

Fellowship News

Infolettre UUFO

WINTER ISSUE

DECEMBER 2022



Roots Hold Me Close

By Sarah Baxter



The roots of our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition spread wider underground than we often realize. Though we sometimes feel like a lone tree, standing tall, reaching for the sun, under ground our roots are connected to those

who have come before, and those across the meadow, in the forest, not so far away. We are one with our fellow UUs, rooted together in our search for meaning, truth, and a just and compassionate world.

Vyda Ng loves being the Executive Director of the Canadian Unitarian Council, because of the opportunities to make connections, form relationships, invite and create inclusion, and create change. In February, we will be exploring our UU Roots, and our CUC connections. As an organization focused on the movement that binds us

together, the CUC tends to our roots: supporting each tree by focusing on the systems connecting us to one another.

“I love being able to connect with UU Communities, to hear about the work that they are doing with youth and young adults, and to collaborate on projects, trainings, and problem solving.” Says Rev. Danielle Webber, one of the CUC’s Youth and Young Adult Ministry team. “... youth leaders are incredibly thoughtful, compassionate and grounded in covenant practices.”

Rev. Danielle spent their education focusing on multigenerational, multicultural faith formation, recognizing that we can create moments of meaning-making no matter what we are doing, and how we are gathered. Through leaning into interdependence, and recognizing that faith formation can happen everywhere, UUs can become radically inclusive in creating space within our communities for those already here, and those joining.

What is it about Unitarian Universalism that resonates with you? For Vyda, it’s “a faith with the opportunity to ask questions, where our tradition is a living one.” As well as “the commitment to love, justice and equity.”

Roots hold me close. Wings set me free. *What grounds you to our UU faith?*

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Caring and Sharing



Nick, Fran, and newest grandbaby, Maeve

This November, our fellowship members' families grew once again!

Nick and Fran are delighted to welcome 8 lb. 5 oz. granddaughter Maeve to the family. Born Nov. 5, Maeve is their second grandchild.

From **Pat and Gary**: When our family moved to Ottawa in 1998 and joined the Fellowship, our youngest child **Max** was 3 1/2 years old. Many of you will recall him as an "RE kid", and later as a young adult who regularly participated in Fellowship social events throughout his busy teen and university years. With the birth of Baby **Theo**, Max and his partner **Tamara** have now entered their parenting years, much to the delight of their many friends and family members!



Tamara, Max, and baby Theo

Thank you from **Helmut** to everyone who came to the citizenship celebration for **Rodrigue and Pacifique** this fall. You helped to create a really celebratory atmosphere. It was a great joy to see how well Rodrigue and Pacifique have done and are doing. And being able to welcome **Maralene** as Rodrigue's new bride was icing on the cake.



Celebration time!



Marilynn & Helmut had a great visit with Gilles & Gord

Memories of Jean Ahmed

by Pat Lucey, with many thanks to Elinor, Louise, Lucie-Marie, and Marlene for sharing their fond memories of Jean.

Our much-loved founding member Jean Ahmed passed away at the age of 92 on September 10th, after a short illness. She and her late husband Farid had two children and five grandchildren.

Before she helped to start up and develop our Fellowship, Jean was a member at First Unitarian on Elgin Street, and then at the new building on Cleary Ave. She was a strong supporter of the Fellowship, keen on having our own space, and delighted with the proposed partnership with Heartwood House -- even more so when our own space came to fruition. She was the Fellowship's bookkeeper and archivist for many years, and wrote the history of our early years.

Her husband was Egyptian by birth and a Muslim. They were comfortable with, and supported, each other's faiths. Louise remembers Jean "... insisting to Farid that the mosque the Muslim community was building in Ottawa MUST have a minaret. I think that it was going to add considerably to the cost of construction, but Jean felt that a minaret was absolutely necessary and Farid carried her opinion to their Board. The minaret stands today as a beautiful and distinctive reminder to Ottawans of the presence of the Muslim faith in our multicultural, multi-faith community."

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Marlene remembers that “Jean always welcomed visits from the UUFO Caring Circle, and since I lived nearby, I went to see her regularly. She was always interested in church news, and also was glad to remain mobile enough to take her wheelchair across to Garry Armstrong Long Term Care to see Farid after he was transferred there. Jean was amused to tell me that while he was still mobile and living in the Rockcliffe Residence, he wandered away and nobody could find him. They even called the police, until Jean suggested that they contact his mosque. There he was, after riding in two buses to get there - he had been instrumental in establishing the mosque, so knew very well where it was.”

Those among us who knew Jean remember her as quiet, understated, and involved and engaged, both in groups and individually. She was calm, considerate of others, and could always be depended on. From Lucie-Marie: “Jean is the one that welcomed me and my husband Jerome at the Fellowship in 2000. She greeted us with so much warmth and dignity that we decided to go back. She accepted that we would not sign our name in the visitor’s book with respect and discretion. She was always ready to listen to our questions, and her enlightening and calm answers were so appreciated. Jean

Jean Ahmed



taught me a lot about welcoming new members. I loved her so much that in turn I accepted to follow her steps. For me Jean is a ‘grand Lady’ that I will always remember!”

Jean’s obituary can be found online at: <https://ottawacitizen.remembering.ca/obituary/jean-ahmed-1086166910>

Engagement: The Many Ways We Are Connected

In October, the board led a worship service to kick off the annual pledge campaign. This year, Nick focused on the many ways in which we are engaged in our community.

There are so many ways we connect and contribute beyond financial contributions: volunteer roles, organizing roles, small groups for purpose and pleasure. Caring, singing, speaking at services; we **are** UUFO!

If there is a new role or group you would like to explore, reach out!

You are welcome!

Service Leader Tech
Membership Welcoming Newsletter
SAC Meditation
Worship Cluster Movies
CUC conference Board
Art Gallery Set up Affordable Housing
Adult RE Singing
Music Caring Circle
Pub Night Environment
Cercle de Criossance
Speaker
Inspiring Activities

Board Walk: A “This and That” Update

By Nick LePan, Board President

Feedback received

We had a very useful, well-attended meeting on the Board Retreat Report and member survey. Those present broadly agreed with the Board’s priorities. There were two additional take-aways for me. The first was the idea of broadening our music and singing possibilities beyond the hymnal. The return of singing and live music is truly wonderful. While many appreciate our well-known hymns, some described the hymnal as a bit ‘dusty’. I understand that previously we collected words (and music) to a variety of songs that fit our themes—and these are available in a cabinet in the store room for any service leaders. Expanding our repertoire a bit, both in the hymnal and beyond seems like good idea.

The worship cluster is pursuing, and you should see an expansion of our repertoire soon.

Second there were some great practical ideas re reaching out to potential new members. As the Board noted, our first priority has been supporting our renewal of spirit as we have been able to come together more in person. Soon I hope it will be time to reach out more and be more available to those who might want to give us a try. Of course Covid is not over and we will continue to follow public health requirements and guidance for everyone’s safety.

Pledge Campaign

As you read this the annual pledge campaign is in full swing. Thank you for being a part of UUFO and contributing in whatever ways you can. It was great to see at the Stewardship and Engagement service how so many people are involved in some way in Fellowship activities. We understand that this has been a very challenging year for everyone. UUFO’s needs remain the same, we also face challenges, and costs are rising. It is our hope that those who have not pledged in the past will consider doing so this year, and that those who have pledged last year will consider pledging a bit more. Your pledge helps us plan ahead and continue to provide our fellowship with quality services, and helps us contribute to the community at large. We’ll report on the results of the campaign soon.

I was particularly moved by the Quechan fable that was one of the readings at the October 23 service. (see p. 5)

New Support Roles!

We’ve had a few changes and additions to the team! We welcome Anne Hamilton to be our Zoom coordinator back-up. You may have seen her on the screen. Thanks Anne for handling several services already.

Sarah has also agreed to be our newly-defined Worship Planning Coordinator (in support of the Worship Cluster). If you are willing to be a service leader sometime between now and next June, if you would be willing to do that partnering with a more-experienced service leader, If you would like to speak at a service, or if you have an idea of someone who would be a great outside speaker, please contact Sarah.

Working in Partnership

Lastly we have had a recent Partnership Committee meeting with Heartwood House. This process, which is mandated by our agreement with Heartwood House focused on updating our understanding of major systems in the building that may need to be repaired or replaced over the next few years. At our next meeting we are going to focus more on how we can deepen and broaden the connection between the Fellowship and the organisations that make up Heartwood House.

As we head into the holiday season the Board wishes everyone happiness, inner peace and the best for the new year!



FUN WITH FINANCE!

85% of our income is from our membership donations via pledges. Where does the remaining **15%** come from?

(Find the answer later in this newsletter!)

The Story of the Hummingbird.

There is this huge forest being consumed by a fire. You can imagine the horror. All the animals in the forest come out and they are transfixed as they watch the forest burning, destroying their home. They feel very overwhelmed, very powerless. All except this little hummingbird.

The hummingbird flies to the nearest stream and takes one drop of water. It puts it on the fire, and goes up and down, up and down, up and down, as fast as it can. Each time with a drop of water. In the meantime all the other animals, much bigger animals—like the elephant with a big trunk that could bring much more water—they are standing there helpless.

And they are saying to the hummingbird, ‘What do you think you can do? You are too little. This fire is too big. Your wings are too little and your beak is so small that you can only bring a small drop of water at a time.’

But the hummingbird turns to them without wasting any time and says ‘I am doing what I can.’ I’m doing what I can.

Quechuan Fable, Ecuador

Worship Cluster Notes

By Pat Lucey

Holiday Celebrations: Christmas Day 2022 and New Year’s Day 2023 both fall on a Sunday this year. The last time this happened was in 2016, and Rev. Rod was with us back then as our half-time Developmental Minister. He took a strong lead in our holiday celebrations by organizing a Christmas Eve Celebration on Saturday evening, and a Christmas Morning Open House on Sunday morning. A week later, we had a New Year’s Day Celebration with fun and games and music, and a potluck dinner, starting at 4:30 pm.

The Board and the Worship Cluster have agreed that we will give ourselves, and our setup, tech, and Zoom hosting support teams, a couple of weeks off from organizing formal Christmas and New Year’s Day services, but we will offer the Sanctuary space to any members and friends who would like to hold some Fellowship holiday celebrations. If you would like to plan something for either of those days, contact Sarah at worship@uufufo.org for advice about the logistics and requirements for using our space.



Themes: As we prepare to settle into the depths of winter, our theme for the month of January will be

“Rest.” Most of us welcome a period of rest after the December holiday season, but this will also be a time for us to welcome the spiritual rest and renewal which a new year can bring. Following that, we will dedicate the month of February to exploring our **“UU Roots”**, with participation by some CUC leaders, who will guide us in deepening our understanding of our UU history, faith, traditions and identity.

Tech Update: We have received lots of positive feedback about the improvements to the visual presentation of our Sunday services – the Zoom session is now shifted over to a large screen, opening up the entire pulpit area again for use by the service leader, speakers, musicians, Joys and Sorrows, etc. The Fellowship has now purchased a new laptop, which will soon become a dedicated component of our audio-visual equipment, and will be permanently available for use by members and friends who have been trained in conducting hybrid services, meetings, or other types of presentations, from our Sanctuary.

And saving the best news of all for last is that Sarah will be joining our Worship team as our **Worship Coordinator** – yay! We’re very happy to welcome Sarah onto our team, and we’ll pass the baton to her now, so she can tell us about her new responsibilities...

(Continued on page 6)



And Worship Coordinating Too...

By Sarah Baxter

Hello again! Once again, I am writing to let you know that my role here at the Fellowship is changing. Growing, really. Since I started working here in the office in 2015, my areas of responsibility expanded to include much more coordinating of congregational life, when I first took on supporting Adult RE programming in 2018. Now, my programming and coordinating role will also include worship planning!

I'm excited to take on the newly created role of Worship Coordinator, as it puts me at the centre of all your logistical questions about worship planning. Who is planning the next worship? How do I volunteer to speak on a Sunday? Can I shadow an experienced service leader to try it out? I have a

great idea for a Sunday Service who do I tell? I am now the person to tell!

I will be working with the Worship Cluster who will continue to guide the planning of our Sunday Services, but much of the logistical coordinating, maintaining lists, and managing details can now be lifted from their capable shoulders, so they can focus on the quality thematic content we know and love.

So if you have a worship/programming question, ask me! And if you would like to participate in a Sunday service in any way, let me know!

worship@uufo.org

Worship Cluster Team:

Sarah Baxter (Worship Coordinator), Allison Calvern, Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower, Laura Evans, Pat Lucey (cluster contact), Katie Lunn (Board liaison), Martha Nabatian, Nancy Rubenstein.

Welcome and Membership

By Hoppy Roy

Finally, now that life is starting to return to normal, the Welcome and Membership Committee has some actual news to report! Our team, Carolle, Andrea and Hoppy had our first "in-person" planning meeting at the Fellowship in early September.

We want to thank Sarah in the office for her excellent help in so many ways, particularly in completing the new UUFO 2022-23 Directory. We also thank everyone who replied to our requests for updates and corrections and we trust the results are as correct as possible. If your name is in the directory, you are welcome to sign for and pick up your hard copy at the Newcomers' Table at the back of the Sanctuary.

With our return to more in-person participation we have also been printing name tags for anyone who didn't have one, or may have misplaced theirs over the past two years. Let us know if you still need a name tag! And in a new effort to enhance our welcoming practices, stickers are now available for you to add your preferred pronouns to your name tag should you so choose.

On Sunday, September 25, we held our first "New Member Ceremony" in over two years. We welcomed Bahram, and Liane in person as new members and also acknowledged Maire-

Claire who was not able to be with us in person. All three had been approved as members by the board back in June 2022 and all have been active with our Fellowship in various ways. Bahram is also a new board member, which is very good news!

Laura Evans ran the "New UU" series of seminars for newcomers to Unitarian Universalism. These were held over 4 weeks before the regular Sunday service. Two newcomers attended these sessions.

This little committee would love to expand by one or two new members. We generally meet twice a year (or as needed), work with the Sunday set-up teams to welcome visitors and newcomers, and with Sarah and the board to organize new member ceremonies, keep track of our UUFO Friends and Members and update our directory once a year. Please contact Hoppy, Carolle or Andrea either in person, or by email if interested.

Hoppy Roy - hoppyroy@gmail.com

Carolle Séguin - 4carolle@gmail.com

Andrea Young - andreamkentyoung@gmail.com



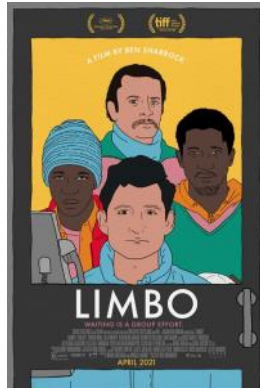
Movie Musings

By Michel Jan

Our movie discussion group continues to have enjoyable discussions on Zoom once a month to talk about the movies identified to be watched during the month preceding the discussion. In August we watched and discussed “Limbo” and “The Invisible Thread”.

“Limbo” is about asylum seekers waiting for their hearings on an isolated island in the north of Scotland. “The Invisible Thread” is about a teenager with two dads who is to make a video about his parents, as a class assignment, and how things unravel during the time he is making the video. Everyone liked “Limbo” and were okay with “The Invisible Thread” -- not to say it isn't good, just that “Limbo” is a very good movie. It is on Netflix or at least it was at the time.

In September it was “Downsizing” and “Irresistible”. Everyone liked “Irresistible” the best, but “Downsizing” was liked as well. “Irresistible” is with Steve Carell playing a democratic strategist helping a candidate win an election in competition with a Republican strategist. It is a political satire about how politics is really done. We all liked it. “Downsizing” is with Matt Damon, and is about people being able to choose to be miniaturized, ostensibly to help the environment as they would use less resources, but really those who choose this route often do it because their money will go much further in the communities designed for miniature people. The film is about human nature and social justice issues.



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JON STEWART



In October we watched “The Village Teacher” and “Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom”. People really liked “Lunana” but not so much “The Village Teacher”. “The Village Teacher” is a Stalin-era Soviet film which appears dated, but promotes good values of self sacrifice, helping others etc. It is about a wealthy young woman who decides to go teach in a remote village in Siberia. No one expects her to succeed but she does and she manages to change students’ and villagers’ lives. “Lunana” is about a young guy in Bhutan who wants to go sing in Australia but has one year left in a contract as a teacher. He does not like teaching, but the lady whom he reports to will not let him out of his last year, and sends him to a remote village way up in the mountains of Bhutan, where he is revered, as everyone wants a teacher there. The scenery is breathtaking, the cinematography displays this well, and the story is touching and heart warming. There are, also, many funny moments.

I have been asked to write about my favourite Christmas movies but I don't really have any. I do like just about every version of “A Christmas Carol,” so there is that. “Home Alone” is funny. “Christmas, Again” from 2014 is a good indie Christmas film, and “C.R.A.Z.Y.” from 2005 actually takes place over several Christmases. I don't think you can fail with any of these.

COIN FRANÇAIS

Rassemblement Unitarien Universaliste d'Ottawa

Le souffle de l'Orient

Par Gustavo Gottret

En tant qu'Unitarien universaliste, je me sens ouvert à toutes les sources de spiritualité. Cette fois-ci, permettez-moi de partager trois courtes histoires qui ont enrichi ma vie avec le souffle tiède de l'Orient.

Youssef, un souffle de l'Égypte

Qu'est-ce que tu as, Gustavo?

Je ne sais pas Youssef, tout d'un coup je me sens si faible.

Tu brûles de fièvre! Rentre chez toi tout de suite.

Mais, et le superviseur?

Je m'en charge. Vas-y maintenant!

Youssef et moi travaillions dans une boulangerie industrielle à Genève. C'était le début des années 80. Je venais de terminer mes études universitaires mais je ne voulais pas rentrer en Bolivie, mon pays d'origine, puisqu'il était sous une dictature militaire. Je préférais aider les réfugiés boliviens qui arrivaient en Suisse. Pendant le jour j'en profitais pour suivre des études complémentaires à l'université. La nuit, je travaillais pour faire des sous puisque j'avais déjà trois enfants en bas âge. Je dormais donc peu d'heures et, six mois après avoir commencé ce train de vie, je m'étais écroulé. L'attitude de Youssef m'avait cependant donné la force pour rentrer à la maison cette nuit-là.

C'était l'été et, pendant les pauses du travail, Youssef et moi sortions pour respirer de l'air frais. Sous le ciel étoilé, nous parlions de nos pays d'origine, de nos cultures, de nos croyances. Il me parlait aussi des nombreux noms de Dieu...

Mais, je croyais que Dieu n'avait qu'un nom, Youssef.

Allah est le plus Miséricordieux, Gustavo, le tout Puissant, l'infiniment Saint, le Créateur, Celui qui sait tout, Celui qui pourvoit et qui nous protège...

Youssef, je n'ai plus eu de ses nouvelles. Quelques jours après avoir quitté ce travail, le

médecin avait découvert que j'avais une pneumonie avancée. Il m'avait demandé de garder du repos absolu pendant des mois. Et alors, comment survivre?

Le ciel gris qui couvrait ma vie allait peu à peu changer. Des amis, avec qui on aidait les réfugiés, nous appuyaient avec nos dépenses. J'allais ensuite trouver un bon emploi à l'université qui allait me permettre de commencer un doctorat.

Fatima, un souffle d'Afghanistan

Lorsque Miriam et moi étions arrivés à Ottawa, en 2008, je cherchais du travail. Parmi diverses stratégies de survie, j'avais commencé une formation pour devenir interprète. On était une vingtaine de personnes en provenance de différents pays, et plusieurs Musulmans parmi nous. Fatima et son frère suivaient aussi cette formation. Ils étaient jeunes et beaux. Fatima était toujours habillée avec goût; elle portait des vêtements orientaux et de beaux voiles de couleur pour se couvrir la tête. C'était la seule femme du groupe et, pendant les pauses, elle était souvent seule. J'allais alors vers elle pour parler.

Fatima m'avait raconté que ses parents avaient été tués en Afghanistan quand elle et son frère étaient encore des enfants. Obligés de fuir leur pays, le Canada leur avait finalement permis de s'y établir.

Fatima adorait me parler du Coran et des ressources spirituelles qu'elle y trouvait. Vers la fin de notre formation comme interprètes, elle prit une feuille de papier et s'est mis à écrire avec soin quelque chose dans sa langue. Elle s'est ensuite levée, elle s'est approchée de moi et, doucement, elle me dit :

C'est le nom d'Allah, Gustavo; c'est très précieux pour nous. Garde-le avec toi mon frère; garde-le dans ton cœur...



Je n'ai plus revu Fatima. Quelque temps après je commençais à travailler comme interprète, et je signalais aussi mon premier contrat avec l'université d'Ottawa.



Alitash, un souffle de l'Éthiopie

L'un des cours que j'aime le plus donner à l'université est *Développement de l'enfant*. Pour la première fois, dès le commencement de l'actuelle pandémie, je le donne de nouveau en modalité présentielle. La plupart de mes étudiants, cependant, préfèrent le suivre de façon virtuelle, ce que je leur permets volontiers.

Mon attention était attirée par une étudiante qui s'asseyait toujours en première file et écoutait très attentive. La tête couverte avec un hijab, les traits délicats de son visage ne cachaient pas un esprit assertif. Un jour que j'avais fini mon cours plus tôt que d'habitude, cette étudiante s'est approchée de moi.

Bonjour professeur. Je ne suis pas en fait une étudiante de ce cours; j'ai suivi ce même cours avec vous le printemps passé, sur Zoom. Je l'ai beaucoup apprécié. Je suis Alitash. Vous souvenez-vous de moi? Excusez-moi si j'arrive un peu en retard, je dois prendre soin de mon père avant de venir.

Dans mes cours sur Zoom je ne voyais pas les étudiants, juste des rectangles noirs. Alitash y participait systématiquement, et avait obtenu la note la plus élevée. Elle partageait, en classe, son désarroi à cause de la violence dans son pays d'origine et ailleurs.

Et de quoi parle-t-on dans ce cours? On articule les sujets du plan de cours avec l'importance du développement d'un esprit d'ouverture chez les enfants, ainsi que la prise de conscience du fait que nous partageons tous, toutes, d'une façon ou l'autre, la responsabilité de l'éducation des enfants dans la création de nouvelles sociétés, plus justes et bienveillantes.



Avez-vous des « souffles de spiritualité » que vous aimeriez partager? Nous vous attendons : nous avons ici un bel espace pour le faire!

Gustavo

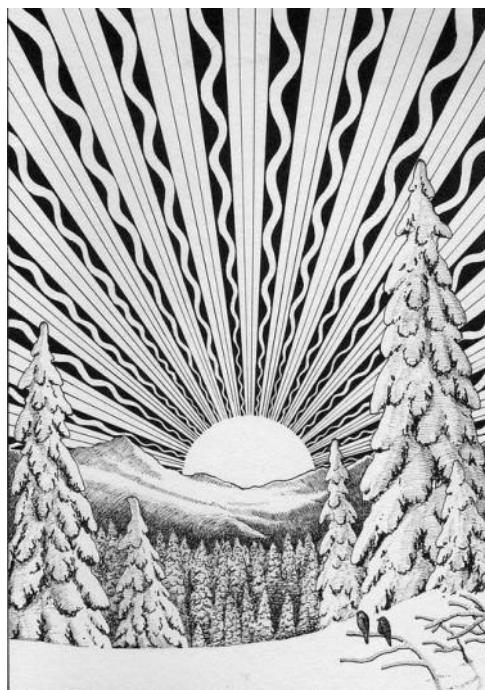
Célébrations Francophone

Notre équipe de planification vous souhaite la plus chaleureuse bienvenue à nos célébrations d'hiver:

Le 18 décembre à 16h30:
Célébration du solstice bilingue pour toute la communauté RUUO

Le 22 janvier, 12h30:
Thème : Le repos

Le 26 février 12h30:
Thème : Les racines de notre foi UU



Please join us for the Winter Solstice Celebration. Let's join together to celebrate that special time where we pass from darkness to light. The celebration will be followed by a potluck supper where you are invited to bring your favourite dish to share with others.

Veuillez vous joindre à nous pour la célébration du Solstice d'hiver. Rassemblons nous pour fêter le triomphe symbolique de la lumière sur les ténèbres. Suite à la célébration, il y aura un souper partage. Nous vous invitons à venir partager votre met préféré.

Adult Religious Exploration:

Exploring Self, Spirit, and the
World Around Us

Winter Workshops

UU Common Read: Mistakes and Miracles

The Adult Religious Exploration team is proposing a new book discussion group: 4 guided sessions based on this year's "UU Common Read"

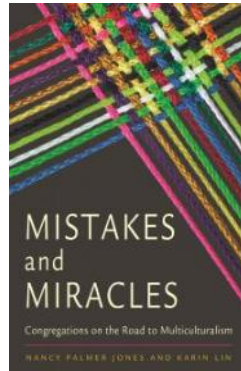
The 2022-23 UU Common Read, *Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism*, is co-authored by Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin—a white minister and a lay person of color. It explores five UU congregations' journeys toward Beloved Community and shares the joy, disappointment, and growth that these congregations found along the way.

Today, UU congregations are grappling with a charge to dismantle white supremacy in ourselves, our communities, and our world. As we enter a Common Read of this book, we find ourselves receiving its report with a changed spirit and an urgent need for multiculturalism and antiracism work in our congregations and our movement.

The discussion guide for this book invites Unitarian Universalist congregations and groups to engage deeply with the stories of others who have chosen a faithful path and struggled along the way.

4 guided workshops to be scheduled in the winter - after we receive our copies of *Mistakes and Miracles*

Email ARE@uufu.org to express interest in this series



“Let everything we write be an invitation”

by allison calvern

There are three rules for writing good memoir:

1. Tell the truth,
2. Do not censor, and
3. Think small.

The UUFO writers' group hosted a pop-up memoir-writing workshop on Saturday, September 3rd. Five people met in the sanctuary at 9 am and discussed writing. While biography is an account of a person's entire life—where they went to school; who they married, or didn't marry; what prizes they aimed for—a memoir usually covers

one part of that life: the author's struggle with addiction, or the time her brother pushed her on the stairs and she broke her arm. Some people write memoir about a trip they took, or about the afternoon they entered the boxing ring for the first time. Each of us is a holder of stories; the writer's job is to share those stories—because the world needs them.

Our homework prompt for the workshop was hands; each of us in turn read our work aloud. One person wrote her memoir as poetry. We discussed why we write, and to whom we are writing: the grandchildren; to self-discover; to enjoy the reminiscence; to preserve the past; to entertain; to warn; to heal ourselves and/or our family; to discern meaning from our lives; to celebrate the good and the not so good; to become aware. Half-way through the morning, we scattered to quiet corners, and spent twenty minutes writing a fresh piece, which we also shared by reading it aloud. Writing memoir with effect means to reveal our vulnerabilities as well as our strengths; no one can participate in a memoir workshop without touching and being touched by the deepest of human connective tissue. We were moved by the richness of one another's stories and the attention given to the work, and we learned in those few hours to trust our stories and to trust one another.

It is the writer's job to be true to her life. As we write, we make mistakes—spelling mistakes, focus mistakes, structure mistakes. We learn to welcome them, because mistakes are what helps us grow into ourselves. We do not worry about anybody else, or what they might think; it is not our job to know what others think. Writers are at their best when they are fully human. It is never wrong to be human; it is never wrong to be you. Good writing requires it.

Keep your eyes on the Friday Notes for the next Pop Up Memoir-Writing workshop!

Value of Community Hits Home

By Nanci Burns

We focused on “community” a lot during our fundraising campaign, but do we really embrace it? I have always appreciated the communities around me but perhaps took them for granted, until one day I woke up and realized I didn’t have one. It was this moment that I grasped the reality of its worth.

Tom and I travelled this fall to PEI to dog sit for a month. On day three in PEI, Hurricane Fiona hit. We were alone on an island. The Island had no internet, phone or escape routes. This isolation lasted 7 days for us. For others, much longer, but that’s another story still playing out. I knew only Tom and two dogs. This was our new reality.

Charlottetown has churches on every corner. Surely there must be a Unitarian Congregation we could connect with. Unfortunately, they did have one until 2017, when membership dwindled to six people, and they had to close their doors. (According to CBC story found on internet.) What a disappointment. If only there was a way to connect. The silence was broken only by the sounds of chainsaws and generators. If only to hear the ping of a message again (yes Michel, pings mean connection sometimes - inside joke for those who attended October 30th service).

Our days revolved around a portable radio that gave a rather limited update every day at 10:00 AM, that announced the numbers of residents still without power. It was not until later did we realize the whole Island was powerless. Prime Minister Trudeau came and went, and 100 soldiers were sent to help the Island. With minimal support on the horizon, it was time to meet the neighbours. They stepped up quickly and taught us city folk how to run a generator, removed the fallen trees and debris off the property we were staying on, and cleared off the car covered in branches. Strangers became our heroes and once again we had community.



CUC National Symposium

On **May 19-21, 2023**, the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) and First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa will be hosting a National Symposium on the 8th Principle. It will include both in-person and online activities.

The symposium takes the place of the CUC's annual conference, and we hope that Ottawa will make it a smashing success.

It will be hosted at Algonquin College.

Volunteers are needed for a wide variety of roles, including participation in the opening/closing ceremonies and national Sunday morning service. More information will be available in the coming months. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Brandon.



CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL
NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2023

Do you miss working with RE Kids?

Get a taste of it again by volunteering with Young Fun, the CUC's children's program during the Symposium!

Contact Sarah about volunteering with Young Fun, she will be coordinating a program for kids, aged 0-12 to run on Saturday and Sunday. Join the fun!

Social Action Cluster Focus: Time For Renewal

by Marilyn Kuhn

A year ago, the Social Action Cluster (SAC) held a series of focus groups as step one in a process of “regeneration.” These were in response both to problems we felt and opportunities that needed some space to grow. The problems were:

- SAC was struggling with the fact they could not possibly be a focal point for all the social justice priorities of individual members of UUFO. For the past six years our priority has been largely, though not exclusively, reconciliation and Indigenous issues
- Membership of the core SAC group needs to be “refreshed” in some systematic way. (Among other things, those who have been there for many years, will soon be aging out!)

The opportunities were:

- People interested in providing leadership related to other social justice issues.
- Willingness of the current SAC members to support these people if needed.

Two new interest groups came from the focus groups – an affordable housing group and a “just beginning” climate change/environmental concerns group. Together with people from these groups and representation from the board we are now thinking more concretely about the next steps. We are describing this as a search for a new “model” for social action. A few issues we are considering for this new “model” are:

- What “models” works with a relatively small congregation?”
- How do we facilitate an openness to new initiatives along the way?
- Is there a way to involve the “whole” congregation in ongoing decisions re allocation of resources – time/ money?
- How can we avoid a hierarchical structure?

Would you like to be a part of this discussion? Let us know. We think a new “model” needs a new name. Any ideas you would like to share? Stay tuned or, better still join the discussion!

Respectfully submitted by:

The Social Action Cluster: Claire, Elinor, Gary, Helmut, Marilyn, Nanci, Brandon. (Board rep.)



Paint Renewal

Changes to come to our walls!

The board has approved a proposal to refresh the paint in our small meeting rooms: the office, and the RE room. This winter we will be looking at a fresh colour, and a fresh new layout!

We are intentionally putting thought into how we use our smaller spaces.

Sarah’s office will be moved to the smaller room, while the larger corner room will be styled as a community space: a small meeting room for all ages!



We will be on the lookout for appropriate artwork to adorn our fresh new walls. Keep us in mind when re-decorating or downsizing!

Fun With Finance Answer:

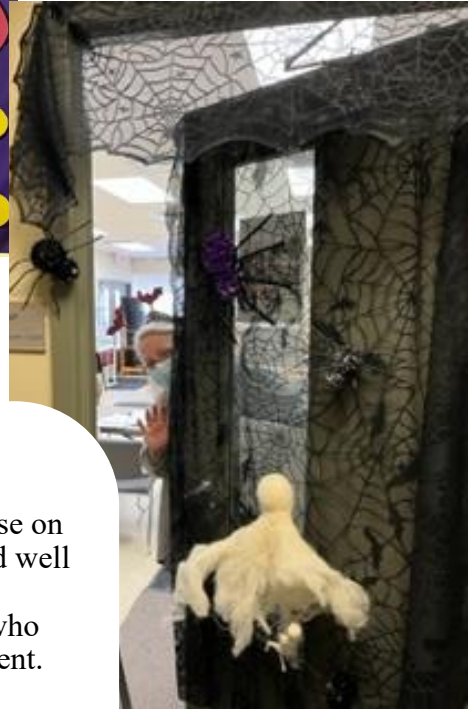
On average, half of the remaining 15% comes from non-pledged donations and half comes from renting our space for meetings and events.

Halloween Builds Community at Heartwood House

By Nanci Burns



As “roving reporter”, I dressed as a Wizard and enjoyed meeting the welcoming doors at Heartwood House on Halloween. It was fun and even paid well - in chocolates! Bravo to ELTOC – featured in our Spring newsletter – who initiated this community building event. They offered “door” prizes for the spookiest and best doors and Jen and Vicki, as the judges, provided gift packages as prizes. I had a chance to visit with several of our Heartwood neighbours. I hope you stay tune as I feature them in my future articles in the newsletter called “Who Are the People in your Neighbourhood?” Maybe I should’ve dressed as Mr. Rogers?



Meditation corner: Harvesting Love

by Evangeline Danseco

The meditation circle meets on the first Saturday (in-person) and third Saturday (online) each month. We do mindfulness meditation (usually based on the practices from [Plum Village](#)) and share our reflections on the theme of the month. On the theme of balance, I reflected on Buddhism and the middle path at the service and led one of our meditation sessions on this topic. Here I expand what I have called the practice of harvesting love.

In many Buddhist traditions, there is a practice called lovingkindness or metta meditation, where we begin by sending love and peace to ourselves, then to someone we love, then to someone we know of but do not have any particular relationship with, then to all the people in the world. It is a practice that fosters lovingkindness and compassion.

One day, I thought to myself: there must be at least one person in the world doing a metta meditation right now, sending prayers of peace, compassion and lovingkindness to everyone in the world. I said to myself, I will take those thoughts of metta meditation and harvest this love and compassion.

In the harvesting love practice, as I go through my day, I take notice of the love and goodwill that comes my way – the smile of a stranger, a friendly email or Facebook post, the joy from my colleagues when we meet. It is similar to a gratitude practice where you acknowledge 5 things you are grateful for. Harvesting love is a practice throughout the day of paying attention and being mindful, focused on love, goodwill and kindness around me.

For some of us who are involved in various community or social justice activities, we can sometimes feel exhausted or burnt-out. Worse, we can get trapped in



cynicism or anger that does not get channeled or transformed into compassionate action. We are used to giving and sending love, rather than seeking help or receiving love. In harvesting love, there is no striving or work that is involved, except that of noticing and receiving. A meditation practice of harvesting love invites us to open our hearts and just sit in being. We need a balance between doing and being.

Much like second and third hand smoke that can stick to one's clothes or the curtains in a room, love can also stick to inanimate objects and infuse our environment. This is reflected in many Indigenous teachings that honour for example, the rocks, the stones and all of nature. I take notice of the sun shining through my window, a gentle breeze, the sound of a distant train. We harvest love from people, from nature, indeed, from everything around us. Love and kindness are everywhere.

There is so much anxiety, negative news, trauma and hurt around us. The practice of harvesting love is not about negating these (which is what happens in toxic positivity), but also acknowledging the love and kindness that surround us. Yes, there are many challenges that face us in our world today, and there are also stories of miracles, surprises and basic goodness.

I am writing this piece on All Souls Day in the Christian calendar, the day after celebrating All Saints Day, and two days after Halloween. With the harvesting love practice, we give and receive love to dear ones who have passed on, remembering our roots and harvesting the love of our ancestors.

As you go about your day, try to notice and harvest love in its many forms. How and where can you harvest love?



Dispatch from Kaliyampoondi, Tamil Nadu, India

From Robin Cappuccino

I left on the 14th of November to visit all our Children's Homes, and am now in Kaliyampoondi. Thanks for the opportunity to keep our many good friends at the UUFO up to date on the world of Child Haven International and our beautiful and resilient children.

My mother chose reluctantly not to come along on this trip due to the ongoing covid risks, but will be in touch as I visit the Homes over zoom and phone. Just prior to my leaving for India though, we were all pleased to have a graduate from our Hyderabad Home, Harish Reddy, come to visit us in Maxville. Harish came to our Hyderabad Home at the age of four. He was a very bright and engaging student and passed at the top of his class all through school. Child Haven supported him in a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, and he did so well that he was able to secure a scholarship and loans enabling him to be accepted for a Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering at a College in Michigan. His plan is to get his degree, gain some work experience here and then return to India to pursue a career focusing on Electric vehicles. Harish just got a visa to visit Canada and we were all thrilled to see him. His photo is below.

Here in Kaliyampoondi it is wonderful to be amongst the radiant faces of our children. This is my second trip since the pandemic began to abate. Bonniema and I have been on many zooms with the staff over the past several years, but it is most reassuring to be here in person and able to connect first-hand.

While most of our children are doing well, Ganesh, the Manager of this Home, says that while things are slowly returning to normal, there is a lot of catching up to do after schools were closed for long periods of time. He says the staff is dealing with many more behavior issues than in pre pandemic days. He attributes this in part to so many children being sent back to whatever family they had for periods of time by the order of local child welfare authorities in their efforts to restrict large gatherings of children during the height of the pandemic. This led to many of our children going back to marginally secure environments. That combined with schools being closed, seems to have fostered some challenging behaviors that our dedicated staff is doing their best to turn around. Tonight I was impressed with the arrival of 8 tutors from the local community who have been hired to help the children catch up on their studies now that schools have reopened.

We are greatly relieved that all of

our staff and at least the older children have been vaccinated, and the numbers of cases in the community seems to be declining as well.

Fortunately, while donations have decreased during the pandemic, with many of our fund-raising dinners on hold, our multitude of supporters have been very loyal through it all and we have been able to maintain our expenses for food, education and staff. A few bequests, for which we are most grateful, have also helped bridge the funding gaps.

I wish that everyone who contributes could have the opportunity to be as deeply moved by getting to know our children as those of us fortunate enough to visit. Our Homes are filled with children who each have a story of great hardship and loss. Yet, they are places filled with laughter and joy. Testaments to the resounding power of active love and the resilience of children, who, when provided with the nurturing that every child deserves, will flourish and grow. I will be gathering stories and pictures for our next newsletter, the most recent of which can be found on our Child Haven web-site www.childhaven.ca

Huge thanks and best wishes to our extended Child Haven family at the UUFO, Robin



Harish Reddy the day he entered the CH Home in Hyderabad.



Harish Reddy with Fred, Bonnie, and Robin Cappuccino

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa

Everyone Welcome | Bienvenue à tous

The Unitarian Fellowship of Ottawa is a spiritual community of people with shared values and diverse beliefs.

We are guided by the warmth of love, the light of reason, and the call of justice.

We come together to nurture meaning, hope, and reverence for the earth as we pursue a more just and compassionate world.

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newsletter@uufu.org

Submissions for the Spring Issue are due February 15

Many thanks to our contributors and editors!

Editorial Team

Allison, Nanci, Pat,
Sarah



Winter at UUFO

Monthly Activities

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
(Worship) Uncolonizing Focus Group				Cercle de croissance spirituelle (UUFO)	Writer's Group (UUFO)	Meditation Circle (UUFO)
(Worship)	Board Mtg (Hybrid)			Pub Night (Patty's)		
(Worship)					Film Club (Zoom)	Meditation Circle (Zoom)
(Worship) (Célébration francophone)						
(Worship)						

Special Events

DECEMBER 18 4:30PM

Solstice Service—Our winter solstice celebration and potluck!

SUNDAYS: DECEMBER 25 & JANUARY 1
NO WORSHIP SERVICES PLANNED

THE SANCTUARY AND ZOOM ARE AVAILABLE ON CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS DAYS. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GATHER/HOST YOU ARE WELCOME TO USE THE SPACE(S).

Please contact Sarah to arrange it.

JANUARY 8, 12PM

Congregational Budget Meeting—help set the budget for 2023

Weekly event info & Zoom links come to your inbox in our Friday Notes!