

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg

## *The Communicator*

December 2021

Sunday Services via [Zoom](#) at 10:30 am

### *The theme for December is Healing*

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The deadline for the January 2022 issue is **Monday, December 20th, 2021**



#### **December 5: Journey to Insight**

*Service Leaders:  
Doreen Stroud and  
the AIM (Access-*

*ibility and Inclusion Ministry) Team  
Service Coordinator: Steve Lennon*

The A Team is coordinating this service in acknowledgement of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2021. The service will focus on the twists and turns of the challenge in dealing with acquired disabilities. In relation to this the resilience and perseverance required on this journey will be depicted through a personal story. Join us!

#### **December 12: Courage to Be Who We Are**

*Service Leader: Rev. Meghann Robern  
Service coordinator: Odell Havsdotter*

Using the song "Courage to Be Who We Are" from the Justice Choir Songbook as our anthem, we will honour and celebrate trans lives as part of the queer history that has sought freedom for all people to be their truest selves.

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## Sunday Services continued

### December 19: Thresholds

Service Leader: Rev. Meghann Robern

Service Coordinator: Marian Siemens

We have once again come to the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere. As we live in the dark and prepare for the light slowly to return, in this service we'll consider what beginnings, endings, and transitions we each have before us.



### Friday, December 24, 6:30 pm CT: Christmas Eve

Join us for our annual Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols with a Unitarian Universalist twist! This

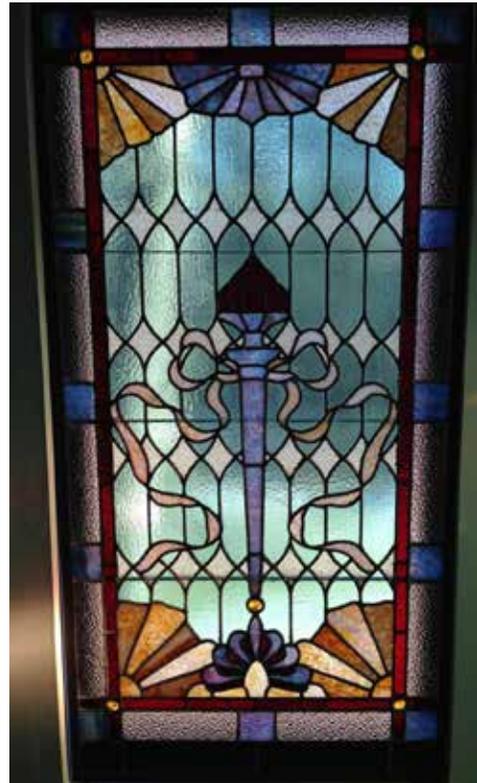
year we'll also be using the newly published First Nations translation for the lessons from the traditional gospels.

### Dec 26: Theme for the Coming Year

Service leader: Janet Toews

Service coordinator: TBD

We have often made resolutions for a new year. Why not develop a new theme Instead? A personal theme that encompasses your hopes, dreams and desires for 2022. Join us as we reflect on the past 20 months, and look to the year 2022 through readings, music, times of silence, and short homilies. What might your personal theme be for the coming year?



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## From the Minister's Study

by The Reverend Meghann Robern

The snow has arrived, and with it being December, the snow is here to stay for several months. As many of you know, this is my favourite time of year. I love the chill in the air, and the way that the snow softens the sounds of the world around us.

Winter is when I have the most opportunities to delve into stories, usually represented in the stack of books waiting to be read on my bedside table, or in my digital queue on my devices. If, like me, you spend this time of year doing internal work alongside the outward work of keeping people warm and fed, I would offer you some recommendations for the months ahead.

One of my favourite series is Seanan McGuire's Wayward Children. The books are in a shared universe, often sharing characters, but each stands alone as its own story. Each centers a youth who finds themselves not quite fitting into our world in which they were born, and discovering a Door leading them to a

different world in which they can grow into their best and favourite self. The series offers fantastic and magical new places to dream about and explore, but is still rooted in the power of relationships and caring for each other as the way to survive anything that comes our way.

One of the best books I've read in recent years is *The Midnight Bargain* by Canadian author C.L. Polk. It's a lush and vibrant world in which magic exists, but is primarily used to control and subjugate women of all economic classes. Both romantic and familial love are lifted up in this novel as the forces which can undo hundreds of years of oppression.

Finally, I'll share with you something from my to-be-read pile that I picked up recently at McNally Robinson: *Alternate Plains*. It's an anthology of speculative fiction, edited and published by Manitobans, featuring authors (and settings) from across the Canadian prairies. I'm quite excited to dive into this one, and to experience what our unique home here in the centre of Canada ignites in the imagination of some of our writers.

*In gratitude and faith,  
Rev. Meghann*

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## Board Notes

by Marlene Schellenberg, President

During the pandemic, as we all adapt to new circumstances, the word pivot has become the *mot du jour*. One of the most recent adaptations in our community is Jim

Gardiner's decision to move from his role as President, to a role that can support the work of committees more directly. This decision grew out of the Board's great care in working its way through the recommendations in the Shared Ministry Team (SMT) Report. With the Board vote, that put me in the President role. A daunting role, but I commit to you to do my best to help us continue to grow into the loving community we aspire to be.

One of the questions that the SMT posed in the Report relates to nominations to the Board and selection of committee members and chairs. The role of committees in the life of the church varies and while we want to be welcoming of everyone, discernment of volunteer placement is sometimes necessary by trusted individuals. It is a privilege and an honour to be part of community building and some of the opportunities to serve are by appointment or election only. So, who gets invited to serve? Who gets to do the work of the church? To whom should you speak if you have passion, expertise, and other gifts to share?

To respond to these questions, the Board has leaned into our 5th Principle and the democratic process. We also turned to our Bylaws to consider Section 58, currently called The Volunteer Resource Committee (VRC). This committee does not exist just now. Upon examination, the VRC is the only committee of the church that requires elected members, apart from Board members. All other committees are either open to all volunteers, or participation is by appointment. Participation on some committees is restricted by approval of the Board because its volunteers deal with sensitive and personal matters. For example, due to the nature of their work, Pastoral Care Associates even require criminal background checks. On some committees, terms of reference and other policies require Board approval and appointment. In all cases, we want to ensure that volunteers are well matched to roles in the church.

Many of you have asked recently, "How can I help?" We want to put you to work. Re-establishing the VRC, with an amended Bylaw will give us a committee to support the work of the church. After consulting with the current Nominations Committee, the Board is proposing that the VRC be in line with all committees and not require election. We are requesting congregational support to allow the VRC to accept nominations of Members to the Board, recommendations for volunteers, and expressions of desire to serve. The

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intent is for the appointed members of the VRC to ensure that folks are well-matched to the work of the church. We trust that an amendment of Section 58 to become the Volunteer Resources Committee with a minimum of 3 volunteers will go a long way to putting you to work. For more information, see the agenda and financial documents that are available on the church website under Members Only. And please attend the Autumn Financials meeting on December 5 to discuss this amendment and express your support.

It's important to acknowledge that we have many dedicated volunteers to whom we owe much gratitude. Our Sunday morning tech team is a remarkable, dare I say fearless, group who have plunged into the world of Zooming, chatting, spotlighting, hosting, you name it. Our multi-platform team has been filling in grant applications, and working out the logistics to acquire equipment and deliver services from our building. And every active committee in our church continues to respond to needs in the world, while staying safe.

On behalf of the Board, I invite you to join us in approaching each other with warmth and curiosity. Let's ground our actions in our UU Principles, Sources, and Aspirations and settle into this holiday season with love and joy.

"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." Arundhati Roy

*In gratitude*

*Marlene Schellenberg*

## CUC Adopts 8th Principle

*by Janine Reid and Marlene Schellenberg*

Adopting an 8th principle to address anti-racism was one of the recommendations from the CUC Dismantling Racism Study Group, a national process over a couple of years culminating in recommendations made at the May 2021 CUC AGM. The 8th principle ultimately is an invitation to "love each other better". For more learning and background see our website: <https://uwinnipeg.mb.ca/learn-about-the-8th-principle/>.

The 8th principle reads: "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"**

At the Special Meeting of the CUC November 27, 2021, hosted after a six month national call for congregations to engage with this issue:

**95% of 104 delegates voted in favour of adopting the 8th principle** in its current form. There was a secondary motion that was voted on earlier in the meeting, to postpone indefinitely the motion on adopting an 8th principle: 94% voted against postponing indefinitely, all 105 registered delegates voted.

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**This is a call to action from the CUC and our Canadian UU community to commit to the work needed to unravel racism in our communities.** There is a broad understanding, which was demonstrated at this special meeting, of intersectionality and the multiple barriers to inclusion that people face. There is a recognition that our Unitarian Universalist faith needs to understand change as inexorable, and also necessary to remain relevant and meaningful, and we need to actively guide this change according to our values. There is a commitment from the CUC to review the Principles, now 8, in full, recognizing that renewal is important, and that inclusion of other priorities may need to happen. At the same time, there were serious concerns raised at the Special Meeting by IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour) attendees, who were silenced and harmed within the meeting by the outdated and ineffective procedures that our national organization chooses to prioritize. We saw this in action and is an example of how our organisation and faith may need to grow.

These words were shared in closing, written nearly 60 years ago:  
“We need a powerful sense of determination to banish the ugly blemish of racism scarring the image of America. We can, of course, try to temporize, negotiate small, inadequate changes and prolong the timetable of freedom in the hope that the narcotics of delay will dull the pain of progress. We can try, but we shall certainly fail. The shape of

the world will not permit us the luxury of gradualism and procrastination. Not only is it immoral, it will not work... it will not work because it retards the progress not only of the Negro, but of the nation as a whole.”

— *Martin Luther King Jr., Why We Can't Wait (1964).*

The Board of Directors expresses gratitude to our delegates Janine Reid, Ashlyn Noble, and Rev. Robern for their work in representing us. Our congregation, with the support of the Board, will need to consider how to approach this work of anti-racism in a way that is specific to our context and meaningful to our membership and friends, to continue building our loving community. We invite everyone to participate in this work moving forward.



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## 2021 Autumn Financial Meeting – December 5

by Peter Miller

On December 5, at 1:30 pm, The Board of Directors will host the Autumn Financial Meeting to approve the 2020-2021 Financial Statements, prepared by accounting firm Scarrow & Donald, LLP. The Board invites all members and friends of the congregation to attend the meeting. Only members will be allowed to vote.

We will host the meeting on Zoom, to allow social distancing. For ease of access, we will use the same Zoom link as the Sunday service.

The formal business of the meeting will include:

1. A motion to approve the Financial Statements of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg prepared by Scarrow & Donald, LLP, for the year ending June 30, 2021.

2. A motion to appoint Scarrow & Donald, LLP to review church finances and prepared Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2022.
3. Reconstitution of Volunteer Resource(s) Committee
  - ◇ Reasons for reconstituting the Volunteer Resources Committee
  - ◇ Amendments to bylaw section 20 – Nomination and Election and section 58 – Volunteer Resource Committee
  - ◇ Board appointments to the reconstituted Volunteer Resource Committee

2020-2021 Financial Statements and other materials is now available on the church website under the Members Only section.

<https://uuwinnipeg.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Autumn-Financial-Meeting-packet-Dec.-5-2021.pdf>



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## Holiday Traditions inspired by Unitarians

by Gini Martin

Unitarians in history have contributed to some of our current holiday celebrations and traditions. One of the most well known was Charles Dickens who wrote "The Christmas Carol". Some of the words like "scrooge" have come into our language.

In 1822 the poem known as "The Night before Christmas" was also by a Unitarian, Clement Moore. Thomas Nast, another Unitarian and one of the most famous cartoonists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was asked in 1881 by *Harpers' Weekly* to illustrate its publication of "The Night before Christmas. Nast drew Santa as a jolly visitor bringing presents to children. Nast placed Santa on the North Pole as a message that he existed for all the children of the world.

Some of our popular carols were written by Unitarians. "It Came upon a Midnight Clear", one of my favorites, is in our hymn book. It was written in 1849 by Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears, a Unitarian minister. Others are "Watchmen, tell us of the night" by John Bowring and "Do you hear what I hear" by Noel Regney.

Another carol's words are based on a poem written by a Unitarian. The poem called "Christmas Bells" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was written on Christmas Day in 1863. The refrain on each

verse is "Peace on earth, good will to men". Longfellow's poem was set to music a few years later titled "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day". The hymn has been recorded by different singers.

Even "Jingle Bells", one of the first secular songs of the season was written by the son of a Unitarian minister, Jim Pierpoint. Jim was music director in his dad's church.

The poet Samuel Coleridge (Author of "the Rime of the Ancient Mariner") and a Unitarian in support of the tradition of exchanging gifts wrote that it taught children about generosity and unselfishness. He wrote a story about it in the *Christian Register*, an official Unitarian magazine at the time.

Interesting to note the prominent authors who identified with our denomination. The 19<sup>th</sup> century is many years before the Universalists joined the Unitarians in 1962.

With information about a few of the Unitarians in history who influenced our celebrations, celebrate the holidays with your own traditions remembering the last lines of the Moore poem:

"But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight - Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

Thanks to sermons by Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblum at the Unitarian church in Brookline, Mass. And to Caryl Tipton from the church at Washington Crossing, New Jersey. Both sermons are available on the web.

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## Sharing and Caring A message from your Pastoral Care Team

Beginning in January, Rev. Meghann will be away for 6 months. Our Pastoral Care team has been looking at ways to increase our capacity to provide ongoing support to our community during her absence. We have identified activities that are critical to our community's overall well-being and are attempting to stream-line where we can.

Sharing our heart-felt cares during Sunday services is a vital ritual of our faith community. It helps our caring community keep in touch with each other and to support others through life's joys and sorrows. So that has been a priority area.

Pastoral Care will continue to receive your request as we have been doing via [candles@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca](mailto:candles@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca) . Your Pastoral Care Associates will still check in with those who submit messages as appropriate. We will also collate the

messages and create the script in preparation of our Candles of Caring ritual and, after the service, we will share them with Our Caring Community Email Group.

However, on Sunday morning, new team members will be reading your messages during the service. Since each of their computer setups will vary, not all readers will be able to accommodate a candle plus a bowl of water and stones. So, we are encouraging them to choose the set up that works best for them. They may choose a candle plus the water and stones or just one of the two. And, if none of these options are possible, they may simply just read the script. Sharing your messages with our Caring Community is what really matters!

To facilitate this change we are asking that all "candles" are **submitted by 5:00 p.m. Saturday evening**. That will give our associates sufficient time to touch base with all those who will be sharing heart-felt messages with our faith community and to prepare the script for our readers.



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## Financial Education Seminar

**Two Fridays, February 4 & 11,  
2022, 1:30 – 3:30 pm**

Take control of your financial destiny. Let's apply some independent UU thinking and a bit of iconoclasm to ensure your financial interests and outcomes align with your values and desires.

Participants will be provided with proven practical tips and techniques to assess:

- using self-directed investments vs advisor led or both
- the quality of your advisor's service and how to increase advisor accountability
- general investment portfolio flaws
- whether your investment costs are acceptable to you vs. lower cost alternatives
- whether your estate planning has avoided the most common flaws

General investment approaches will be provided. Resources for investor awareness and independence will be reviewed.

This seminar is not intended to replace professional financial advice provided by qualified industry professionals. Participants are assumed to have basic investment knowledge.

Seminar facilitator **Doug Wasyliw** is a retired former Certified Financial Planner and a current volunteer Trustee of the church's Endowment Fund.

A suggested donation of \$25.00 or \$10.00 low income to the First UU Church of Winnipeg or its Endowment Fund covers both sessions. Limited means will not be a barrier to participation.

Program sponsors are the Endowment Fund Committee and the Adult Programming Committee.

Please register through Doug at [ret-coachdjw@yahoo.ca](mailto:ret-coachdjw@yahoo.ca) and you will be sent the Zoom link.



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## Our Endowment Fund

by Linda Henderson & Doug Wasyliw



One foot in front of the other, as we plodded through coming out of the world's pandemic. The year 2021 showed us our vulnerability on many fronts, and of particular note to our congregation, many losses of beloved and well respected members of our church community.

We will remember them. And with your donations in their memory, each member will continue to live amongst us.

A friendly reminder to congregation members that the 2021 tax year is quickly drawing to a close. If you have

been contemplating a donation to the Endowment Fund, December is the time! Help us secure the future of our spiritual home.

Due to computer glitches, our latest donations will be reflected in the January issue of this newsletter.

Will you join us in contributing to our UU future? No contribution too large or too small. Please make your cheque to **First UU Church of Winnipeg**, with **Endowment Fund** in the re line. You are invited to read our Fund history on our website - click on the "STEWARDSHIP" button at [www.uuwin-nipeg.mb.ca](http://www.uuwin-nipeg.mb.ca), and scroll down to Endowment. If you have questions, please contact any of your friendly Trustees - *we're approachable*.



**Your Endowment Fund Trustees:**

Linda Henderson - [varadero@mymts.net](mailto:varadero@mymts.net)

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# The Communicator



Merry  
Christmas

Please submit materials to the editor Marjorie Doyle by email to: [communicator@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca](mailto:communicator@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca)  
The **deadline** for the **January 2022** issue is:  
**Monday, December 20th, 2021**

The opinions of the authors are their own and do not necessarily represent those of the Board of Directors, the editorial board, the newsletter editor, or the church minister.

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