



# First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa

# The Parkway Spire

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Deadline for next Spire submissions:  
February 15, 2023



## In Memoriam

- Jean Marie Ahmed** ~ 6 August 1930 - 10 September 2022, wife of the late Farid, mother of Peter and Susan
- Pauline Angela Hadfield Ives** ~ 16 September 2022 (at 91), wife of Jack, mother of Nadine, Tony, Colin and Peter
- Nancy Jane Scarth** ~ 1 November 1928 - 1 October 2022, wife of the late Lloyd, mother of Jean, George and Robert
- Marilyn Ann (Marnie) Girvan** ~ 5 October 2022 (at 82) in Guelph, mother of Scott and Glen
- Margaret (Margot) Morley Broddy Clarke** ~ 13 September 1929 - 18 October 2022, mother of Andrew, Beth and Jeffrey; former wife of the late Alan Clarke (2007)
- George William Argus** ~ 14 April 1929 - 21 October 2022, husband of Mary, father of Eric, John, Martin, Rebecca. Predeceased by his son, Michael.

## 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"*

The Caring Network

### December 2022

Paul McGinnis <a href="mailto:paulmcginnis9@gmail.com">paulmcginnis9@gmail.com</a> 613-829-7156	Maryan O'Hagan <a href="mailto:maryan.ohagan@rogers.com">maryan.ohagan@rogers.com</a> 613-729-7752
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### January 2023

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### February 2023

Evelyn Algar <a href="mailto:evelyn.algar@rogers.com">evelyn.algar@rogers.com</a> 613-728-5761	Amy McKay <a href="mailto:amymckay@outlook.com">amymckay@outlook.com</a> (819)213-6220
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## Facing Windows

~ Rev. Eric Meter

I would be much more of an ungrateful fool than usual if I did not devote this column to thanks for all those who made our installation ceremony in October such a success.

As I've said repeatedly now, the stole you gave me for the occasion deserves to be stored in a glass case. It really is museum quality. That said, you will see me wear it, as I've been assured that it was made to be worn. I don it with pride and gratitude.

I was heartened to have colleagues from across Canada with us for the event, especially Rev. Kathleen Fowler, with whom I worked closely back in the States, and two of your former ministerial interns, Rev. Debra Faulk and Rev. George Buchanan. (Debra and I met several years ago when we both served on the UU Partner Church Council Board, and George served a congregation in Cleveland, Ohio when I began working at the church in Columbus, Ohio. I love how connected we often are as a faith tradition.)

That said, perhaps the greatest surprise of the event came a couple days afterward when the congregation's Facility Manager Lori Clarke asked to speak with me about the celebration and indicated that I should sit down. "Uh oh," I thought. "I'm in trouble now."

Instead, she said that she hadn't been clear on what the format of the afternoon would be. She had written something for the occasion, and she wanted to share it with me.

With her permission, this is what she read to me:



*As the Facility Manager at FirstU since Feb. 2013, I have been asked to do many things to keep this wonderful sanctuary clean and maintained.*

*Being in the maintenance field for more than 30 years, I am a hands-on person and have the skills to work with many hand and power tools.*

*Recently though, I was confused when I was told we were going to have an Eric installation.*

*What did that mean? What tools am I going to need for that job? In all my years, I have never been asked to install an Eric before.*

*So, like many of us today, when we want to know how to do something, we ask Google.*

*And so, I did. I entered 'How to install an Eric?' And ta-da, would you know it is really a thing.*

*Apparently after a comprehensive search, and the decision is made to obtain an Eric, you must download the package and extract the zip file. An Eric is a superior product and*

*has many features. To install, first you go to preferences in the drop-down menu, open the command prompt, and hit enter. Cut and paste the path of the folder location and type install. Wait while the program is downloading. When the installation is complete, you will see a message "Welcome Eric".*

*Welcome to our congregation Eric and congratulations on being selected as the settled minister. As of today, you have been officially 'installed'.*

*I hope you, and your wife (and family) will be happy in our country, in our city, Ottawa our nation's capital. I hope you will appreciate our seasons, experience our culture and witness the similarities and differences that make us 'proud to be Canadian'.*

*You have been trusted to lead the congregation into the future with a gentle hand. For you, I hope the congregation remembers and graciously accepts that nothing and no one is perfect. As FirstU moves along the path of planting the seeds of change, may we be patient and respectful. Let us work as one as we evolve and improve.*

*So apparently, for this installation, I didn't need the tools of my trade like my hammer, screw gun or pliers but I stand here before you with loving hands, an open heart and acceptance.*

*Lori Clarke*

*PS: I promise that I won't hit you too hard. Screw you in too tight OR pry you in the wrong direction.*

*Lori, on top of everything else, you made my week, if not my month. As I told her then, I had no idea she had such a great sense of humour.*

*My best to her, and to all of you. Onward!*

*In shared faith,  
~ Rev. Eric*



# Splinters from the Board ~ Brent Nicolle



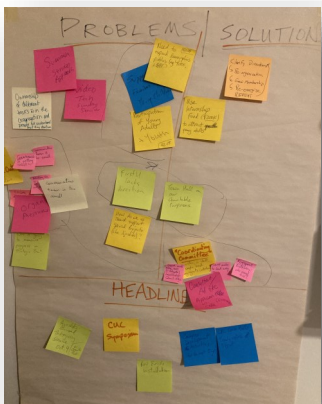
As a congregation, we really do have a lot going on. It was since the last Spire deadline that the board held an offsite retreat. That was back in late August, and since then we have had an installation ceremony, a town hall, and a fall fair. We have marched in the Pride Parade, celebrated Thanksgiving with the Ajashki team, raised our voices in a climate strike, and learned about the history of colonization. You could be forgiven for losing track of time and not catching all of it.

But let me go back to that board retreat in August, held at my home. The nine of us (Amy, Brent, Carl, Caycee, David, Lisa, Mary Ella, Phil and Reverend Eric) spent a few precious hours thinking about the congregational year ahead and reviewing some key documents like the Strategic Five-Year Plan that was initiated last year. Then we brainstormed the big issues that we would face at FirstU, and whether there would be any obvious solutions to address those issues.

Some things we knew in advance would seize our collective attention sooner or later: holding the first Fall Fair since COVID, hosting the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) Symposium, presenting a master concept plan to the congregation. And of course, some things we know we cannot predict – problems that pop up like Whack-A-Mole – will seize our attention until resolved. But there are some things that won't grab our attention unless we seek them out.

We arrived at three big challenges:

1. Aging demographics of our membership;
2. A perceived lack of clarity in our direction;
3. An alarming collapse of some groups due to leader fatigue.



This was a daunting list for sure! (And we are in good company... many other congregations have similar problems.)

Nevertheless, soon a four-word pathway crystallized before us:

## Refocus, Reorganize, Re-energize, Grow

Refocus to make sure FirstU is working on things important to its mission. Reorganize to make sure that we don't drop any important activities if we have fewer volunteers available. Re-energize by offering time-limited projects to new volunteers with limited availability. Grow by attracting people who share our focus and our enthusiasm.

That pathway isn't easy. Reorganizing, in particular, may take some time for proper consultation, so I ask for your patience. I also hope you notice a few seedlings sprouting. A discussion on charitable purposes at our Fall Congregational Meeting should sharpen our focus. Activities like the Fall Fair and the CUC Symposium provide opportunities to re-energize. Welcoming and engaging with the newcomers that we see every week is a chance to grow, in more ways than one.

I'd love to hear your thoughts.

~ submitted by Brent Nicolle, President  
[president@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:president@firstunitarianottawa.ca)



## Musical Interludes ~ Jenn Berntson



It's been wonderful to be back to working with all our choirs on a regular basis - since the pandemic began, this is the longest uninterrupted stretch of rehearsals we have had! We have been delighted to welcome new members to all three choirs, to have reinstated snack time in Chalice, and to have been able to regularly contribute music to services throughout the fall. I have also enjoyed some of the changes to music in the service, including opening the service with congregational singing every week and singing the children out each Sunday.

The choirs have an upcoming concert on Dec. 4 at 4:30 p.m., entitled "Into the Light". This concert will feature music around the themes of hope, loss, renewal, and perseverance; it should leave you feeling uplifted for the season. Some highlights to look forward to:

- The premiere performance of an arrangement of Neil Young's Harvest Moon, written by Ottawa composer Ellen Badcock, just for FirstU!
- Inspiring pieces centered around social justice, including selections from the Justice Choir Songbook and an arrangement for voices and body percussion of folk trio Low Lily's "Hope Lingers On".
- Susan Labarr's beautiful and moving Advent piece "Where the Light Begins".
- An irreverent and spirited ode to the Newfoundland tradition of "mumming".
- Some seasonal audience sing-a-longs to close out the concert.

And then, December 11 will be my last service at FirstU before I begin my maternity leave. I'm looking forward to this next new adventure, and I'd like to thank everyone for their support and excitement. I look forward to returning in September 2023 - I'm sure the time will fly!

*With song,*

*~ Jenn*

*The choirs of First Unitarian present*

# Into the Light



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 4:30 P.M.**  
ADMISSION BY DONATION

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA  
30 CLEARY AVENUE

*Masks required*



# Religious Exploration ~ Neo Yaxley



## CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Join us every Sunday at 10 am for UU Faith-based lessons

**We are happy to announce that we are back to offering two programs each Sunday to meet the needs of our participants. Bring your kids and grandkids!**

**The UU Kids group (8 to 12) will meet in Room #14  
Chalice Playkids (2 to 7) will meet in Room # 4**

**Please check the e-UU ( weekly news) for program details or join our Facebook page.**

**We are seeking facilitators for Kindergarten OWL and Coming of Age.  
Please get in touch with [dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca) for more information. We can't do it without your involvement.**

*~ submitted by Neo Yaxley [dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca)*



## FirstU's New Program: Messy Church

"The more we get together, the happier we'll be" are the words we sing when we meet at Messy Church!

Parents and Grandparents of children 0-8 years old are welcome to join us at 10 am on the first Sunday of each month for this new breakfast program. So far, we have had about 16 children, 3 grandparents and 6 parents attend. After our singalong, we head to Room 4 where we participate in all kinds of amazing art projects that usually involve getting messy! We often head outdoors to play afterwards.

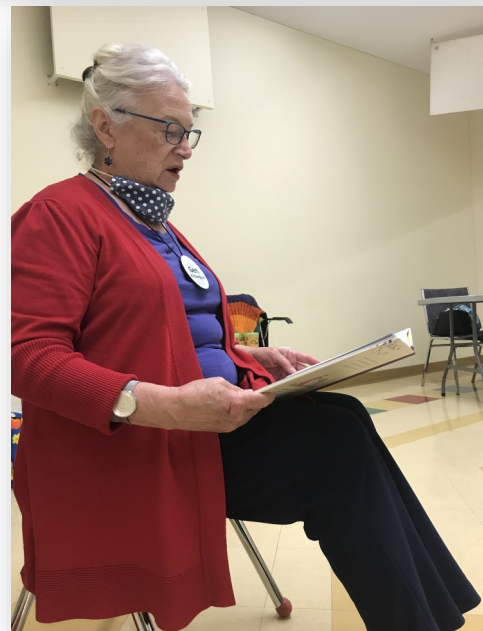
In October, the Men's Group made us delicious pancakes for breakfast; Mary Ella came to play her guitar; and Jodi brought her drum.

In November we had a pyjama party camping adventure where we sang songs around the fire and played in a tent. Our special storyteller, Geri Richardson, read to us a book called *Raj and the Best Vacation Ever*, by Sebastien Braun. This was a story about a tiger cub and his dad who go camping and have some problems; but then a large noisy bear family helps them out when they get into serious trouble.

Our next Messy Church will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. Feel free to bring your friends!

For more information contact Neo at: [dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:dre@firstunitarianottawa.ca).

~ submitted by Lisa Sharp



## Meet a Member: Guy Belleperche



Born in Kitchener and raised in Ontario – mostly North Bay and Kapuskasing, Guy has a younger brother living in Ottawa and with whom Guy remains close.

Guy arrived in Ottawa in the summer of 1989, after earning an engineering degree with a specialty in metallurgy from Queen's University in Kingston. He began a long career with the federal government, retiring in 2019. Guy earned a second degree from Queen's in 2006: a Master of Public Administration.

Guy and his future wife, Meghan, met playing paintball with a group in early 1991, although Meghan doesn't remember this! She does, however, remember meeting Guy again later in the summer of 1991 at a wedding ceremony at FirstU. Guy and Meghan have been together ever since, and they have two children – a 26-year-old daughter and a son who is almost 25. An Ottawa resident, their son is a University of Ottawa graduate working in business development. Their

daughter, a Carleton graduate, is currently doing her PhD in chemistry at McGill. Guy and Meghan are very proud of both of their children.

Guy's introduction to FirstU was through the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program. He started as an overnight volunteer and became more and more involved with the program. He began attending service with Meghan and the kids soon after his father died in early 2004. Guy was searching for something to fill the void and FirstU fit the bill. Some of the sermons were challenging, but always left Guy with something to think about.

UUism continues to challenge Guy to be a better person. At FirstU over the years Guy has been an OWL facilitator, youth advisor, committee member and chair of multiple committees, including: Embracing Diversity, Finance, Communications and Outreach, and Governance, which he currently co-chairs. He has also served as the congregation's president.

Guy's hobbies are reading, movies, a lot of walking and keeping up with friends and family. Both Guy and Meghan are devotees of Disney and Universal and have visited Orlando at least 20 times since 2005. Having been involved with several not-for-profit professional associations while with the federal government, Guy maintains friendships with many of the people he met through these associations.

Guy has been, and is once again a worship associate at FirstU, and was recently called to be a lay chaplain for the congregation. Guy's hope for the future is that FirstU will still exist in 20 years. He would like to see us maintain our existing membership numbers and continue to attract new members of various age groups. He is looking forward to seeing the campus development plans proceed, and the continuation of our work on reconciliation, the eighth principle, and climate justice. Finally, Guy is really looking forward to seeing how Rev. Eric works with us to shape our future over the coming years.

*~ submitted by Andrew Drake*



### Thanks, Merci, Miigwetch

- ♥ Big Kudos to **Carol Card and all the FF Team Coordinators** who worked so hard to make the Fall Fair a successful community building and fundraising event!
- ♥ Gratitude goes out to **Jane Lindsay, Eva Berringer, Amy Bérubé, and Jen Brennan** for organizing Eric's installation service - and **to Jane Lindsay and Colleen Glass** for his stunning stole.
- ♥ A huge thanks to all the **FirstU Staff** who support this beloved community through all the twists and turns of the pandemic.
- ♥ And much appreciation goes out to **the Friends of the Meditation Gardens** for their hard work all spring, summer and fall to keep our gardens looking beautiful—now ready for winter's blanket of snow—to sleep!

## Some Unique Ways to Give

As the annual pledge campaign for 2023 wraps up in December, it is timely to remind you of other ways you can financially support the congregation. The pledge campaign mailing included a Legacy Giving brochure that describes two such ways, bequests (gifts by will) and beneficiary designations. The same information is on our website at:

<https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/legacy-giving.html>

Legacy gifts have become a significant source of revenue for the congregation. From 2019 to the present, the congregation has received bequests with a total value of \$754,100 from the Estates of Ann Denis, Don & Renee Saxon, Alastair Henderson, Doris Smith, and Doris Jelly. Thank you! Some of this income is used for current needs and the rest of it is invested for future needs or specific purposes, contributing greatly to our long-term financial sustainability.

It is also possible, and can be advantageous, to make legacy gifts during your lifetime. Two congregants have done this in the last 2-3 years, donating a total of \$150,000. And another congregant transferred ownership of a life insurance policy to FirstU, so that the congregation will receive the death benefit.

The congregation can also receive gifts of securities, such as stocks and mutual fund assets. Donating securities can eliminate the capital gains tax that a donor might otherwise have to pay.

For more information on any of these giving options, contact our Finance Manager, Michelle Jackson, at [fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:fm@firstunitarianottawa.ca).

~ submitted by Maury Prevost on behalf of the Stewardship and Finance teams

## Seeking Spiritually Grounded, Theologically Alive Testimonials

Are you a proud Unitarian Universalist, interested in helping us define what we believe at FirstU? We're looking for congregants to record a personal video testimony (with minimum 1920x1080 pixels) that briefly answers all or most of the following questions in four minutes or less. Allison, our Communications specialist, will then edit parts of received videos into new media that we can display on our website and YouTube channel, as well as share on social media to give the public an idea of who we are as a spiritually diverse congregation.

My answers (Carl Sonnen) are provided below as a personal example of how I would answer these questions:

1. What is my name and faith background?

*I was raised as Anglican but converted to the United Church in 1987, when I could not accept the Anglican church policy, at that time, on gay marriage. I spent a semester in the University of Toronto Master of Divinity program in anticipation of becoming a United Church minister. However, I was interested in more than just a strictly Christian approach to religion and after studying the writings of Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi, I began to study prolifically in other faith traditions. After performing an internet search for pluralistic faith communities, I settled on Unitarian Universalism and began attending a UU congregation in Toronto and after moving to Ottawa I connected with FirstU Ottawa.*

2. What got me interested in Unitarian Universalism?

*I've always been spiritually engaged, serving as an altar boy at the Anglican church. Several spiritual epiphanies or 'unique religious experiences' have led me to a more inclusive, open, liberal, and inquisitive investigation into religion and spirituality in general. FirstU is the perfect environment to share what I believe and where I have unlimited opportunity to learn and grow from the equally valid and unique perspectives of others.*

3. How do my other faiths and Unitarian Universalism complement each other?

*I love that Unitarian Universalism is open to so many different spiritual, philosophical, cultural and scientific perspectives and respects and appreciates diversity of opinion, insight, spirituality, religion, culture, nature and so many other things*

Please send all completed videos to the email address below and if the video is too large to send by email, please upload to your favorite online file sharing service and send the link to the file to: [publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca)

Subject line of the email should be: 'FirstU Spirituality Video – and your first and last name.'

For those unsure of how to record a personal video or who need assistance in doing so, please contact [communications@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:communications@firstunitarianottawa.ca) - attention Carl.

~ submitted by Carl Sonnen





# Fall Fair Back Again!

Our beloved Fall Fair returned on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, after two years interruption during the height of the pandemic. It was wonderful to be able to work together again to welcome eager shoppers to FirstU's annual fundraising sale. Owing to the hard work of over 250 volunteers, many of whom are from outside our congregation, the day was a great success.

Fall Fair planning involved extra challenges this year because of the ongoing COVID situation. To ensure good ventilation, we opted to use only our larger rooms, which meant that some of our usual sales areas did not operate this year and others moved to new locations. Conveners and their teams adapted to the changes with good cheer and resourcefulness. Mask-wearing was

mandatory, as it is currently for all gatherings in the building, and we had excellent compliance with that safeguard. Although some shoppers didn't arrive with a mask, none objected to wearing one when it was offered.

In the week leading up to the sale, our valiant volunteers did a myriad of tasks to get ready, from setting up tables and sorting aprons to preparing food and pricing items. On Fall Fair day, the first shoppers were at the door by 7:30 a.m., even though the sale didn't start for another two hours. Well over a hundred people lined up before start time and were grateful for the coffee and conversation offered by Rev. Eric as they waited. The day went well, although proceeds were lower than at past Fall Fairs because of the smaller

number of booths, lower donations and fewer shoppers overall.

For many new members and newcomers at FirstU, this was their first experience of the Fall Fair. We hope they enjoyed their involvement as much as we enjoyed working with and getting to know them.

While the Fall Fair is certainly a fundraiser, it also aims to create community and to redistribute goods to those in need in the community. All three of those purposes were achieved with brio! Thanks again to all who helped in any way. We plan to continue our Fall Fair tradition next year, of course, with the sale date already set for Saturday, November 18, 2023.

*~ submitted by Carol Card, Fall Fair Director*



## News from the Social Justice Action Network (SJAN)

### Environmental Action Group: Is it Time for Clutter-Free Giving?

The Holiday season is upon us! Surrounded by the powerful influence of corporate advertising, it is not difficult to be sucked into the gift-giving excitement. Yet with greater environmental awareness we recognize that many of these purchases are made using plastics and scarce resources including water and land, while exploiting underpaid human labour, and having produced high levels of carbon and other toxic emissions. We also foresee that many will end up in a closet, a donation box, or the landfill. How can we continue to experience the pleasure of giving others joy without it being at the expense of our planet?

It is time to ask whether any of us really need "more stuff" in beautiful, but environmentally costly wrapping. Perhaps it is time to look at "Clutter-Free Giving".

Ponder the gift of experiences... Perhaps tickets to concerts, theatre, or sporting events; or participatory passes for golf, hiking or indoor rock climbing. Purchase a gift card for a favourite restaurant. Think of once-in-a-lifetime experiences like a hot air balloon ride, a day of white water rafting or zip-lining across the Ottawa River. Research some of Ottawa's Scavenger Hunt Challenges, or a "Surprise Trip".

Who wouldn't enjoy the offering of a gift of service? Suggest a Day at the Spa, or even a massage or manicure. Perhaps the recipient would value a car wash or detailing, or a yard cleanup. Often most appreciated is the gift of one's own time... think things like an IOU for babysitting, yard or house cleaning, or prepared meals.

Maybe the perfect gift is the gift of learning. Offer a weekend workshop or weekly classes at the local community center, in things from learning Greek and cooking, to dance, music, painting or working with clay. Or how about a physical trainer? We could include here gifts of memberships, at a variety of Ottawa's museums, the Water Park, or Trail Passes for Gatineau Park.

And who doesn't love the gift of consumables? Contemplate edibles like fruit baskets, chocolates, or cheese. If you focus on special local foods, beverages or other treats from a farmer's market, brew pub or small entrepreneur, a bonus is the support of local business. Or consider plant related consumables, like flowers, potted plants, or bulbs and an offer to plant. Or offer to help design and plant a pollinator garden.

Most of these can be sent to the recipient digitally...totally clutter free... but if you prefer a more personal gifting, design your own accompanying card with personal art, computer generated art or using old cards.

For further hints for a green Christmas, see last's year's Holiday Hints for a Green Christmas in the Personal Enrichment "To Act" Section:

<https://www.firstunitarianottawa.ca/to-act.html>

~ submitted by Donna Bowen-Willer, EAG

### Justice Equality and Action Group: Report on Current Threats to Ontario Health Care

On November 14, 2022, I attended the first meeting of a new group, tentatively called the "Interfaith Committee to Protect Public Health Care for All". Participants included those from a wide range of faith communities, such as Jewish, Anglican and the United Church. This group has been organized by the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), and our objective is to amplify the voices of health care workers, health care users and especially the most vulnerable populations in Ontario.

We discussed current threats to our health care system by the Ontario government, including the looming privatization of hospitals, long term care facilities, public health departments, and health services such as cataract surgery, to name just a few.

Under the Canadian Health Act, Canadians are not supposed to be charged for health care services. The fundamental principle of compassion and access to health care for all those who need it, regardless of income is under attack. The Ontario government's tactics are largely based on cutting funding to emergency health care services, including in our children's hospitals such as CHEO.

We also discussed the need to work across sectors, such as taking to the streets to support Education Workers against the recent attack with Bill 28, where the Ontario government enacted the Notwithstanding Clause in an attempt to eliminate the right to strike and bargain collectively. Every single union in Ontario is at risk and we need to galvanize faith groups in support of these workers.

The OHC has a history of action in the healthcare sector. They have recently stopped closures of small rural hospitals and birthing centres. In the coming weeks and months, they are hosting 13 townhall meetings and rallies across Ontario to raise awareness among Ontario residents, including one in Ottawa (date to be announced).

As well, the OHC is launching a Charter Challenge regarding Bill 7, which took away seniors' right to informed consent for placement in a long-term care facility; as well as to Bill 124 which limited health care workers' wage increases to 1 percent a year for three years.

Our hope is that faith communities across Ontario will come out to rallies and strike actions in the coming months as various sectors come under attack.

~ submitted by Lisa Sharp, Chair, JEAG



# Learning from History: Why Treaties Still Matter

November 6-12<sup>th</sup> marked Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario. Given the long and devastating history of colonial settlement on unceded Algonquin land, also known as Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec, let us take a moment to reflect on the Treaty of Niagara. This was the first treaty after the British laid claim to most of North America, signed in 1764 by 24 First Nations (including Algonquin people) and the British Crown, represented by William Johnson. It was recorded both in written English and in the wampum tradition of its Indigenous signatories.

The Canadian Encyclopedia explains further: “The Niagara agreement was entered into the wampum. Approximately 84 wampum belts were exchanged during the treaty council representing negotiations between various First Nations. At the conclusion of the council, Johnson presented a Covenant Chain wampum belt to the Western Confederacy. The two figures holding hands on the belt symbolized friendship and alliance that bind Indigenous nations and the Crown, while the hexagons represented council fires. Johnson presented the Twenty-Four Nations Wampum to the nations. It symbolically showed they were all in a relationship.”

“It is significant that this meeting is taking place on Algonquin land. Our people never surrendered these lands; nevertheless, we are being pressured to remain on reserves. This is not what our ancestors intended. This covenant, which was made with the English and French Nations, that is contained in the wampum belt, may have faded from your memories, but it has not yet faded from ours.

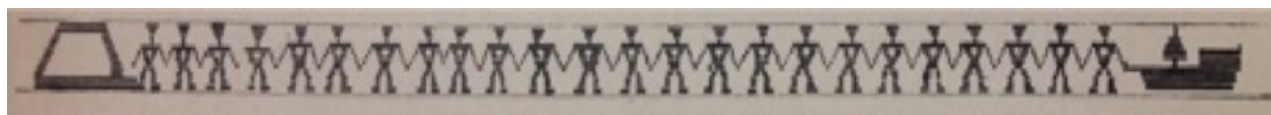
It was agreed at the time that the Indian nations would always be leaders in their homeland. Anything that was supposed to be negotiated would have to be negotiated with the Indian People, regarding the jurisdictions and how to deal with each other respecting equality of each nation; that the Indian people would always be the leaders of this continent.”

Treaties Recognition Week was launched by the province to increase treaty awareness and provide the public with an opportunity to learn why treaties matter. A treaty means more than a legal claim to land, put down in writing. In the wampum tradition, a treaty is also alive and relational. For those adhering to this tradition, the act of presenting a wampum belt and conveying its meaning is a sacred one. It also ensures the continuity of an oral tradition that is as important to



“A Two-Row Wampum belt was given to Johnson by the First Nations. It indicated Indigenous understandings of the treaty and the Proclamation.”

the Algonquin people as written laws and spiritual texts are to Canadian society. Learning and talking about the Treaty of Niagara is an act, within itself, of preserving it.



Although the Treaty of Niagara is not codified law in Canada, it did represent the law of the land that established British Colonial rule more than 100 years before Confederation. And its significance remains today, more than 250 years later. At a 1987 First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters, the Algonquin delegation, including Elder William Commanda, were the first to speak after the Prime Minister. Here are some of their words from that day:

Jody Wilson-Raybould, our first Indigenous Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, has stated that for true reconciliation to happen, Canadians need to learn, understand, and act. Perhaps as we learn more about treaties and the wampum tradition, we can use our imaginations to envision respectful relationships with our Indigenous neighbours – what would our wampum belt look like, if we were to offer one to the Algonquin people today?

~ submitted by Michael Lloyd and Jan Andrews, Truth and ReconciliAction Group

# Update on Hosting the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) Symposium and Youth Conference in May 2023



We are busy organizing the program for the May 19-21, 2023, national Symposium in Ottawa on *Living into the 8th Principle*. The Ottawa Host Team from the FirstU Congregation of Ottawa and the UU Fellowship of Ottawa are working with CUC staff and volunteers to create a memorable experience, both virtual and in-person for you.

Held at Algonquin College, the weekend, with something for all ages, will include a children's program for ages 0–13 years. The youth conference, CanUUdle, will take place at FirstU. You can also find events for young adults, a bridging ceremony, and an afternoon of multigenerational activities throughout the weekend.

Parts of the Symposium will be live-streamed – the Opening Ceremony, the Confluence Lecture by Rev. Julie Stoneberg on the topic of *Open Minds/Closed Doors*, and the Sunday morning service. The main program streams on Saturday will be multi-

platform. Watch for more details in the coming months, in both FirstU and CUC communications, especially the e-UU weekly newsletter at FirstU. Registration for all the events opens at the end of January 2023.

Some volunteer roles that the Host Team would like to fill as soon as possible are (can be one or more people):

- Organization of the Opening Ceremony and banner parade
- Organization of a Saturday evening social event, e.g., talent show
- Coordination of the Sunday worship service (others will be responsible for the content).

The pending details will include more information about other volunteer opportunities, but here are some examples:

- Overnight supervisors and kitchen team for the youth conference at FirstU
- Volunteers for the children's program at the Symposium site, led by the Children's Program Director, e.g., caregivers and facilitators
- People to host Symposium participants in their homes (provide a bed)
- Volunteers for registration, welcoming, and providing information
- Drivers for errands, runners for onsite tasks, meal ticket takers, ushers for Sunday service
- People for the Symposium (Sunday service) choir and other music

- Technical support for the Annual General Meeting, Opening Ceremony, Sunday Service, and other hybrid (live-streamed or zoom) events.

If you would like to volunteer, and have not already done so, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Kathy Yach, at:

[cityviewky@rogers.com](mailto:cityviewky@rogers.com) or 613-224-6835.

For other information about the Symposium or for answers to questions, contact Host Team Lead, Maury Prevost at:

[uuconnections@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:uuconnections@firstunitarianottawa.ca)

## OWL – Plans for Facilitator Training After the Symposium

There are plans to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL) Lifespan Sexuality Education facilitator training immediately after the 2023 CUC Symposium (from Monday May 22<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday May 24<sup>th</sup>) for up to three levels of training: children's OWL, youth OWL, and adult OWL. We are trying to determine levels of interest, so if you are interested or would like more information, please contact:

[owl@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:owl@firstunitarianottawa.ca)

There is a good description of OWL on our website at:

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

~ submitted by Maury Prevost on behalf of the Host Team



# Emergency Preparedness at FirstU Ottawa

Last Victoria Day weekend gave us a word derived from Spanish to describe a climate emergency. Derecho: “a widespread, long-lived, straight-line windstorm associated with severe thunderstorms, hurricane force winds, tornados, and flash floods.” Indeed, our Derecho pummeled its way through the most heavily populated regions from Windsor to Quebec City, causing power outages for over a million people, loss of internet services, cancelled flights, downed trees and damage to homes and buildings. Then, in September, the Atlantic provinces were devastated by hurricane Fiona, leaving thousands to cope with loss of power, washed out roads, and damage to homes, businesses, and coastal infrastructure. And repair of damages is taking a much longer time and costing more than ever before.

Climate change is bringing more severe weather conditions, which may result in extreme heat, flooding, power outages, building damage, downed trees, etc. The Ottawa area specifically is prone to major storms, both in winter and summer. In some cases, FirstU and its campus may be

directly affected; in other cases, surrounding communities may experience more severe damage. FirstU needs to be able to respond to meeting its own needs as well as those of congregants and of the community at large.

FirstU’s Environment Action Group (EAG) has recently convened a small team to look at how to increase awareness of the problems, sharing information with congregants about action they can take as individuals, and consulting with others on how we can improve FirstU’s response for the congregation and the broader community. Key questions we’re asking are:

- How do we respond to ensure our building is safe & usable? What about our campus partners? Does our current emergency plan need updating?
- How do we identify which members need help and who can provide help?
- Can our building be used for temporary shelter, an electronic

charging centre, etc.? Should we have a generator?

- For the larger community, what are the criteria to decide whether FirstU should act?
- What value-added can FirstU provide to the response/clean-up?

As a first step, each of us can start our own plan and we encourage everyone to consult the city website on emergency preparedness. It has a wealth of information on what to include in your emergency kit from important family documents, pet preparedness, car kit, first aid, to food & water.

<https://ottawa.ca/en/health-and-public-safety/emergency-preparedness/emergency/checklists-emergency-preparedness>

*~ submitted by Sherri Watson on behalf of the EAG Emergency Preparedness Team: Eva Berringer, Glenys Elliot, Lena Jones, Margaret Linton, Sherri Watson*



Published quarterly, **The Parkway Spire** welcomes unformatted articles (**maximum 450 words please**) along with photos (high resolution jpg format is preferred) of interest to the congregation. We also welcome 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](mailto:spire@firstunitarianottawa.ca) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication. Next submission deadline: **February 15, 2023**.





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**Next deadline for submissions: February 15, 2023**

## Subscriptions

Electronic subscriptions are free, contact: [publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca](mailto:publications@firstunitarianottawa.ca)

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