



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA
A Congregation for Everybody

UCN NEWS

June 2024

Our 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.

UPCOMING SERVICES

June 2- Annual Church Picnic - hosted by Eva Schwartzentruber and Paul Pi-pher - Pinegrove Crescent, Albright Gardens, Beamsville (Google for directions)

This year's picnic will again be in Beamsville starting at NOON. It's potluck. Bring a favourite dish, your own plates and utensils and a chair to sit upon. Bug spray and walking shoes are suggested if you wish to hike the nearby Bruce Trail. In the event of rain there will be an indoor facility to gather. Join us for fun, good food and maybe some hiking or board games in the afternoon. For further information contact Eva at evaschwartzentruber@gmail.com.

ALL OTHER SERVICES at 11:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

June 9 - Flower Communion - service presented and led by Kathryn Waugh
The Flower Communion is an annual Unitarian-Universalist tradition where we celebrate our uniqueness and our community by bringing a flower to service and returning home with the gift of another flower. Read the article by Kathryn Waugh in this month's newsletter about the history and symbolism of the Flower Communion.

June 16 - How to Live to 100 - service presented and led by Fred Harland

June 23 - Goddess Remembered, NFB film - service led Liina Veer
This film is the first in a trilogy chronicling 35,000 years of goddess-worshipping religions in the ancient past.

June 30 - Memories of Campfires Sing-a-longs - service presented and led by Andrea Crecco and Avril Beaubien, with musical accompaniment by Susan Glassford on the banjo

FLOWER COMMUNION, June 9 - Kathryn Waugh



A Short History of the Flower Communion

The Unitarian Universalist Flower Communion service which we will celebrate on June 9 was originated in 1923 by Dr. Norbert Capek [pronounced Chah-Peck], founder of the modern Unitarian movement in Czechoslovakia. On the last Sunday before the summer recess of the Unitarian church in Prague, all the children and adults participated in this colourful ritual, which gives concrete expression to the humanity-affirming principles of our liberal faith.

When the Nazis took control of Prague in 1940, they found Dr. Capek's gospel of the inherent worth and beauty of every human person to be, as Nazi court records show-- "...too dangerous to the Reich [for him] to be allowed to live." Dr. Capek was sent to Dachau where he was killed the next year. This gentle man suffered a cruel death, but his message of human hope and decency lives on through his Flower Communion which is widely celebrated today. It has been a success in Unitarian congregations around the world including Canada.

On June 9, congregants are asked to bring a flower of their choice, either from their own garden, or from a field or ditch. I will bring extras for those who can not access flowers. Each person will place their flower in a vase provided. This

signifies that each joins with others of their free will. After the service, each person will take a flower other than the one they brought.

The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together, the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community. It would not be the same without each and every one of us.

By exchanging flowers, we show our willingness to walk together in our search for truth, disregarding all that might divide us. Each person takes home a flower brought by someone else, thus symbolizing our shared celebration of community. This communion of sharing is essential to a free people of a free religion.

Some “wonderings” to start the discussion:

- When did you first look into the face of a flower? What flower was it? What did you think?
- How have flowers been important to you? How are they meaningful to you?
- Do you have flowers in your garden and your home? What flowers do you like to grow?
- Do you have a favourite garden? What would you plant in your ideal flower garden?
- If you were a flower, what flower would you be? What qualities of the flower do you see in yourself?
- Bring a favourite poem to read in the circle about a flower/flowers.
- Bring your own thoughts and wonderings to add to our discussion.
- In a study published in the Journal of Nature the data presented suggest more than 80 percent of modern flowering plant lineages originated in a sudden burst of invention that began 150 million years ago. How does this knowledge affect your thoughts about flowers?

References:

<https://treeoflife.kew.org/release-history>
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10778206>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Mary-lyn Hopper

What a month May was! The dimness of our sanctuary was set ablaze with the addition of new lighting and we gloried in the brightness of much needed coats of paint. We joined together in the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Niagara Congregation. We experienced a minor break in and hired a new cleaning person. In the busyness of all this activity (and much more), the major common denominator is enthusiastic volunteers that make this happen. Let's celebrate the time and energy of all of you who have contributed this month:

- planning the anniversary celebration
- researching and presenting a service
- providing snacks and making coffee
- contacting non-members to provide a service
- providing music through planning a program or making your voice heard at service
- participating in the cleaning crew for the anniversary
- monitoring our finances
- providing maintenance such as fixing locks
- cleaning our property
- doing outside work like weed whacking and weed pulling
- reaching out to the community through social action
- reaching out to the community by sharing food resources and used books
- sorting, organizing and getting rid of excess property in the building
- meeting to provide governance for the congregation
- reaching out to past members of the congregation
- meeting to plan the program for the fall

- facilitating and planning small-group discussions
- doing background tech work on the website and calendar
- setting up the equipment for the zoom presentations
- sending out weekly communications
- editing the newsletter
- maintaining contact with renters

Although the list is long there are no doubts that some contributions are missing.

As the formal “church” year closes, we look forward to the fall and appreciate the work of those who will be spearheading fall activities. We welcome and appreciate the contributions of all. If you would like to be involved and make your personal contribution, contact one of your board members.



CELEBRATING THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER



SUMMER SOLSTICE 2024

Thursday, June 20 at 4:50 EST

Summer solstice was originally celebrated by the Celtic, Slavic and Germanic populations.

Large bonfires were intended to strengthen the warmth of the sun to facilitate healthy and bountiful crops. These practices continue today as a way of honouring past traditions rather than the belief that dancing around bonfires actually contributes to crop yields.

As we enjoy the longest day of the year, let us reflect on the bounty that is created by the warmth of the sun. And let us remind ourselves that the bounty we enjoy is not experienced by everyone.

Statistics Canada has recently released new numbers on behalf of Food Bank Canada. Food insecurity (an inability to obtain a sustainable amount and quality of food) rose from 18.4 percent in 2022 to 22.9 percent in 2023. The current year's statistics are continuing to trend upwards.

I sincerely hope that all who read this article are secure in their food supply. And from this group, I ask you to consider thoughtful donations to those who do not share your privilege. Whether donating to a food bank, providing a healthy meal to a stranger or taking a gift of fruit and vegetables to a neighbour struggling to eat well, take a moment on June 20 to spread the warmth of community and the nourishment that comes from love and food.

SUMMER SOLSTICE ACTIVITIES

There are many fun and family oriented celebrations surrounding the summer solstice, too many to list here. From Yoga on the Beaches to Liitha Faire at

Market Square to pagan rituals, they can be found in St. Catharines and the broader Niagara Region. Many are free and many are not. Check out your options:

<https://allevents.in/st%20catharines/summer-solstice#>

<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/arts-culture-and-events/festivals-and-special-events.aspx>

And although not a summer solstice event, National Indigenous Day (June 21) offers a selection of activities from entertainment to educational. Check them out at <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013718/1708446948967>

CREATING A HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER LIFE

submitted by Jim Glassford, Usui and Karuna Reiki Master

Dr. Mikao Usui, the founder of Reiki, created five principles, also referred to as precepts, that help to leading a healthier and happier life.

First, meditate daily.

Second, say these words twice a day and think about what they mean:

Just for today I will not anger.

Just for today I will not worry.

Just for today I will do my work Honestly (Diligently).

Just for today I will be kind to my neighbours and all living things.

Just for today I will give thanks for all my Blessings.



VIDEO:
FROM WATERCOLOURS TO
DIGITALS:

30 Years Of Plein Air Painting

Now playing at
Lincoln Pelham Public Library -
Fleming Branch

5020 Serena Drive
Beamsville, ON L3J 0T2 ranch

Reception and meet-the-artist:
Saturday, June 15, 2-4 pm.

ARTIST STATEMENT

As with the Fauvists, strong, saturated colors are far more important to me than the representational or realistic; and my subjects are simplified and abstracted.

Colour and line are what counts. I try to discover the elements in a scene that would be most likely to carry into an alternate universe. My greatest complements are laughter or surprise.

Paul Pipher

Our Summer Birthdays:

*June: Abu Hosein, Ann Monster, Connie Scott,
Karen Stovell*

July: Jim Glassford, Paul Pipher

August: Roy Blake, Mary-lyn Hopper



Community Care Food Hamper

Please continue to bring a food item each week for the food hamper situated at the rear of the sanctuary. An item brought weekly by each congregant will provide the equivalent of a week's worth of groceries for a family.

We have received a letter of appreciation from Community Care for our last contribution which was in excess of 25 pounds of food. Let us continue with this trend throughout the New Year. We know our efforts benefit others and are deeply appreciated.



Niagara Mobile Closet



203 Church St (rear door)
Tuesdays and Fridays - open 10:00 am to Noon
Sunday - open Noon to 2:00 pm

They are currently in need of work wear, job interview clothing, winter wear including boots and, especially, men's coats. You can donate any of these items that are in good repair.

Book Riot

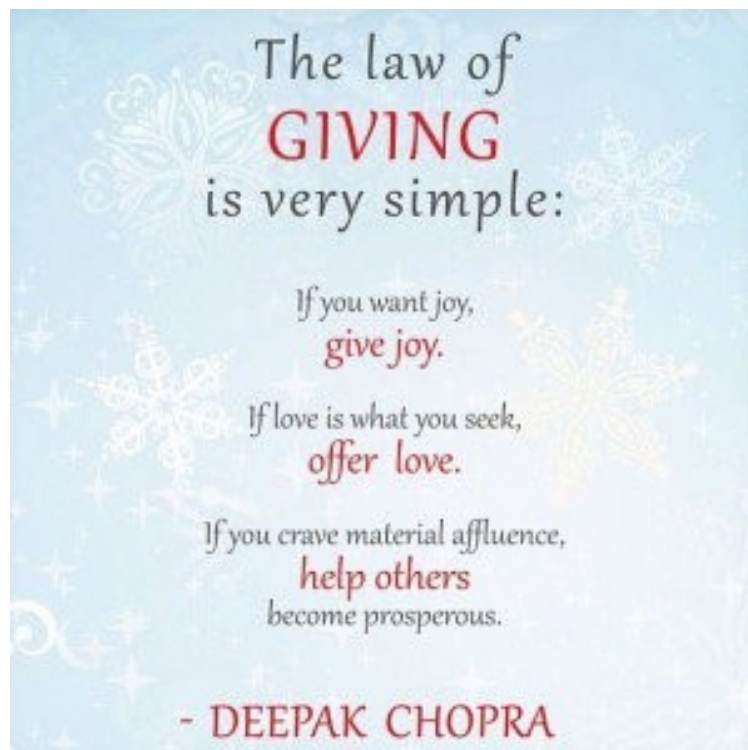
Book Riot is an annual event to raise money for Birchway, a women's shelter in Niagara Falls. This year's event is scheduled for June 4-9, 2024 at Gale Centre, 5152 Thoroldstone Rd, Niagara Falls. Cost: \$10, in support of domestic violence services.

If you have useable books that you would like to donate, bring them to UCN and place them in a box or bag in the back room, and be sure to label them "Book Riot". Mary-lyn Hopper will drop the books off at the Niagara Falls collection location.

HOW DO I GET MY MONEY TO UCN?

There are several ways of honouring your pledge:

- You can contribute at services via cheque or cash. There are small envelopes where you can insert your contribution and place it on the Offertory plate set out at the table at the bottom of the ramp. Please put your name on the envelope so we can issue you a tax receipt.
- You can mail your pledge directly to Brian Jones c/o UCN, 223 Church Street, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 3E8.
- You can e-transfer your pledge using Interac. To do this you must be registered with your financial institution on-line. Just set up Unitarian Congregation of Niagara as an Interac payee using the email address ucn.communications@gmail.com.



Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

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Board of Directors

President: Mary-lyn Hopper
Vice-president: Shaun Ironside
Past-president: Matt Virro
Secretary: Sarah McLaren
Treasurer: Brian Jones
Member-at-large: Eva Schwartzentruber
Program: Eva Schwartzentruber
Social Action: Shaun Ironside

Lay Chaplains: Contact
laychaplainsucn@gmail.com
Beryl Stovell, Karen Stovell

Committee Chairs

Music: Penny Blake
Denominational Affairs: Jacob Santos
Lay Chaplaincy: Doreen Peever
Membership: Doreen Peever
Newsletter: LesLee Turmel, Penny Blake
Pastoral Care: Doreen Peever
Property: Peter Skelton
Rental: Doreen Peever
Social: Susan Glassford, Jim Glassford,
Abu Hosein
Website: Jacob Santos

Trustees

Jim Glassford, Erdwin Hueniken,
Doreen Peever



Summer

Summer, summer almost here.

Let's give summer a big fat cheer!

Of this fact I'm surely clear:

Summer is the best time of year.

—Tim Rasinski



Deadline for September Newsletter:

August 23,, 2024

