

There were many teachings along the way, but one in particular has stayed with me. We were sitting in a bar having a beer with a young guy we’d met up with and an old Indigenous man sat down at our table. He’d had a few, and started talking about his life. I was so moved by his story that when I got back home I wrote this song to play on my guitar:

*I met him in a smoky bar, in
Banff, the Cascades Inn.
His face was weather in his pain,
honoured brown the skin.*

*But what struck pangs of guilt in
me, those eyes filled with contempt,
A wolf caught in the trapper’s
steel, the hope and rage all spent.*

*He told me of his trapping days,
quiet in the hills,
then rode a wagon in stampedes,
his brother he got killed.*

*I asked him of his ancestors, the
tales and legends old,
But he just shifted words around,
ashamed (I think) and cold...*

Looking back now, a little wiser with years of experience and education, I question a few of my youthful

assumptions: Was he really ashamed or did he just not want to talk about his or his family’s painful experiences in residential schools? He had every right not to trust me, a young white girl asking a bunch of questions.

In school, I was taught nothing about Canada’s horrible, abusive relationship with Indigenous peoples who’d lived here for thousands of years before we arrived. Over time, my heart has moved from guilt to greater compassion along with a strong commitment to learn and grow in my understanding of Indigenous realities and how we can mend our damaged relationships.

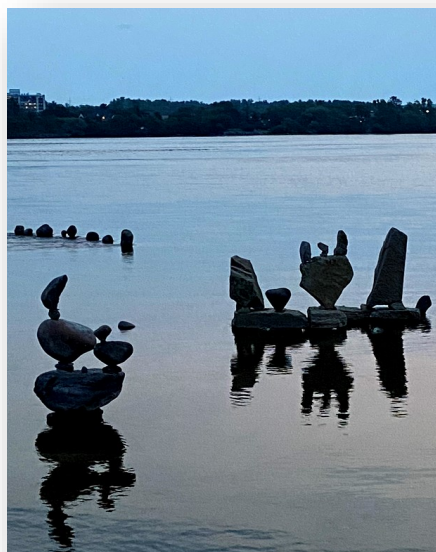


Photo from Remic Rapids: Artist
John Ceprano

In 2010, as part of my work in First Nations and Inuit Health (Health Canada), I attended the first Truth and Reconciliation National Gathering in Winnipeg. In sharing circles, I felt honoured to bear witness to many powerful stories of pain, loss, torture and loneliness in residential schools – sometimes a rough wool blanket being the only comfort.

I also attended fire circles with elders praying, offering tobacco, smudging and drummers in the four directions. And the Pow Wow, with dancers, drumming and singing as an eagle circled directly above us, going higher and higher. I was overwhelmed by the strength of spirit, culture and community. Such resilience and joy in the midst of powerful truth telling!

Prior to government, I worked in the community supporting abused women. As part of that work, I was privileged to sit on the Council for what was then the Aboriginal Women’s Support Centre (now Minwaashin Lodge). I am still grateful for the many teachings of those women: how to listen deeply, to sit with things for awhile, to respect and even welcome differing viewpoints, to make decisions always mindful of the whole—not just of individual interests. There was always lots of laughter too!

Continued on page 7...

Truth and Reconciliation *cont...*

I still feel like I have so much to learn to remove the blinders of colonization in my own life and in the communities where I walk; to validate Indigenous ways of knowing and doing...

“Decolonization requires non-Indigenous Canadians to recognize and accept the reality of Canada’s colonial history, accept how that history paralyzed Indigenous Peoples, and how it continues to subjugate Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization requires non-Indigenous individuals, governments, institutions and organizations to create the space and support for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim all that was taken from them.” From: [A Brief Definition of Decolonization and Indigenization](#)

So let’s go back in time to one of the earliest treaties – an agreement between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee in 1613 and the Two Row Wampum (Gä•sweñta’) which signified this pact:

“...Each of their ways would be shown in the purple rows running the length of a wampum belt. “In one row is a ship with our White Brothers’ ways; in the other a canoe with our ways. Each will travel down the river of life side by side. Neither will attempt to steer the other’s vessel. Together we will travel in Friendship and in Peace Forever; as long as the grass is green, as long as the water runs downhill, as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, and as long as our Mother Earth will last.” From [Onondaga Nation](#)

Some sources describe the white areas on the Wampum Belt as symbols of Peace, Friendship and Respect.

I am moved by these three words – ***Peace, Friendship and Respect.***

Canada, with its policies of land theft, cultural genocide, residential schools and rampant racism (still very much present today), betrayed the original occupants of this land. I believe today we are at a crossroads – a time of reckoning and action – so that one day, we may finally greet our Indigenous neighbours nation to nation on equal footing in true Peace, Friendship and Respect.

[The Truth and Reconciliation Action Group](#) at FirstU is hosting a number of events and activities that you can take part in – watch for notices in the eUU bulletin. I invite you to walk with us on this path toward healing and reconciliation.

~ submitted by Jan Andrews
Co-chair, Truth and Reconciliation Action Group
trag@firstunitarianottawa.ca



From: [Onondaga Nation](#)

Did you know...

The name "Algonquin" sometimes interpreted as –"those who are dancing"– may have been coined by Samuel de Champlain in 1603 when he arrived in Tadoussac. In recent years many Algonquin have started using the term "Anishinabe" instead. To read more about this history, see: <https://www.anishinabenation.ca/en/origin-of-the-name-algonquin/>

There are two main Algonquin organizations that represent communities in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec: [The Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council](#) and [The Algonquins of Ontario](#)



Love everything. It is the strongest medicine we have



ISAAC MURDOCH
Survivor, artist, storyteller,
musician, father, land and
water protector
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Social Responsibility Council (SRC) News

Environmental Action Group

Food – Pleasure or Problem (Part 1)



What a wealth of shapes, colours and smells the Farmers' Markets are in the fall! Later we will enjoy the tastes of the fresh foods we buy. As well as plentiful nourishment, these foods are a source of great pleasure for our senses, one of our main pleasures in life. An Indigenous chef, who cooks in a middle-class restaurant but knows families who are eating only rice, writing on Facebook, calls our plenty "food opulence," an evocative phrase. "Food profligacy" might be a more appropriate term given the facts about food wastage in Canada.

First the bad news, then some good news. Statistics vary, which is confusing, but most are very close. The food wasted in Canada, 58% of what is produced, is worth \$17 billion a year. North America has the highest wastage per population in the world. The average Canadian family wastes more food per year (79kg) than the US (59kg). Source: [Google Food Waste Countries](#)

Whilst the Federal and Ontario governments have made policy statements on goals, there are no serious effective targets and regulations.

The greatest problem with food waste is that when not composted it creates methane gas, which is 85 times more potent over 20 years than carbon dioxide, and contaminates ground water. Add this to the waste of large amounts of power, water, gas and packaging and you can see it's a big problem that is not receiving much attention.

Shockingly, an almost entirely avoidable 50% wastage occurs in the home. Before it reaches us, 10% is wasted on the farm, 20% in processing, 10% in retail. This is you and me, our families, friends and work places. What can we do to help?

First, we can pay attention over the holiday period. At catered events there is frequently too much food and what's left is trashed. Can you influence your workplace or neighbours? Don't give children more than their small stomachs can handle. Give guests take-home containers and use leftovers well. Talk to friends and family about this issue. Watch for more suggestions about what we can do in the next Parkway Spire.

We come to FirstU not primarily for activism, but to connect with our spiritual awareness. Here is a contemplation I hope you will enjoy trying. When you have your meal, first make sure your surroundings are quiet – turn off all media, even that phone! If you have a partner, agree to eat for the first 10 minutes in silence. Take a mouthful of each food on its own in turn. Really taste it, smell it and feel the texture. Go around your plate again, this time contemplating where the food has come from, where and how it was grown, the elements, the farmer and everyone involved until the food comes to your table. Then return to the food's natural origin. I hope this enriches your appreciation of your food.



~ submitted by Clea Derwent

Ending Natural Gas Electricity Generation in Ontario

For much of this year, members of FirstU, and the congregation officially, have been involved in a campaign to rid the use of fossil fuels for the generation of electricity in Ontario. Collectively, the effort has been fantastic and has included letters from the board and congregants, social media postings, attendance at virtual meetings and a small demonstration outside a government MPP's office. This activist effort hit a high point on October 9th this year when Ottawa City Council, in part thanks to FirstU efforts as well as others in the community, voted and passed a motion to phase out natural gas generation in Ontario by 2030. Ottawa is the 32nd municipality to pass such a motion and now, 60% of Ontarians live in municipalities which have voted for a gas phase out.

This is the good news. The bad news is that this struggle is far from over. The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) released a whopper of a study and related report in October. Ignoring the advice of many of the stakeholders who want to see a gas phase out, the IESO's study managed to set terms of reference which were harder to achieve than necessary. To give but one example, some gas phase out proponents suggested keeping some of the gas plants after 2030 for reliability purposes and running them on renewable fuel when they are periodically required. This suggestion was ignored and as a result, the IESO's study concluded that a gas phase out by 2030 would lead to rolling blackouts. In actual fact the IESO's own numbers show that blackouts are caused by a tiny 0.3% generation shortage in 2030. This small shortage is something the IESO's study could easily have course corrected on, through a small amount of renewable fuel use (as gas phase out proponents suggested) or by increasing another generation.

continued on page 10...

SRC News: Environmental Action Group cont...

Unfortunately, ongoing political maneuvering appears to be further delaying action. On the very day the report was released, Ontario Energy Minister Todd Smith asked the IESO to study if a moratorium on gas generation would be feasible and what would be involved in phasing out gas generation (without a deadline). This sounds promising, except that the Minister gave the IESO thirteen months to get back to him. In the interim, there is virtually nothing being done by the province to reduce emissions on the electrical system. Nothing being done for thirteen months during a decade where we must cut emissions in half. So, our activist work will continue – stay tuned to learn how to help.

~ submitted by the Environmental Action Group

COP26: Not a Quantum Leap! Maybe an Incremental Step in the Right Direction

The paramount climate focus in November was COP26 in Glasgow where, after much fractious negotiating, nearly 200 countries signed on to the Glasgow Climate Pact. In the end it could probably best be seen as incremental progress towards achieving its goals.

On the positive side, strong rules were established for a robust, transparent and accountable global carbon market. Productive movement

was made in the domains of methane control and reversal of deforestation, areas which are vital in moving towards decreasing emissions.

Finance firms managing \$130 trillion joined a net-zero pledge. While early wording relating to the “phasing out of coal and fossil fuel” was seriously watered down, activists maintain that just the inclusion of the term coal is a gain, and that the fossil fuel movement is aware that its time is limited.

Emissions need to fall about 45% by 2030 to allow any possibility that warming may be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100. But despite a flurry of hopes and promises the first week, when added together the pledges fall below the amount and the speed required to meet this goal. Instead, they seem set to rise by 14%. But while previous COPs made vague calls to action, COP26 has emphasized specific and urgent climate action, pushing big emitter nations to submit stronger emission-cutting pledges. Included is a move to deliver new national commitments on a yearly rather than five-yearly basis. COP27 will be held in Cairo in 2022 and the pressure will be on.

Most disappointing was the lack of response of the wealthy carbon emitting countries to contribute adequate compensation, based on their contribution to global emissions, to developing and island countries. These countries are suffering the worst impacts of climate change,

including loss of life, housing and livelihood. This must certainly be a priority for COP27.

Canada contributed to a number of positive undertakings at COP26. But Canada also has a history of promising climate action without follow through. We know that commitments and pledges will not stop our planet from warming. Only immediate and drastic action can do that. This is where we at FirstU come in. Let's hold our politicians accountable to make sure they keep their promises so we may succeed in decreasing our emissions. Let's make sure we do *our* fair share in supporting countries at risk. Canadians are at the top of the list for emissions per capita.

Join us in our Enviro-Advocacies to the Prime Minister and his ministers or undertake some advocacy on your own. Sign petitions, send letters, contact your MP, write letters to the newspapers, support and donate to groups supporting climate sustainability and climate justice.

<https://www.edf.org/media/cop26-ends-strong-result-carbon-markets-and-international-call-action-most-urgent-climate>

NPR <https://www.npr.org/2021/11/13/1055542738/cop26-climate-summit-final-decision>

~ submitted by Donna Bowen-Willer



From: <https://octopus.energy/blog/climate-murals-cop26/>

Imagine leaving a positive footprint



AMANDA SUUTARI
Writer, artist, mediator,
daughter, partner, gardener
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SRC News: Poverty Action Group

Update on Refugee Sponsorship

Refugee Sponsorship now falls under the umbrella of the Poverty Action Group (PAG).

In the spring of 2021, Mohammad approached us by email through the CUC, asking if we would sponsor his family from Syria. The family, who have been living in Jordan for six years, consists of Mohammad's brother Ali and his wife, their six children (ages 3 to 14) and Ali's mother Fouryeh. Mohammad was able to come to Ottawa under a similar refugee program sponsorship and a second brother Nesrin also lives in Canada.

We approached the Or Haneshamah (OrH), Ottawa's Reconstructionist Congregation that rents space in our facilities. Their Board agreed to partner with us, and various members from their organization along with Rabbi Liz have joined our committee.

The Process

The CUC has given us nine refugee spaces and two members of our congregation are completing the applications for Ali and his family.

In order to sponsor a refugee family, we need to collectively prepare the

application (lots of paper work), fundraise to ensure there are sufficient funds to financially support the family in the first year, and prepare an agreement to emotionally and socially support the family when they arrive. Down the road we will be looking for furniture etc.

Funding and How You Can Help

The refugee sponsorship calculations suggest about \$35-40,000 for a family of four plus another \$3,000 per person for additional family members. That would be about \$55,000 in total. Ali's Canadian family has pledged a considerable sum.

Our Board has committed \$15,000 to the fund and the Or Haneshamah is starting to fundraise.

We invite you to donate to FirstU on behalf of this collaborative effort to sponsor a refugee family. The following payment methods will be gratefully received:

- Etransfer to:
fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca
– this is auto deposit – no password needed. However, you MUST state in the Etransfer message, the intent of the donation (e.g. Refugee Fund) and include your

mailing address to receive a tax receipt.

- Cheques – made out to First Unitarian Congregation – memo line must state the intent of the donation.
- Credit Card – please contact Michelle Jackson 343-987-8560 or email at:
fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca.
- To donate shares or stocks, please contact Michelle for more information.
- We also accept cash in a sealed envelope with the amount and counter identified on the outside of the envelope as well as the intent of the donation.

Whichever method you choose, it is important to state the intent of the donation (e.g. Refugee Fund) and if you want a tax receipt, the full name and address of the donor is required.

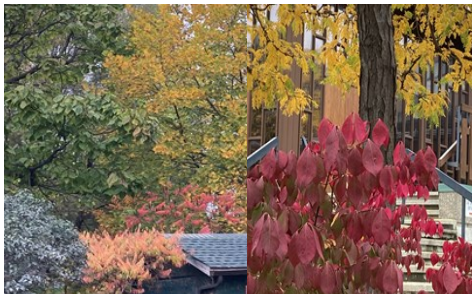
For more information or if you are interested in helping out on the Refugee Sponsorship committee, please contact:
cityviewky@rogers.com

~ submitted by Kathy Yach, Chair, Poverty Action Group.



Campus Diary – September to November

This is the last of my *Campus Diary* series, begun last January when you still couldn't visit after nearly a year.



What a strange, muddled fall season it has been on this beautiful piece of land! I expected to be writing about the glorious colours of the trees, all turned red, gold and orange together. In years past, I have driven to the church and stood gazing up in wonder at the maples against the bright blue sky. But this year it's as if Mother Nature is in serious need of respite care and we human beings had better get on with it before she kicks the bucket.

As early as the end of August half the leaves on the birch tree near the daycare turn yellow and fall while leaves half their size stay on the tree till early November. The lilacs are drooping. We are in another drought.

By the end of October, the trees are in many different stages of turning. At the north end, close to the church

one maple is bare, another is dropping leaves that are brown around the edges and yellow with still some green. The maple on the edge of the Sunday school garden is shedding yellow leaves that are half the size of normal. Some are shedding green leaves and I worry that these trees have not used all their chlorophyll and have not been able to produce the usual amount of leaf to give sugar for the next year's greening presumably because of the spring drought and intense summer heat.



However, there has still been much beauty to enjoy on our beloved campus. The first week of October and there is an amazing late blooming of flowers - geraniums and clusters of beautiful pink roses by the gate to the memorial garden. The largest of the rich purple Michaelmas daisies is swarming with bees in the hot sun. Snowberries line the way into the Memorial Garden like clusters of

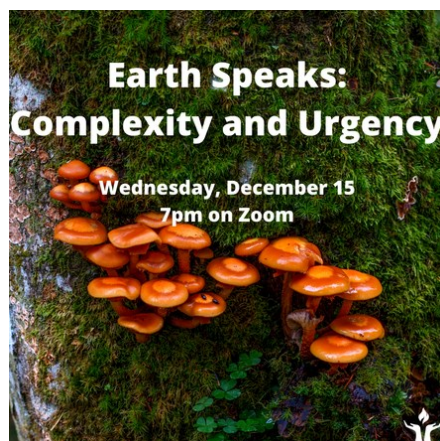
pearls. On the vine close to the church steps grapes ripen, soon to be flattened to two feet by squirrels feasting.

At the south end of the Memorial Garden the trees are an unusual display of muted colours and the rock garden on Cleary Avenue is covered by a patchwork of leaves like Joseph's coat of many colours.



Now that you can come to the church, please take the time to walk, not only in the gardens, but around the whole campus, to see and appreciate for yourselves this small park and be uplifted, even in winter. I have always regarded it as a sanctuary, an extension of Fellowship Hall. A sacred trust that will never be regained if lost.

~ article and photos submitted by Clea Derwent



Meditation Gardens News: The Friends' Potluck

The upkeep of our meditation gardens takes many volunteer hands and when the *Friends* gathered for a potluck lunch this past October some of us were surprised by our number. Since we're not all gardening on the same days, the lunch was a welcomed opportunity to meet up with fellow volunteers. Indeed, we totaled eighteen when we came together to celebrate and commend Lori Snyder for her four years as Chair of the *Friends of the Meditation Gardens*. We are fortunate that while Lori has decided to relinquish the leadership role, she intends to continue providing her talents to future gardening seasons.

But the *Friends* wanted to recognize Lori's skillful management that was particularly challenged during the pandemic when social distancing protocols needed to be observed. During the 2020 and early 2021 gardening seasons Lori provided special consideration to Unitarian House advising their administration whenever volunteers would be working in the gardens. For many of the residents of Unitarian House, access to the privacy and relative safety of the gardens became even more of a blessing during periods when their activity was restricted due to Covid surges. Consequently, when the

Friends decided to present Lori with a gardening encyclopedia, we canvassed Unitarian House residents for contributions and circulated the book for signing a tribute. And we were allowed to hold the potluck in the House courtyard where we were provided with the set-up of tables and chairs.



Photo credit: Colleen Glass

The day was sunny and warm and perfect for applauding Lori's leadership style that was described as "Zen-like"- thoughtful, calm, and collegial.

Lori's legacy will be for single-handedly implementing a brilliant design by Betty Campbell, long-

time *Friend* of the gardens, for an innovative new watering system.

Betty's idea was to use the existing topography of the gardens to erect watering stations with shutoff valves that could bring water from the church throughout the area without the tiresome need to drag and connect

heavy, cumbersome hoses. The plan was realized in the summer of 2020 because of Lori's resourcefulness in researching, obtaining, and fitting the appropriate plumbing mechanisms.

From the *Friends* and all who visit and appreciate the gardens — thank you Lori and Betty for your contributions to enriching our precious green oasis.

~ submitted by Susan Mellor on behalf of *Friends of the Meditation Gardens*



Lori and Betty (photo credit: Colleen Glass)



'Building Back Better' After COVID

How do we re-build our community after COVID? And better yet, how do we build back even better, ensuring our community is both inclusive and welcoming? These are the questions that members of our Leadership Council pondered at its recent meeting on November 2nd.

This was Rev. Eric's first Leadership Council meeting and in his opening remarks, he encouraged us to be bold. But he also pointed out that FirstU is an awkward size: we're big enough to think we can do everything, but small enough that we don't have the resources to do everything we want to do. That means we need to set priorities and focus on the unique things we can

do that differentiate us in the eyes of the larger community.

In addition to receiving updates on the 2022 budget and the Pledge campaign, the Leadership Council heard about the exciting new technology, the Kandao Box, that's available through the office and will help make hybrid meetings a workable option. The Embracing Diversity Committee also presented its new Welcoming Guide, an important tool for helping us become more intentionally inclusive.

As for those discussions on re-building our community, there were many ideas put forward, including offering more small group activities such as Chalice Groups and adult

learning courses and holding more fun, multi-generational events. We're now in the process of looking at how we move forward with those ideas - stay tuned for more information.

The Leadership Council includes the leaders of all our teams, action groups and committees. members of the Board, senior staff and the Committee on Shared Ministry that organizes the meetings. Its meetings are open - if you're interested in becoming a leader, or interested in learning more about how the congregation operates, please consider coming to one of our meetings.

~ submitted by Eva Berringer on behalf of the Leadership Council



Photo from Remic Rapids: Artist John Ceprano

Published quarterly, **The Parkway Spire** welcomes unformatted articles (**maximum 450 words please**) along with photos* (high resolution jpg format is preferred) that are of interest to the congregation. We also encourage the submission of one feature article for each issue of the Spire, **maximum 900 words**. Articles may be edited if necessary. Submissions should be sent to spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication. Next submission deadline: **February 15, 2022**.





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