



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.”

May 2021

Upcoming Services

May 2 - Search for Truth and Meaning - presented and led by LesLee Turmel

In a series of discussions focusing on Unitarian principles, we will launch this exploration beginning with our Fourth Principle, the free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

May 9 - A Mindful Mother’s Day - presented and led by LesLee Turmel

Images of mothers and mothering lie somewhere between sticky sweet and “Mommy Dearest.” Along that continuum stands an iconic figure of motherhood. So let’s look at what practical mothering means.

May 16 - TBA

May 23 - Community and UCN - presented and led by Penny Blake

UCN without community can not exist. How, as individuals, can we come together to enrich our community?

May 30 - Her Name was Margaret - presented by Denise Davy

Denise authored the tragic story of Margaret and her experiences with mental illness and homelessness. Denise will speak of her relationship with Margaret, the policies and programs that failed her, and recommendations for change. The service will be led by LesLee Turmel

Learn from yesterday,
Live for today,
Hope for tomorrow.
The important thing is not to stop
questioning.

- Albert Einstein

**Unitarian Congregation
of Niagara**

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2021

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This Month's Guest Speaker

Denise Davy

Denise, a fellow Unitarian, will be speaking on May 30 about mental health and homelessness, especially as it pertains to Margaret Jacobson, the subject of Denise's book, 'Her Name was Margaret: Life and Death on the Streets.'

From denisedavy.ca>bio

Denise Davy is an award winning journalist whose writing focuses on mental health, homelessness and gender issues. She worked for the Hamilton Spectre for 26 years. She has won multiple awards, (too lengthy in number to note all here - see bio). She has been recognized for her coverage of health, social issues and investigative reporting.

Denise is the recipient of four national journalism fellowships which provided the opportunity to explore child prostitution in Thailand, poverty and family issues in India, and children in poverty in Canada.

In 1993, the Canadian Association of Journalism awarded Denise for co-founding the National Women in Media Conference. The following year she filed an Ontario Human Rights complaint against the Hamilton YMCA, which was the last all-male Y in North America. As a result, the Y agreed to allow women as members.

That victory, along with her work on the conference and her wide ranging coverage of women's issues, earned Denise the Woman of the Year award in the Communications category from the Status of Women Committee of Hamilton.

Denise's writing has appeared in Chatelaine, CBC Hamilton, Broadview, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail and Parents Canada. Her story on adoption appeared in the book "The Lucky Ones."

She is also founder of Purses for Margaret, which provides toiletries to homeless women living in Burlington.

.....modern Unitarian

This parody, “.....modern Unitarian”, based on Gilbert and Sullivan’s comic opera “The Pirates of Penzance”, was submitted by Anita Miecznikowski.

The tune is that of “I am the Very Model of a Modern Major General” and the lyrics are the composition of Reverend Christopher Riabie - Minister Emeritus UU Congregation of Jamestown, New York. Thank you, Anita. It is a toe tapping tune which many of us know. With some solitary practice, we can join in a rousing performance of this ditty when we all gather next.

– *LesLee Turmel*

I am the very model of a modern Unitarian,
Far broader than a Catholic, Hindu, Jew or Presbyterian.
I know the world’s religions and can trace their root historical
From Moses up to Channing, all in order categorical.
I’m very well acquainted, too, with theories theological,
On existential questions I am always wholly logical,
About most any problem I am teeming with a lot of views,
I’m full of fine ideas that should fill our church’s empty pews.

Chorus members:

We’re full of fine ideas that should fill our church’s empty pews,
We’re full of fine ideas that should fill our church’s empty pews,
We’re full of fine ideas that should fill our church’s empty empty pews.

I quote from Freud and Jung and all the experts psychological.
I’m anti nuke, I don’t pollute, I’m chastely ecological.
In short, in matters spiritual, ethical, material,
I am the very model of a modern Unitarian.

In short, in matters spiritual, ethical, material
I am the very model of a modern Unitarian.

I use the latest language; God is neither Father nor the Lord,
But Ground of Being, Source of Life or almost any other word.
I never pray, I meditate, I’m leary about worshipping.
I serve on 10 committees none of which accomplish anything.
I give to worthy causes and I drive a gas conserving car,
I have good UU principles (although I’m not sure what they are).
I’m open to opinions of profound or broad variety,
Unless they’re too conservative or smack of righteous piety.

Chorus members:

Unless they’re too conservative or smack of righteous piety.
Unless they’re too conservative or smack of righteous piety.

Unless they're too conservative or smack of righteous pie-piety.

I formulate agendas and discuss them with the best of 'em,
But don't ask me to implement, we leave that to the rest of 'em.
In short, in matters spiritual, ethical, material,
I am the very model of today's religious liberal.

Chorus members:

In short, in matters spiritual, ethical, material,
We are the very model of today's religious liberal.

Pub Night

Thursday, May 27 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Theme: Technology

“We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology.”

- Carl Sagan 1990

“We have genuflected before the god of science only to find that it has given us the atomic bomb, producing fears and anxieties that science can never mitigate.”

- Martin Luther King Jr. 1963

As Unitarians, do we care too much or enough about science? Is science and technology a means to increase our own fortunes or is it a means to increase the fortunes of the manufacturers of technology? Are we simply limping behind it?

Is technology outpacing our capacity to understand it and to keep up? Can we manage a spiritual life alongside technology?

EO Wilson suggested in 2009,

“The real problem of humanity is the following: we have Paleolithic emotions , medieval institutions and godlike technology.”

Let's get together on Thursday, May 27 at 6:30 for our final Pub Night of the season! As always, everyone is welcome. The Zoom connection will be provided closer to the scheduled date.

Don't forget to bring your wine or beer or food or refreshment or abandon it all!

– *Matt Virro*

Calling all UCN Members and Friends

I have good news and bad news.

The bad news is that UCN's furnace conked out this spring. The good news is that a new HVAC system has been professionally installed. The new air filter system helps provide better protection against COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses. We will be a lot safer when we meet again.

Some additional bad news is that the new equipment and installation cost almost \$16,000. Yikes!

The Board expects to meet this additional expense. But we can't pull this off without your support. Whether you give regularly or infrequently, as a member or a friend, we ask you to contribute to this undertaking. It's something we need our entire congregation to participate in.

Even if you cannot make a large gift, know that every bit counts. It is about coming together as a community to meet the challenge. Can you give an additional amount to help meet this unavoidable extra cost?

You can send your contribution by E-transfer or by cheque, noting on the E-transfer or cheque that the money goes towards the furnace.

Thanks everyone. I am confident that we will come together and donate to this cause. We need to stick together during these difficult times.

What a great party we shall have once we are all together again in our UCN home.

– *Beryl Stovell*

What Does UCN Mean

To me, the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara means a safe place. It is a place where any question may be asked and is treated respectfully. It is a place where questions are expected. It is a place where one doesn't have to pretend to believe items in a creed which doesn't make sense. It is a place where one can identify as atheist, agnostic, humanist, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish or Christian – or none of the above. It is where LGBTQ+ people may come out, feel safe and are loved. This is a place where friends have supported me when I badly needed that. This is a place which had enough faith in my abilities to appoint me as a Chaplain in 1992 and continues to support me in that role. It is home, where most of my friends are, where we like and trust each other.

To the community, UCN represents a liberal religious voice that fearlessly defends the rights of LGBTQ+ people to legally marry. Unitarian Lay Chaplains provide a service to the community by officiating at weddings and memorial services for people who have no church home. We provide a dignified service that respects the wishes of the people involved, tailored to them, not just a by-rote service that barely remembers to plug in the right names. We have had representation on the Brock University Ecumenical Chaplaincy Committee since 2010, along with Anglican, Presbyterian and United Churches, hosting a Toonie Supper

for students once a year. We work respectfully with members of other religious denominations, as we do with Muslims in Out of the Cold. We support RAFT, Community Care and Women's Place with both money and in-kind donations. We provide a home for people who have left other denominations because they felt constricted by a narrow belief system. The Unitarian Church has always been a strong supporter of women in ministry, starting in the 1800's with Olympia Brown, the first woman ordained as a UU minister. That tradition continues with both ministers and Lay Chaplains in Canada.

For the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara to thrive, we need to ask ourselves what we can give to it – our time, our talents, our hard work, our involvement and our money. As with anything worthwhile, what we get out of it depends on what we put into it. UCN needs all of us.

I have been a Unitarian since 1959, first at the Church of the Messiah in Montreal when I went to McGill. That is where I first learned of a church that honoured differences of opinion, challenged people to think for themselves and where I felt at home. After more than 60 years, I cannot imagine being anything else.

Doreen M. Peever, Lay Chaplain and Trustee, Membership Chair; previously served UCN as Secretary, Vice President, President and Treasurer.

The world is so full of wonderful things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

– Robert Louis Stevenson

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