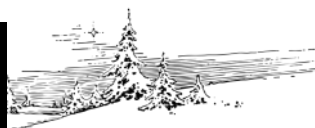


Fellowship News

Infolettre UUFO



WINTER ISSUE

DECEMBER 2021



Winter's Here, and So Are We!

By Sarah Baxter

As winter takes hold, and the sun begins to set closer to 4:30pm, we enter our season of celebrations. Hanukkah, Yule, Christmas, Kwanza, our December holidays bring light into the dark nights, a reminder that the sun will return.

But this year, we are choosing to celebrate the darkness as well.

Sometimes, what we need is the calm, the shadow, the slumber. To acknowledge the sadness, the difficulty, the loss and grief.

Sometimes the darkness deserves to be celebrated, not simply chased away with light. We will be giving space to the metaphorical darkness at our Blue Christmas service (see p. 9), and reveling in the dark before sharing the light once again at our annual Solstice tradition on December 19.

Our winter themes for worship (see p. 4) will carry us through from darkness, to awakening, and love, and as winter begins to flirt with spring, we will dive into a month of self-exploration. Winter invites introspection, and at UUFO, our contemplations can be done both from the cozy blanket forts at home, and in our (now properly heated) Sanctuary. With many Zoom-based groups, and a growing number of workshops and meetings now scheduled at 400

McArthur, we are doing our best to meet everyone where they are most comfortable.

Winter will bring more opportunities to learn together (see p. 11), as we continue our gradual return to in-person activities. And we aren't the only ones excited to be back in the building.

Meet one of our Heartwood House neighbours, grateful to be able to continue serving our local community on p. 14.

Serving the local community will have a new boost of energy this winter, as our Social Action Cluster guides and challenges us each to take action on the issues that matter to us (see p. 10). The support of our beloved community can offer a much needed boost to help us act on issues that matter to us.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Caring & Sharing	2
<i>Faces of Social Justice: Focus on Marina Jones</i>	3
Worship Cluster Notes	4
Board Walk	5
Movie Musings	6
Poetry Corner	7
Coin Français	8
Blue Christmas	9
Social Action Cluster Focus	10
Adult RE	11
Kid Crafting	12
<i>Sex Activism</i>	13
<i>Who are the people in our neighbourhood?</i>	14
CUC Job Posting	15



Caring and Sharing

News from our Readers



Megan, Allison, and Mer

Here's a picture from a very happy day in the life of the Lucey-Weinhold family.

On October 2nd, our family celebrated Mer Weinhold's marriage to their partner Megan Dougherty in their backyard in Gatineau.

In additional Fellowship news, the officiant at their ceremony was Allison Armstrong, known to all of us as our temporary Office Administrator during Sarah's maternity leave.



Nanci's encounter with a moose while cycling in lac St Jean

Diane Schmolka is keeping busy! She reports that she is taking a 5-week course in memoir writing, and is planning the design of her memoir. She's also working with one of her co-residents on a new club, "Sharing Experiences." In addition, she is on a planning committee for the Centennial Celebration of Overbrook which will occur in 2022, and is a columnist for *ConneXions*, the Overbrook newspaper. And she's still composing, playing piano and writing poetry.



Calvin and Hobbes on Halloween:
"my mom sewed it"



Here is Ruth, raising the flag on her favourite island— Baker Island.

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of Ruth Milne.

I don't think we would have a Fellowship today if it hadn't been for Ruth's efforts to build community. No one ever wanted to miss a gathering at her place! Clink the champagne glasses, eat hips of beef and smoke cigarettes and you have one unique Unitarian. —Nanci



Photos shared by Marina & Nanci



Ruth in green (can you name all the Unitarians?)



The Smiles of Social Justice in action!

Focus on Marina Jones

By: Nanci Burns

For many of my years in the Fellowship, I was busy working as a social worker in the public school board. Sometimes conversations about my work would lead to unusual partnerships with some Fellowship members. Some partnerships are still alive and well after many years. I think particularly of Louise and Don McDiarmid who jumped in to help a newly arrived family from Afghanistan and are still a significant part of their lives.

This story, however, is about Marina Jones. She was intrigued by my involvement with a young high school girl who wanted to be a teacher. She was 17 years old and living on her own. She was bright and engaging but reluctant to smile big—especially in pictures, given her teeth were so crooked. There was no money for orthodontics. She worked hard to pay her rent and food expenses between youth assistance and her part-time jobs.

Teaching would be a challenging career choice. I told Marina my desire to help but the costs for dentistry were too prohibitive. Marina asked to meet her. Liza told Marina she wanted to be able to smile in a picture with her mouth open, and have the confidence that a straight smile would bring. Needless to say, Marina immediately saw the potential I had envisioned. She approached her dentist and agreed to pay the dental bills for Liza, under the condition that Liza would be on a payment plan each month to pay her back half of her investment. A deal was made.

Marina and Liza spent time together going to shows, enjoying lunches together and of course, met at the monthly orthodontist appointments. Marina and Liza's relationship blossomed into a close bond between them. Liza went on to teacher's college at Queen's University.

I opened doors for her whenever I could and we soon found ourselves working in the same high school. She was the star drama teacher. I would so love our weekly Monday lunches together and watching her thrive in the school environment. However, beginning teachers are not paid well and Liza soon had a family with 2 beautiful boys. She took real estate courses on the side and she got her real estate license. She quickly became not only a



successful teacher but a realtor. She paid off her student loans for university before her 30th birthday. This is a young woman, now 36, who has been set on the road to success. A small investment led to a big payoff. By the way, Liza just helped Marina sell her house which brought beautiful smiles to both their faces!

What makes me smile is hearing how generous Liza has been to others as her way of “paying it forward”. Liza regularly gives to the Ottawa Food Bank and created a Resilience Award and a Black Educator's Award with another teacher in the school. Liza says “It's sort of a nice fact to add that when you help one person, you ignite a domino effect because they go on and help others as well”. It is so encouraging and hopeful that all our social justice initiatives through the Fellowship can really change the world for the better.



Liza and Marina all smiles at the selling of Marina's house

Worship Cluster Notes

By Pat Lucey

Roomers and Zoomers have become a reality again as of mid-October! We have a regular group of fully vaccinated and masked attendees who meet in the Sanctuary on Sunday morning to view the Zoom service together, and to socialize before and after the service. When the Zoomers share their Joys and Sorrows in breakout rooms, the Roomers share their Joys and Sorrows in the Sanctuary. Even better news is that we are now approaching a time when, with the help of technology, and a professional audio engineer, we expect to achieve and sustain full 2-way audio and video communication between the Roomers and the Zoomers.

We're marking the end of 2021 with our customary holiday celebrations: our Mitten Tree celebration of sharing, our Solstice celebration of winter darkness and light, and the "Between the Years" Coffee House celebration of music, stories, memories and fun. This year we are also dedicating Sunday December 12th to a "Blue Christmas" service, celebrating togetherness and support during the winter holiday season.

When the new year begins, we will explore the theme of **"Awakening"** during the month of January. We awaken to a new calendar year, in a world where changes are frequent, rapid, and often dramatic and radical – will we also be awakening more to the world around us?

Our February monthly theme will be **"Love."** How do we love in the public arena? As citizens? As governments? As UUs?

In March we will explore the theme **"Who Are We As UU's?"** and ask ourselves these questions: Are we simply Unitarians? Where is the Universalism at UUFO? How do we conduct ourselves as Unitarian Universalists?

April 2022 will be a special month this year, in which three of the world's religions will observe their holiest spiritual traditions: Ramadan, Easter, and Passover. So during this month of holiness and reverence, we will share some of our own **personal spiritual traditions**, and learn more about the spiritual traditions of other world religions.



May is the month when the beauty of nature surrounds us here in Ottawa, and accordingly, our monthly theme will be **"Beauty."** What makes something beautiful? Why is it we tend to associate beauty with goodness/rightness/truth? Why do beautiful things bring pleasure? Does a Unitarian even notice?

As 2021 draws to a close, let's all appreciate ourselves, and one another, for keeping our Fellowship alive and active, and close to our hearts, during the very challenging two years we've just weathered together. Best wishes to everyone for the holiday season and the new year!

Worship Cluster Team: Pat Lucey (cluster contact), Martha Nabatian, Katie Lunn, Christine Baddeley Girard, Laura Evans, Nancy Rubenstein, Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower, Allison Calvern (Board liaison), Sarah Baxter (staff support)



Mitten Tree

This year we will be giving our warm winter wear donations to **Inuugatiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families**



Community Growing

There are many expected benefits to sharing space with Heartwood House organizations, and some unexpected surprises!

In November, we learned of an unexpected blessing: a Heartwooder with a love of orchids, has been keeping an eye on the flowers in our windows, and alerted us to some transplanting needs.

What a blessing to have a wider community looking out for us!



Board Walk

By Brandon Milk, Board President

Welcome to winter 2021.

The big news item this fall has been the Canadian Unitarian Council's proposal to add an 8th Principle to the seven Principles we follow as Canadian UU's. The CUC asked for feedback by October 20th, and the board submitted a form on behalf of UUFO. The 8th Principle has now been changed to read as follows: *"We the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote: Individual and communal action that accountably dismantles racism and systemic barriers to full inclusion in ourselves and our institutions."* The CUC held a special meeting on November 27th to vote on the principle. Brandon Milk and Michel Jan were the voting delegates for UUFO.

The Fellowship was pleased to resume in-person services in October. Places of worship are not required to ask for proof of vaccination, but after some debate, the board decided it was the right thing to do. The setup teams have done a great job of checking people in on Sunday mornings. While the rules for gathering have improved, the pandemic situation is always changing and UUFO needs to remain adaptable. Meanwhile, the normal activities of the Fellowship continue. As I write this, the Pledge Campaign is underway, and our annual budget meeting is set for January 9th, 2021.

Despite the strain put on life by the pandemic, several improvements are in the works. Heartwood House has received a grant to upgrade accessibility in the building. This money will be used to improve accessible washrooms and automatic door mechanisms. The board has become aware that the sign with the interchangeable phrases at the front of our building is deteriorating, so we are looking at having it repaired or replaced. When it comes to Sunday worship, Pat Lucey and Gary Weinhold have found an experienced consultant who can recommend technology and methods to improve the delivery of hybrid services. The board is thankful for the extra work Pat and Gary have put in since in-person services started again.

We look forward to the holiday season and to a bright future for the Fellowship in 2022.



"Between The Years" Holiday Coffee House

by Pat Lucey

Each year I look forward to that sweet spot of relaxation and togetherness which falls between Christmas and New Year's Day, when the holiday shopping and bustling are mostly over and done with, family members are on a break from work, and "hanging out and relaxing" is at the top of everyone's to-do list for the week.



For the last several years, we've kept a low-key "between the years" holiday tradition alive at the Fellowship, when all are invited to hang out and relax together in a loosely-organized (but not entirely *dis*-organized) Sunday morning Holiday Coffee House. It's a time to share our holiday memories, stories, reflections, poetry, and music with one another, and look forward to the coming new year.

Last year's Holiday Coffee House was of necessity also a Pandemic Coffee House, and we ran the festivities entirely on Zoom. This year, Michel and I, your co-hosts, are hoping to add a small in-person Sanctuary gathering to our Zoom experience, and find the best ways to hang out and relax together over a distance as well as in person.

So you're all invited to join us on Sunday morning December 26th at 10:30 am., either on Zoom or in the Sanctuary, for some fun and music and memories and conversation and just plain hanging out and relaxing together!

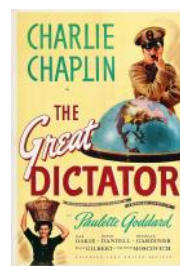


Movie Musings

By Michel Jan

Our movie discussion group has had an interesting fall. We decided that we would explore some cinema classics and so in September we discussed Federico Fellini's *8 1/2*. This film is about all the problems a director faces in making a film and the director's relationships. It includes his relationships with women and how that represents 1960s Italy. The film is somewhat autobiographical and includes fantasy sequences. All the discussion participants liked it and felt that it was very Italian and gave off some deep messages. In October we discussed *Cleo from 5 to 7* by Agnes Varda and *Breathless* by Jean-Luc Godard. *Breathless* is about a cool crook played by Jean-Paul Belmondo and an American girl he meets played by Jean Seberg. This film breaks some cinematic rules and has style, great cinematography and dialogue. *Cleo from 5 to 7* is about a popular singer who learns she might have cancer and her transformation from 5 to 7, as she awaits news from her doctor, from being superficial and selfish to becoming a deeper, more caring person who starts to see and care about other people. We all enjoyed these two films. *Cleo*, also, sings a beautiful song around the mid point called *Sans toi* which you can listen to on YouTube. In November we discussed *War Games* by Peter Watkins and *The Great Dictator* by Charlie Chaplin. This was because we had our discussion on Remembrance Day. *War Games* is a docudrama about the repercussions of a nuclear attack on a town in the U.K. We discussed how frankly and realistically it portrayed the effects of a nuclear bomb. We discussed *The Great Dictator* because it is a comical film so it would be a contrast to the disturbing *War Games*. *The Great Dictator* has Chaplin playing a dictator and a Jewish small businessman.

This brings us up to date. In December we will discuss *Wild Strawberries* by Ingmar Bergman and *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* by Jacques Tati. These films are available on Kanopy which one can watch for free through an Ottawa library membership. The library can help you set up your access to Kanopy. As you probably guessed by now we watch the movies on our own before the discussion. We love welcoming new members. We hold the discussions on Zoom on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm. Links are in the Friday Notes. Please contact me, Michel Jan, with any questions. I am in our directory.



Poetry corner

by allison calvern

“... let us not forget that going right back in our evolutionary DNA, poetry was the medium of utterance, ecstasy, a lullaby, an incantation, so before you had things written down, there was poetry.”

—John Agard, first poet to win Britain's BookTrust lifetime achievement award.

Few art forms provide so much freedom to explore life—from social justice, sexuality, and mental illness, to envy, physics, and the explicit dance of a bumblebee—as does poetry. A song can be experienced without analyzing its lyrics; a poem, too, is meant to be experienced outside of scansion and analysis. Poetry can help us to appreciate the world around us, and maybe even to understand it.

Pat Lucey and Katie Lunn included Wilfred Owen's *Anthem for Doomed Youth* in the Remembrance Day service on November 7. Though the sonnet typically focuses on love, Owen's sonnet focuses on brutality and religion. Besides subverting the form, Owen also subverts the false 'glorification' of war as practiced by many of his contemporary poets. Instead, he uses poetry to tell the truth about war.

The poem, *Coordinates*, written in free verse by Maria Popova, a Bulgarian-born American writer, includes a childhood accident that becomes incorporated into an expression of lovemaking. Popova gives us a kind of kintsugi, wherein the gold of her poetry puts broken pieces of her life together in a beautiful, resilient way. Her poem is easy to read if you do not worry about analysis. Rather, lean back and experience it:



Coordinates

—by Maria Popova

I still wonder
why the knife was
in my left hand
when I pressed it into
the watermelon bark
blade-side up,
pressed it hard and slow
and felt it stop at my bone,
felt no pain at all
as it split my thumb
along a perfect meridian.
I watched the blood spill
its perfect pomegranate seeds
into the aluminium spaceship
of the kitchen sink.

I was six.
I was learning directions.
Left became encoded
in the scar.
Across this slice of spacetime,
this half a lifetime,
I still glide my index finger over it
in animal instinct
when asked to orient.

Tonight I pressed my thumb meridian
into the equator of her bare sole,
she whose footfall I recognise
across the room,
across the gallery,
across the galaxy,
pressed it hard and slow
into the moan of her
animal pleasure.

No use asking
why the knife was
in my left hand then,
or this particular foot
now.
Some things we just get wrong,
then make use of the scars.
Some things we get right
only when we cease pressing
against the blade of why.

COIN FRANÇAIS

Rassemblement Unitarien Universaliste d'Ottawa

Par Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower

Salut à chacun(e),

Avec un aussi bel automne, je suis heureuse de vous offrir un petit « coucou » rempli de toutes les couleurs de l'amitié, de la joie et du partage...

À nos Célébrations mensuelles, comme nous avons su « accueillir le possible » (thème) en septembre, « l'incertitude » en octobre, novembre nous a ramené au « réalisme ». Cette fois ce fut avec le Révérend Fulgence Ndagijimana qui, tout en nous partageant « l'histoire d'un choix pour le bien commun », nous a fait plonger dans la conscientisation de « nos choix comme expression de nos valeurs. »

Il est bon de se rappeler que Rév. Fulgence est fondateur des Unitariens Universalistes du Burundi (2002). Il a servi en tant que Vice-Président du Conseil International des Unitariens Universalistes. En 2012 il est au Canada et débute « The Flaming Chalice » une organisation de charité pour les futures réfugié(e)s afin d'aider à leur éducation, à leurs petites entreprises et à connecter avec d'autres communautés aidantes. Tout récemment le Rév. Fulgence a fondé sur internet une Communauté UU sans frontières qui rejoint tous les UU francophones du monde. Rev Fulgence voit son ministère comme une opportunité d'offrir de l'espérance quand cette dernière est difficile à trouver. »



En 2022, nous espérons que le Rév. Fulgence devienne pour nous un invité régulier.

Le 19 décembre, nous nous retrouverons tous pour la Célébration du Solstice.

Entre temps si tu peux nous aider pour la préparation, s'il te plaît fais-nous signe; - cheistek@sympatico.ca ou mcberes@gmail.com ou luciemariecb@gmail.com

Prochaines célébrations pour 2022 :

23 janvier Conscientisation
27 février Amour
27 mars Qui sommes-nous en tant qu'UU?
24 avril Traditions spirituelles
22 mai Beauté
26 juin Donner et recevoir

Si parfois un de ces thèmes t'interpelle, tu es plus que bienvenu pour devenir notre invité(e), notre animateur/trice ou encore notre coéquipier/ère dans la préparation de nos célébrations mensuelles. Tu sais combien précieux est le travail d'équipe! L'enrichissement est à la fois pour ceux qui donnent et ceux qui reçoivent. Merci de ta présence et de ta participation.

Le Cercle de croissance spirituelle (CCS), premier jeudi du mois à 13h.

Après avoir eu le bonheur de nous rencontrer en personne dans le jardin durant l'été, nous nous sommes retrouvées en présentiel dans notre paisible sanctuaire le 4 novembre dernier, pour la première fois depuis le début de la pandémie. Nous espérons continuer ainsi et, si cela est possible, nous offrirons un cercle « hybride ».

Comme toujours, nos rencontres sont un tremplin d'écoute profonde où le respect, la confiance et l'ouverture d'esprit nous aident à vivre plus pleinement notre vie quotidienne et le moment présent. Si cela t'interpelle, sois bien à l'aise de nous contacter – luciemariecb@gmail.com -



blue christmas

by allison calvern

A Blue Christmas service offers a respite from the commercial cheer that fills our public spaces. Because not everybody feels like celebrating. Because we all know loss, fear, anger.

During this, our Canadian season of cold and dark, a Blue Christmas service honours the cold and dark within our own souls. Troubles are welcome here, and questions are safe.

We keep one chair empty, for those who are not coming home.

We arrive with sadness and regret, bringing what prowls the margins to the centre. We recognize these as the dark gifts of the season.

We are a community of faith; in this Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa, we do not carry our sadness alone. We light candles, offer prayers, listen to music. We find hope. The deep-blue hope of midnight. Which looks towards dawn.

Here are lyrics to *Sweet Little Jesus Boy*, sung every Christmas in spite of its undiluted sadness. The enduring power of this song shows how beautiful it is when spirituality enters from the underside:

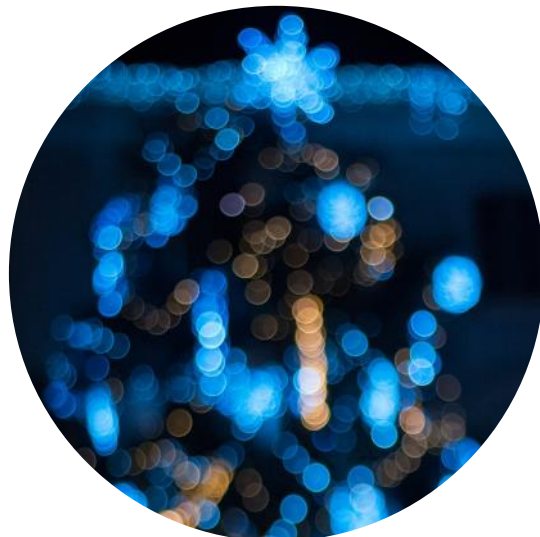
Sweet little Jesus boy
They made you be born in a manger
Sweet little holy child
We didn't know who you were

Didn't know you'd come to save us Lord
To take our sins away
Our eyes were blind, we could not see
We didn't know who you were

The world treats you mean Lord
Treats me mean too
But that's how things are down here
We don't know who you are

Just seems like we can't do right
Look how we treated you
But please Sir forgive us Lord
We didn't know it was you

Sweet little Jesus boy
Born a long time ago
Sweet little holy child
We didn't know who you were



Social Action Cluster Focus:

by Marilynn Kuhn



The Social Action Cluster asked for input and you RESPONDED! Thanks to everyone who participated in a focus group, took time to send us your thoughts via email or to talk to us on the phone. And finally, to everyone who contributed to the lively discussions on Nov. 21st. A special thanks to Evangeline who produced these graphic images of some of the messages in the service. Maybe we can add to these diagrams as we move forward and have a year-end graphic

novel report!

It was a challenge to summarize what we heard. One focus that stood out was an interest in issues related to our local community – our UUFO community, Heartwood House, Overbrook and Ottawa. Specific local issues identified included affordable housing and homelessness, local environmental concerns, and teen drug use.

A second focus was on more policy-related issues and global concerns. How do we shift our societal lens to the “common good”? Concerns were expressed for the systemic issues that affect the common good – a voting system that leaves the majority of voters without a voice, poverty, queer issues (particularly the proposed legislation to ban conversion therapy), environmental degradation, and climate refugees. Some thoughts about possible steps forward related to these included advocacy for proportional representation and implementation of a guaranteed livable wage.

A third thread in the discussions related to individual interests and offers of action: the need for self-care to provide a strong core from which to participate in social action; the possibility of more sharing among ourselves about important personal initiatives and how we act on a daily basis; and opportunities to share thoughts/strategies related to dealing with death and dying.

One assumption behind the discussions seemed to be that



the Fellowship would continue our efforts to learn about and support Indigenous peoples.



We had limited time for discussion about specific strategies or to set priorities related to these concerns. But, we noticed that some of us have very strong commitments to certain causes and good ideas on how to go ahead.

One person volunteered to bring together those concerned about affordable housing. Another offered to lead a group focusing on self-care. Maybe others see opportunities! SAC members can help you! No meetings necessary, we promise! We know that educating ourselves, volunteering, linking with other groups who share our values and concerns, and various forms of advocacy are all part of the way forward.

Thanks so much for your enthusiastic response to engaging with this journey. Look for more feedback from the Social Action Cluster. And, remember keep your ideas coming. We would love to hear from you.

Your Social Action Cluster:

Nanci B., Elinor M., Michel J., Gary W., Maurice C.-P., Claire H., Helmut K., Marilynn K.

Adult Religious Exploration:

Exploring Self, Spirit, and the
World Around Us



Compassionate Communication Continues

In the fall, Fran and Nick facilitated a two-part workshop on Compassionate Communication. This winter, a follow up workshop will be offered to further explore the topic introduced in the original workshops.



Illustration by Anna Lentz
springbird.land

Coming Up: Winter '21- '22

History of Racism in Canada Workshop

January 22, 2022 1-4pm

Our January theme to begin 2022 is **Awakening**. As a movement, Unitarian Universalists have recently been exploring an awakening awareness to the systemic inequalities that are present within our faith tradition. The movement to introduce an 8th Unitarian principle comes from this desire to crack open our previously ignored injustices, and work to *accountably dismantle racism in ourselves and our institutions*.

The work goes beyond a principle, and deserves attention as an opportunity to learn, grow, and awaken.

In January, Maurice Cabana-Proux will be facilitating an afternoon workshop exploring the History of Racism in Canada. Stay tuned!



Update from the Braiding Sweetgrass Zoom Book Club

led by Claire Heistek

Indigenous understanding of growth, reciprocity, and ecological stewardship was often ignored in science education and western thought. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer, is trying to bring her knowledge lenses – Indigenous and traditional training in botany – together, to make us realize that we have a reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.

Braiding Sweetgrass is also the memoir of a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation and a professor at an American university. Dr. Kimmerer shares the history of her people and her experience of learning, she works to integrate her two worlds and explains the benefits of both. These are the two main elements that are evident while reading the book.

This very well written work is very dense and the participants in the UUFO *Braiding Sweetgrass* Book Club are taking their time looking at it this year. On the first Tuesday of every month, one of the 12 participants presents a different facet to be discussed and we each share our insights. We try to grow with a holistic view integrating the facts, observations, and our emotional reactions. Naturally, our insights are coloured by our own cultures and backgrounds. This adds to the richness of the information that is shared.

This group is no longer open to new members but we encourage anyone who wants to expand their knowledge of Indigenous ways of viewing our natural world to read this book. It has definitely been food for thought for our group.

IF HOLIDAY TRADITIONS ARE STRESSING YOU OUT, DITCH THEM — YOUR KIDS PROBABLY WON'T NOTICE

BY KATHARINE REID for CBC.CA (DEC 19, 2019)

Do you ever stop to consider which holiday traditions you're actually enjoying and which ones add stress to your life?

For a few years, I've been carefully coordinating an activity advent calendar. I filled it with all the curated holiday fun I could dream up: skating outdoors; making hot chocolate and curling up with a Christmas movie; making cookies and delivering them to neighbours; going snow tubing; going to the farm to chop down our Christmas tree; reading Christmas books together.

And as lovely as those things are (they are!), having them as a must-do item for each day of December added undue stress to my already busy days with young kids.

This year, I've decided, just because it's a "tradition" for me to do an activity advent with my kids, it doesn't mean I have to do it if it's no longer serving us. And guess what? My kids are not disappointed. They are just as excited (maybe more!) to have a chocolate advent this year. And it is so much easier for me, too.

Read the rest of the article here:

<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/holiday-traditions-should-not-be-stressful>

WINTER CRAFT IDEA: SUN CATCHERS

Create your own sun-catchers!

Suitable for all ages, (but for parents of young kids, you'll need a little prep time).

Materials needed:

- * Clear contact paper
- * Construction paper/card
- * Tissue paper

Preparation:

1. Cut out winter shapes from your card or construction paper. Cut out the middle,

leaving a border about 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide.

2. Cut or tear tissue paper into small pieces.
3. Stick shapes onto contact paper

Craft!

Now let the kids take over, sticking tissue paper all over the sticky contact paper.

When they're done decorating, stick a second layer of contact paper on top, cut out the shape, and hang in your window!





Sex Activism

By Sarah Baxter

Six years ago, I joined a group of fellow UUs at a weekend training to learn the nuances required to facilitate Our Whole Lives (OWL), for elementary age kids. OWL, a joint program created by the Unitarian Universalist Association in the U.S. in collaboration with the United Church of Christ, is a life-long series of sexuality education curricula, which teach kids, teens, and adults all about

bodies, relationships, and sex.

Since then I have facilitated each of the age groups I trained for once, Kindergarten/Grade 1, and Grade 4-6, and participated in the planning team at First Unitarian.

OWL at FUCO has struggled over the past decade with volunteer burnout, conflicting family commitments, and small age cohorts. But the program was resurrected last year, running the Jr. High curriculum for a dedicated group of older kids. The next elementary offering is hopefully being planned for Spring 2022.

Coming full circle, this year, Leander has entered the age for the first level: Kindergarten!

Why OWL?

Comprehensive sex ed tackles a topic often difficult for parents to broach, but one that comes up whether they feel ready or not. At our house, Leander has started asking lots of questions about who's a boy and who's a girl? Why can't he have a baby in his body the way mummy did? Why does mummy sit down to pee? Why does daddy shave his face? Boy, am I glad I have some basic training in how to answer all his questions!

OWL, in particular, offers a holistic approach the basic health lessons kids often receive elsewhere. From how babies grow in uteruses, (and learning words like uterus, vulva, and testicles!) to how to navigate dating, consent, and understanding your own sexual identity, the different curriculum levels build on each other to add age appropriate content on inter-personal relationships, self-image, and myth-busting. We don't want kids to "just say no" to sex; we want to teach kids to understand and articulate their own boundaries, respect others' boundaries, and feel prepared for the complex real-world scenarios they will no doubt face.

Beyond puberty...

Believe it or not, lessons on consent, communication, inter-personal relationships, sexual identity, myth-busting, and even the mechanics of STI prevention aren't just for kids!

Young Adult, Adult, and Older Adult OWL curricula carry the comprehensive education throughout our life cycle. Navigating relationships, exploring the nuances of our identities, our likes, dislikes, compatibility, aging bodies, and more, are valid and important avenues of adult (religious) exploration.

(Anyone who claims they don't have anything left to learn is probably lying, or hiding something!)

OWL is a positive force in this world, where diversity in sexuality and gender identity are still on the fringes of mainstream culture. Thankfully, the program is periodically reviewed and updated to maintain its relevancy in an every-evolving world.

In November, the Social Action Cluster asked us what Social Justice activities we personally care about and are involved in. My answer is comprehensive sexuality education. In 2018, when the Ontario Government scrapped comprehensive sex ed in schools, I felt more than ever, how significant these lessons are!

If your kids or grandkids fall into the age group for the next OWL offering at First Unitarian, I encourage you to check it out!



Who Are the People in Our Neighbourhood?

Nanci Burns, in correspondence with Jason Duff



This is a continuing series about our neighbours at Heartwood House. Who are they? What do they offer to the community? There are 20 NGO's under our shared roof and in past issues we have shared with you People, Words and Change and the Community Laundry Cooperative. This issue we have the pleasure of introducing you to *Suits His Style*. Due to Covid restrictions, this interview was done electronically.

Can you briefly describe how Suits his Style works?

We operate through client referrals from our community partners. Once a client is referred to us, we contact that individual and schedule a 1-hour, private suiting appointment with 2 of our volunteers. If it is an interview suiting appointment, the client can expect to go home – at no cost – with a modern, gently used suit, a few shirts and ties and a pair of shoes. If the client is successful with the interview, his/she is invited to contact us directly to schedule another appointment. Depending on the job and dress code of the workplace, the client will go home with a few more suits, several dress shirts, belt, ties and outerwear. Our goal during the second suiting appointment is provide enough clothes for a regular work week so that our clients do not have to worry about the cost of buying work attire until they are financially stable.

Suits his Style started in 2014 out of a Dymon storage locker in Kanata. With the growing demand for this service, and the locker overflowing. The following year we moved to the Hardini Centre on Donald St. in Vanier. This provided the space we needed, but not necessarily the accessibility for all our clients. We met Moe in 2017 at a fundraising event hosted by 100 Men Who Care. We got talking and later that year moved into Heartwood House.

Since we started operations, we've helped over 2,000 people. About two-thirds of the people we see are successful in their interviews. Although what they wore to the interview probably wasn't the deciding factor why

they landed the job, we like to think it helped

out. What's most rewarding is seeing a client return after they've landed a job. Don't get me wrong, we'd like to help them again. But in some way, we prefer not, at least not to receive our help. Because we know they have started on a path of self-sufficiency and success.

How does ShS serve the community?

Suit his Style is a not-for-profit volunteer run organization. Working closely with community employment agencies and social services partners, we provide professional attire to people in need seeking employment or starting new jobs. However, we also serve people attending court hearings, immigration ceremonies and other special events. We operate through client referrals from our community partners, so we do not have regular hours of operation. We believe that being presentable and professional looking should not be a barrier to a new career.

How has the pandemic changed the way Suits his Style operates?

Between lockdowns of non-essential services and social distancing, the COVID-19 pandemic forced ShS to suspend all operations in March 2020. In late 2020 we did try to serve clients remotely using Zoom appointments and picks up only, at the OCTranspo Lost and Found. Only in the last few months, and with the generous help from Moe and Jennifer at Heartwood House have we been able to start, gradually seeing clients face-to-face again.

What's most rewarding is seeing a client return after they've landed a job.

What do you appreciate most about being a Heartwood House member?

(Continued on page 15)

Dismantling (in)visible barriers to success, one suit at a time



(Continued from page 14)

I think two words come to mind: localized support. We have collaborated with EcoEquitable to get alterations done on suits and we have donated casual clothing to CICAN to support their organization. This December we are planning to jointly organize a pop-up sale with other Heartwooders.

Are you aware of connections to UUFO or Unitarians?

At the moment we are not, however I think there could be something in the future.

Do you want to flag any roles for our Unitarian Fellowship members?

We are currently searching for replacing several board positions and recruiting more volunteers. If any Unitarians are looking to make a sustainable and positive effect on people in need, please contact me and I would be more than happy to discuss these opportunities.
jason@suitshisstyle.ca



CUC Is Hiring!

There has been a slight slow-down in CUC communications to all of you during the past few months. It's because we are sorely in need of a dynamic **Communications Manager**. This team player needs a solid background in communications, is equally comfortable with details and big picture strategic thinking, loves to be in the centre of the action and understands the nuances of our faith. The CM is also social media savvy, an excellent writer and storyteller, and knows how to develop and work a communications plan. Application deadline is December 20, 2021 (we really need one for the new year!) Could this be you or someone you know?

We are also looking for a **Web Specialist** on contract. This Specialist will have the WordPress skills to maintain the Canadian Unitarian Council's website, manage upgrades, web issues and security breaches, ensure compliance with regulations, and keep current with best practices. The WS is also responsible for event form creation, updating web content, and working with the CUC's new resource platform, LearnDash. This posting will remain open until it is filled, but we would appreciate knowing of your interest as soon as possible.

Send applications to jobs@cuc.ca.



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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Fellowship News

is published quarterly by UUFO
Send submissions, comments, or letters to the editors to:

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 Programming Schedule

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
(Worship)		Braiding Sweetgrass Book Club (Zoom)		Cercle de croissance spirituelle (UUFO)	Writer's Group (UUFO)	Meditation Circle (Zoom)
(Worship)				Film Club (Zoom)		
(Worship) Discussion Circle (UUFO)						Meditation Circle (Zoom)
(Worship) (Célébration francophone)					Music Night (Zoom)	
(Worship)						

Winter Themes for Worship:

December: Celebrating Darkness

January: Awakening

February: Love

March: Who are We as UUs?

Winter Special Activities:

December 19: Solstice Bilingual Service (4:30pm)

December 26: Holiday Coffee House (10:30am)

January 9: Preliminary Budget Meeting (12pm)

January 8/22 (TBC): *History of Racism in Canada* Workshop (1-4pm)

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