



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

*A church for people
with enquiring minds*

Our Mission Statement: “We covenant to support an empowering church that affirms the individual and celebrates history, science and mystery in a welcoming, joyous and evolving fellowship.”

January 2021

Upcoming Services

January 3 - Fire Communion - Service presented and led by LesLee Turmel

The UU’s traditional New Year’s fire communion ritual of bidding farewell to the old year and releasing it, making way for new year and all that it holds.

January 10 - Serenity - What is serenity and how can it be obtained? - Service presented and led by Karen Stovell

January 17 -The Legacy of Martin Luther King - Service presented by Donovan Hayden
Donovan will be examining the influence and contributions of MLK as it has impacted American civil rights and nonviolent activism around the world. Service led by Matt Virro

January 24 - Community, Social Action and UCN - Service presented and led by Penny Blake and Matt Virro

January 31 - Unitarian Universalism’s Roots and Development in North America - Service presented and led by James Glassford

Jim will examine how UU developed in North America as a faith with responsible and progressive ways.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.



Annual General Meeting Reports:

Reminder to Board Members and Committee Chairs...Please ensure that Reports are submitted to the President on or before **January 21st** for review and preparation for AGM packages. Thank you.



**Unitarian Congregation
of Niagara**

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2020/2021

PRESIDENT:

Penny Blake

VICE PRESIDENT:

Matt Virro

PAST PRESIDENT:

Anita Miecznikowski

SECRETARY: Roy Blake

TREASURER:

Erdwin Hueniken

MEMBER AT LARGE:

Liina Veer

PROGRAM:

LesLee Turmel

SOCIAL ACTION:

Beryl Stovell

LAY CHAPLAINS:

Doreen Peever

Karen Stovell

ADULT RELIGIOUS

EDUCATION: Karen Stovell

CHOIR and MUSIC:

Penny Blake /

Karen Stovell

COMMUNICATIONS:

Roy Blake

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:

Elaine Edmiston

LAY CHAPLAINCY:

Doreen Peever

MEMBERSHIP:

Doreen Peever

NEWSLETTER:

LesLee Turmel

PASTORAL CARE:

Doreen Peever /

Joan Rothman

PROPERTY: Alan and Hilde

Wheeler

RENTAL: Alan and Hilde

Wheeler

SOCIAL: Susan Velkers, Jim

Glassford, Karen Stovell,

Abu Hosein

TRUSTEES:

Jim Glassford

Jenny Leach

Doreen Peever

A Note of Thanks...

It has been a challenging year for all of us. In a time when we have been encouraged to stay apart from others, it is paradoxical that we have been able to stay together as tightly as we have. This has been made possible through the efforts of many.

One of those who has been most diligent to this end is Roy Blake. Roy has been available to keep us connected, via Zoom, for services, regular and impromptu meetings, tutoring the less tech savvy in the ways of Zoom and has been accommodating to last minute additions and changes to our Zoom activities. He has done this in addition to his many others roles at UCN and CUC. For your patience and hard work, thank you, Roy.

Thank you, also, to all those have been using the common phone to keep in touch with the many congregants who have been unable to attend our Zoom services. This is so important in providing ongoing contact and support to those who could easily feel excluded from their UCN congregation. I know some of you have made new friends through this process which can only help to strengthen our UCN family.

None of us know how much longer it will be until we are united again in our sanctuary. Until then, let us all continue to make the effort to stay as connected as much as we can.

– *LesLee Turmel*

Social Action Accomplishments

Thank you to all the UCN'ers who contributed to the Community Care Seniors' Hampers and the Positive Living Drive for mitts, gloves, scarves and hats.

UCN donations to the Seniors' Hampers just topped \$1000.00. Ann Monster and I were able to purchase nine canvas grocery buggies and eleven \$50.00 gift certificates that can be used for groceries or clothing. Community Care was excited to receive them and is most grateful.

Contributions for Positive Living were equally outstanding. Almost 200 items of scarves, hats and mitts or gloves were donated. These will go a long way towards keeping members of our community warm this winter.

Thank you to all of you. We can accomplish much when we do it together.

Stay safe and healthy.

Wishing you all the best for the New Year,

– *LesLee Turmel*

President's Message . . .

By the time you receive this Newsletter, you may be in the midst of holiday celebrations or in the New Year. It certainly has been different this year. And for many of us, myself included, it has been more limited, not only in activities, but in the celebrations I could naturally have with family and friends around this time of year.

But for all that, we have much to be thankful for. We have maintained services and shared music and stories with each other. We can share our Joys and Concerns and still support causes we believe in, such as Community Care and Community Living. We can be thankful for new technologies like Zoom, or for old ones such as the telephone. The light is now appearing at the end of the tunnel, and hopefully we will be able to stay safe until we can be vaccinated.

A big thanks to all of you; our members, friends, and especially to those on the board and committees for making the effort to keep the UCN alive and connected. I hope you have had happy holidays. Let's look forward to a Happy New Year.

– Penny Blake

CUC Quest Survey: December 2020

The CUC has reached out to congregations and individuals to complete questionnaires that can assist them in assessing its past performance and establishing goals and objectives for the future. The questionnaire which was designed for the congregation was completed by your UCN board. What follows are the questions and the board responses.

1) When we emerge from the pandemic experience, what do we want our Canadian Unitarian Universalist faith communities to be, to do, and to look like?

Answer: Stand up for liberal religion; focus on the environment; Canadian and local issues; help people help themselves; work with other faith communities at local and national levels in areas of common concern.

2) What are we learning during this pandemic that is helping us get there?

Answer: Connecting is not as difficult as we feared. Yet, some members can't be reached without extra effort. Connecting on a national level is actually easier than it was before because more activity is online. We see the likelihood of hybrid services continuing is good. There is a need to get back together physically as well.

3) What can we do as a national faith community to help ourselves, each other, and our communities through the pandemic?

Answer: Be patient and optimistic; make the effort to stay connected; try to maintain a good financial base for the future; continue to donate money to causes.

4) What makes you feel most connected to Canadian Unitarian Universalism?

Answer: It withstood the test of time; lack of dogma and the expectation and acceptance of questioning; broad acceptance of people; rational and constructive outlook; acknowledgement that people have different religious traditions and share the good things from all of them; services are uplifting; UU's have stood up for the LGBTQ community.

5) What do you need from the community of Canadian Unitarian Universalism to stay connected?

Answer: An active CUC with eNews, round-tables and webinars; access to ministers via Zoom targeted to small and lay-led congregations; emphasis on interactive gatherings; a need for transparency and feedback to congregations of which this survey is a good example.

6) How have you experienced the Beloved Community in Canadian Unitarian Universalism?

Answer: Solidarity with other faith communities, migrant farmworkers, homeless people, environmental causes.

7) How can the Beloved Community of Canadian Unitarian Universalism support, ignite, and inspire us as a faith, now and into the future?

Answer: Increase awareness and outreach; increase visibility with governments; work together with other faith communities; taking care to research issues before acting.

8) Do you have any additional comments, stories, or things to share with the QUUest team as we facilitate our shared imagination of Canadian Unitarian Universalism through 2032?

Answer: Encourage members of larger fellowships to participate in the CUC; encourage more interfaith involvement; sharing anecdotes from congregations; keep up the good work of connecting congregations.

Queenston Neighbourhood Stories

The Reverend Paul Miller of Westminster United Church has initiated a project of collecting stories and memorabilia which can tell the story of the Queenston Neighbourhood.

He is looking for stories, memories, documents, pictures, artifacts, and other sources of information about:

- the people of the Queenston Neighbourhood, including residents, employees, employers and contributors.
- places, including homes, churches, businesses, community organizations, parks, schools, including those of the past such as the General Hospital.
- anything pertaining to the past, the present and aspirations for the future.

The rich history of story-telling can create a sense of belonging, build community pride, show us where we have come from, and help us envision where we are going. If you have something to share or would like more information, you can contact Reverend Paul Miller at paulridleymiller@gmail.com

– Penny Blake

January Guest Speaker

Donovan Hayden

On Sunday, January 17, UCN will host Donovan Hayden as our guest speaker. In these turbulent times, he will focus on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Day is observed on the third Monday of January each year. Although it is traditionally an American observance, MLK is recognized worldwide for being the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the American Civil Rights Movement. He successfully challenged racial discrimination in federal and state laws. His legacy encompasses monumental decisions, actions and progressions of humanitarian rights that reach far beyond the American Civil Rights Movement.

Donovan is a Unitarian Universalist member at Neighbourhood Congregation in Toronto. His path as a young activist has found him straddling two countries; here, in Canada, and the other in Pittsburgh, USA where he was active in Black Lives Matter protests. He spoke to The First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh in the summer of 2020, and has spoken to UU Congregations across Ontario.

Donovan has spent much of his life in the USA, but his ancestral home is Toronto where his mother, the Reverend Patricia Trudeau, is a minister of The Unitarian Fellowship of Northwestern Toronto. His father, Wilburn Hayden, remains active developing a story of contemporary black history in Canada and as a Social Work professor at York University. Donovan is currently a Masters student at York.

I first met Donovan at Unicamp years ago. I have come to know him well. He will inspire and inform.

– *Matt Virro*

Unitarian Universalist Midwinter Retreat

February 6, 2021 Online

This is the 32nd year in which Unitarian Universalists have gathered for a February retreat. This year's retreat will be different, for obvious reasons. It will be online, for one day only on Saturday, February 6, 2021.

As usual, there will be a keynote speaker, interesting workshops on a variety of topics, and a social evening featuring a cabaret, games and conversations. Our theme this year will be "Going Viral!"

You can find the most up to date event information on the web at

<https://uumidwinterretreat.blogspot.com/>

The schedule and registration information are being finalized as of this writing. The cost will be \$15.00 per household. The keynote speaker will be Liz James, founder of the Unitarian Universalist Hysterical Society and its famous Coffee Hour Facebook page.

If you have any questions about this year's Midwinter Retreat, please call me.

– *Roy Blake*

Organizing Committee

Susan Velkers, demonstrating her usual enthusiastic ability for fun and creativity, wrote this variation on an old and familiar song for Karen Stovell's service on Joy.

Unitarian Ode To Joy

'Twas the winter solstice, and Roy was tweaking zoom
Hoping for the day we could meet in the same room.
Jenny was putting snow tires on her bicycle.
Peter was at the church breaking off each icicle.
Hilde and Al were under the mistletoe,
Doreen was adorning her cat with a bow.
Abu was picking tropical fruits.
Matt was donning Nordic ski boots.
Penny was lighting the Menorah.
Mary-lyn was inhaling the scent of forest flora.
Adolf was sketching cartoons.
Anita was baking macaroons.
Eva was out hiking in the woods.
LesLee and Ann were shopping for seniors goods.
Paul was playing a carol on the trombone.
Karen was singing in an a-cappella combo.
Beryl was painting a winter scene.
Petra was stirring a soup tureen.
Maurice was playing rock guitar.
Guy was attaching antlers to his car.
Margaret was performing a Nutcracker ballet.
Jim was baking a tuna soufflé.
Erdwin was tallying each pledge letter.
Rhonda was knitting a Christmas sweater.
Elaine was making angels in the snow
Sue was plucking her bluegrass banjo.
Dan was sculpting reindeer hedges.
Julianne was drawing animal sketches.
Liina was lighting a seasonal Yule log
And toasting the New Year with spicy eggnog.
We look to the future with renewed hope!
Adapting, surviving, learning to cope.'

Thank you, Susan for spreading Joy! For those who have been unable to participate in our joyous and fun Zoom services, you are not forgotten. We also extend the Joy of the season to each and all of you.

Pub Night - Thursday, January 28

The theme for January's Pub Night will be "A Favourite Poem." The idea is that we can each share a favourite poem or, perhaps, more than one which inspires the imagination and makes us feel good as we strive for a better world.

Join us January 28 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Details will be forthcoming as how to upload your poem or poems to Roy who will put them up on Zoom for us to see at Pub Night. – *Matt Virro*

Film Night

There will be no Film Nights until further notice.



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