



# UCN NEWS

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

On March 17, St.Patrick's Day, I wore Ukrainian blue and yellow in solidarity with a nation facing daily destruction and peril. I chose not to wear Irish green, which for many acknowledges a man best known as the patron saint of beer celebrated in most university beer halls in Canada.

St.Patrick, I learned, was born not in Ireland, but in Britain in the 4th century. At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family's estate in Britain. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. During this time, he worked as a shepherd and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to a new found religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian. After a return to Britain and ordination as a priest, he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission; to minister to Christians living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish. There is no historical mention of his relationship with stout or beer or ale. And so is history!

I suspect many a glass of foam was raised on March 17 in honour of St.Patrick, but more so for Ukraine and our wish for its people to be safe and secure. It's a feeling any Unitarian can understand. We, here in Niagara, stand ready to do our part to help in whatever way we can. We need only talk to our Ukrainian friends and neighbours, and to visit any of their churches to learn what we as friends of the Ukraine can do to help.

- *Matt Virro*

## **RESUMPTION OF HYBRID SERVICES**

Hybrid services are now available. We are able to congregate at the church or on Zoom. Links for Zoom services will be provided from [ucn.communications@gmail.com](mailto:ucn.communications@gmail.com). If you are not on the mailing list for Zoom services, contact Roy Blake at the above email address.

In order to attend services in person, you must be fully vaccinated and boosted. Please bring proof of vaccination with you. We require that masks be worn and physical distancing observed during services. Masks are optional during coffee hour after service. Please do not attend if you have any Covid symptoms or have been recently in close contact with anyone with Covid.

Anyone who is unable or unwilling to comply with the above instructions is very welcome to join us on Zoom.

## **UPCOMING SERVICES**

April 3 - Revolution - service led and presented by Karen Stovell.

April 10 - Palm Sunday: Lessons for Today - service led and presented by LesLee Turmel

Palm Sunday and Passover will always be intertwined into the story of the season. Their respective and collective messages can inform and direct us as Unitarians.

April 17 - Easter Sunday Service - Guest speaker Reverend David Galston will be leading and presenting the service

April 24 - The Wonderful You - service led and presented by Jim Glassford  
Jim will use personal stories and scientific studies to illustrate how wonderful you all are. This will be a shared service with the Unitarian Fellowship of Northwest Toronto joining us on Zoom.

May 1 - Ryan's Bowl - presented by Isabella Bujour and led by LesLess Turmel  
Isabella Bujour, our guest speaker, will address the initiatives of Ryan's Bowl, her work with the organization and how we can become involved.

## RYAN'S BOWL PROGRAM

*To help a child is to help a community. Education, love and hope can grow a nation.*

Ryan's Bowl is a Canadian based charity that was founded in 2006 by Ken Walsh after he travelled to Uganda. He saw, first hand, the poverty of the region, notably the sad and tragic conditions in which the children lived. It began with just sending some money to feed and care for five children. Years later and after much hard work, Ryan's Bowl is assisting with seven schools and with a babies' home. They now help feed 1,500 children and secure jobs for cooks in each school.

Ryan's Bowl's mission is to bring food, education, medical care and hope to the children of Uganda, specifically the M'bale region. Currently, they are in the stage of growth and expansion. Their plans are to assist an increasing number of small villages to flourish to the point of self-sufficiency. Their primary goals are fourfold:

1. To increase the percentage of girls attending school and passing their classes.  
By educating girls, they indirectly educate the mothers, sisters and wives of the community.
2. To offer help throughout a child's school years to ensure success and to see the child into post secondary school. This can include donors participating in a sponsorship program where they can select a child while supporting and watching them grow.
3. To address urgent needs in communities and implement programs which provide, for example, access to safe water and medical supplies/care.
4. To set up a safe home for orphans who are not fortunate enough to have a family or are in need of reliable and safe shelter; to ensure all the basic needs of a child are provided, including education, food and clothing.

To learn more about Ryan's Bowl, meet the kids and the team, learn of the impact they are having on Uganda communities or to donate, contact their website at [www.ryansbowl.ca](http://www.ryansbowl.ca)

Information and quotations obtained at Ryan's Bowl Website

*We can change the world and make it a better place. It's in our hands to make a **difference** - Nelson Mandela*

## POLLINATOR GARDEN

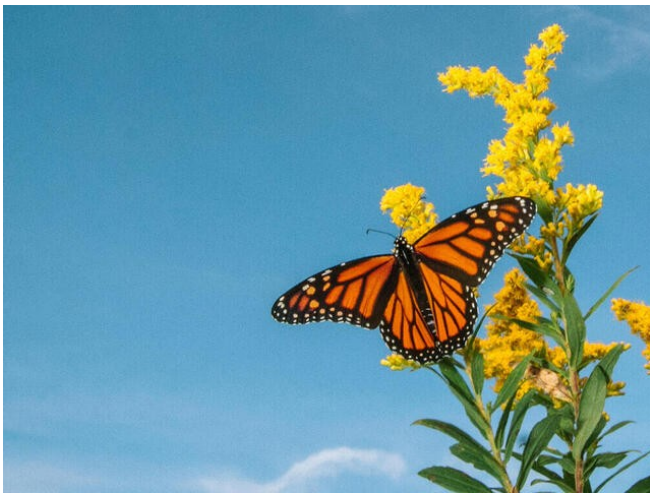
More bees will be buzzing at UCN.

We are excited to announce we have received \$2700.00 from the Niagara Foundation in addition to a previous grant of \$500.00 from West Trust for the construction of a pollinator garden. The creation of this garden, populated with native trees and shrubs, will provide a natural oasis rich in pollen, nectar, seeds and berries for wildlife as well as a refuge of flowers and greenery for us at UCN and the community.

We also look forward to hosting neighbourhood workshops to provide education about the benefits of the garden.

If you are interested in being involved in the garden project, please contact me.

- *Mary-lyn Hopper*



## **Intentional Aging**

Brian Jones and Karen Stovell will be facilitating a group on intentional aging.

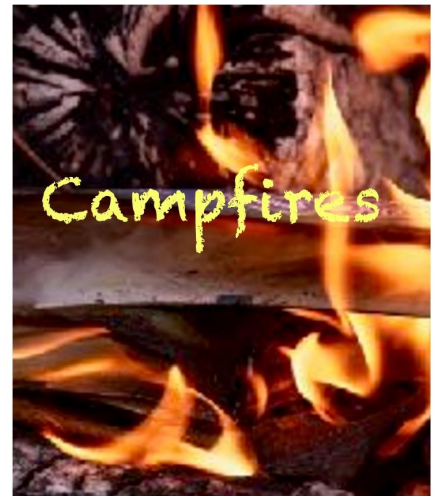
This group is designed to address how we live through the aging process. In spite of how well we have taken care of ourselves to promote successful aging and to avoid disability or dependence on others, we are more often than not confronted with physical, cognitive or mental health challenges which are unanticipated.

Intentional aging is about the choices we make in how we live throughout the aging process. We cannot always control what happens, but we do have control how we address the change.

Contact Karen Stovell if you are interested in participating in this group or wanting further information about it,







# UCN Retreat June 20-22

BLISS HAVEN—1028 Canal Bank Road, Dunville, Ontario



This will be fun!  
Details to come!

SIGN UP with Event Team !

Karen Stovell- Lead / Liina Veer

Mary-lyn Hopper / Matt Virro



Great Price \$250 pp & Accommodations—Buffet  
Food included – Relax—Workshops for the Mind— 82  
Acres to Explore for the Body - Music –  
Get to know your Congregation

Let us know if you would like to contribute!

## Newsletter Survey



Within the next month I will be sending out a survey regarding the newsletter. In addition to advising you of upcoming events and the odd story I send your way, I believe this newsletter can be more dynamic and inclusive. The survey will ask you for your ideas and opinions. .

The newsletter belongs to the members and friends of UCN. So, in anticipation of the survey, please put on your thinking cap and help us grow our newsletter to something that all our congregants will want to explore.

Thank you.

- *LesLee Turmel*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP UCN?

By donating money or time or expertise!

Your financial gifts help UCN continue to operate to better serve you and the community. To make a monetary contribution you can give cash or cheque at time of service or make an e-transfer.

To make an e-transfer, set up Unitarian Congregation of Niagara as payee at your bank with the e-mail [ucn.communications@gmail.com](mailto:ucn.communications@gmail.com). We are set up for automatic deposit so you don't need a password.

If writing a cheque, make it payable to UCN and offer it at Sunday service or mail it to: Unitarian Congregation of Niagara  
223 Church Street  
St. Catharines, Ontario  
L2R 3E8

To make a donation of time or expertise, follow the activities of the various committees and offer to participate. Organizers will typically call for and welcome all volunteers. You are always welcome to make a proposal to initiate something that is true to our principles and close to your heart.

Together, we can work harder and wiser towards a better world.

## ORDINARY PEOPLE DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

One can only wonder how those whose fortunes are made by manufacturing weaponry can look at themselves in the mirror. The products they trade on are designed to kill, maim and destroy. Over 160 million people were killed in wars during the last century. That sad and abstract number is what a person is reduced to during a war. Those that fight and those who die are stripped of their dignity, not because they surrendered that dignity, but because the creators of war have stolen it from them. This time, it is the invasion of Ukraine that is war, Vladimir Putin's war.

My grandparents emigrated from Ukraine prior to being married. They met in Canada and had five children of which three died of prevalent diseases of the day. Of their two remaining sons, the youngest was my father. The family returned to Ukraine in the mid 1920's and remained for two years. My grandmother asserted that they must return to Canada....she was not raising her sons to be slaughtered in a "stupid" war.

Making the decision to return to Canada or remain in their homeland was fraught with internal conflict. If they left, were they abandoning their homeland and family? If they stayed, were they putting themselves and their children's future in peril?

They did return. I learned that each grandparent, although both agreed to return, had different feelings attached to that decision. It was how they told the story that was revealing. My grandmother would talk of their return to Canada with relief; my grandfather would solemnly speak of leaving their home. One voice was that of joy; the other carried a tone of longing.

And so it continues, this very instant, where individuals and families confront the same dilemma. No good decision or bad decision, but an agonizing and complicated decision.

For centuries, often multiple times within a century, Ukrainians fought wars defending their ethnicity, freedom or ever fluctuating border. This time they are fighting to retain nationhood and democracy. They continue to be heroic and steadfast. We are in awe.

David Walsh, the American Catholic political philosopher, wrote in "The Growth of the Liberal Soul" that human beings have a spiritual resource of which they are unaware until those resources are required. Ordinary people distinguish



themselves by resisting oppression, whether it be that of the Gulag, Nazi concentration camps or tyranny of the likes of Putin.

And so it is with Ukrainians. Many are ignoring their instinct for self preservation to defend principles of freedom and dignity. Ukraine and its people are inspiring the world. We see common people risking much to protect their freedom, their democracy.

We also see vast numbers of the global community contributing to humanitarian relief, protesting, and opening their homes to refugees and hospitals to the sick and injured. The world's response has been monumental and inspirational.

As I watch from afar, I am compelled to examine how complacent we have become, complacent about our freedoms, our democracy. Yes, we offer an informed and free vote when the occasion arises. And we trust those who are elected, whether we voted for them or not, to operate in accordance with democratic principles. It is all very neat and tidy.

The best testament to democracy are the likes of Putin who are fearful of the common folk who would risk their lives to retain freedom. May autocrats be intimidated by the people's opposition. May dictators never suppress again the human spirit. May Ukraine remain free. But, alas, the dealers of weaponry will be emboldened to continue manufacturing their killing machines. It is the people who risk everything who are the ultimate flag bearers of democracy.

To preserve our democracy, its inherent freedoms, and the worth and dignity of all requires active vigilance, participation and a unique form of courage lest we become that calculus so large and expansive it can be only appreciated in the abstract.

Our democratic way of life is not a foregone conclusion.

- *LesLee Turmel*

*Principle 5*

*The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large*



## **HUMANITARIAN AID FOR UKRAINE**

St. John's Ukrainian Catholic Church is the Niagara Region consolidation point for donations directed to Ukraine. They recently finished a drive for items and monetary contributions, but will continue to accept donations.

Currently, they are looking for the following:

- water purification tablets.
- dehydrated high caloric meals and dry rations intended for camping or hunting.
- ear plugs.
- wind-up flashlights.
- tactical gloves which are leather, warm, facilitate mobility.
- first aid products suitable for trauma such as gauze, tourniquets, and tape.
- NEW socks, gloves and hats.
- monetary donations.

Many of these items can be found at hunting or camping stores.



The list will be revised from time to time and is based on the current needs within Ukraine. At this time, St. John's Ukrainian Church is receiving items by appointment only and will also pick up items for those who cannot drive.

For dropoff or pickup contact Larissa at 289-696-1100 or the parish office at 905-937-3993. They are open daily from 9:00 to noon.

The items you donate will be sent to Poland and then distributed to Ukraine

*If you want happiness for an hour – take a nap.  
If you want happiness for a day – go fishing.  
If you want happiness for a year – inherit a fortune.  
If you want happiness for a **lifetime** – help someone else.*

*- Chinese Proverb*

## Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

223 Church St.  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8  
905-687-8433

[unitarian-stcatharines.org](http://unitarian-stcatharines.org)  
[ucn.communications@gmail.com](mailto:ucn.communications@gmail.com)

### Board of Directors

President: Matt Virro  
Vice-president: Mary-lyn Hopper  
Past-president: Penny Blake  
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Treasurer: Brian Jones  
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Program: Karen Stovell  
Social Action: Beryl Stovell

**Lay Chaplains:** Contact  
[laychaplainsucn@gmail.com](mailto:laychaplainsucn@gmail.com)  
Beryl Stovell, Karen Stovell

### Committee Chairs

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Karen Stovell  
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Jim Glassford, Erdwin Hueniken,  
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## Covenant

We come in peace  
To this place of fellowship and love,  
Searching for truth and meaning,  
Seeking justice and equity through action,  
Supporting each other  
and serving our community,  
Acknowledging and preserving the gifts of  
this world,  
This is our covenant with each other and  
with all.



### Deadline for Newsletter:

Friday April 22

Send articles to LesLee Turmel at  
[larganturmel@gmail.com](mailto:larganturmel@gmail.com)