

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg

The Communicator

November 2022

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

The theme for November is Change

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The deadline for the December 2022 issue is: **Monday, November 21st, 2022**

Healthy Grieving

November 6, 2022

Service Leader: Angela Haig

Service Coordinator:

Marian Siemens

We live in a death-phobic and grief-avoidant society, which tells us that healthy grieving is grieving that doesn't make other people uncomfortable. It shouldn't last too long and, if it does, you are doing it wrong.

In this service Angela Haig exposes this line of thought for the fiction that it is, and then begins the discussion of what healthy grief really is, and what it looks like.

The Meeting Place: A Remembrance Day Service

Friday, November 11, 2022 at **10:30 a.m.**

Service Leader: Nicole McKay

Service Coordinator:

Steve Lennon

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Sunday Services continued

Nicole shares a heart-felt letter about her experience living at the intersection of military life and Unitarian Universalism. As we commit ourselves to the ever-widening circle of welcome, can we draw the circle even wider? In doing so, we might be surprised to learn about the values we share and the ways in which we can deepen our understanding of one another through dialogue. Let us come together to begin the conversation.

"And Grace Will Lead Us Home" (unless karma has other plans)

November 13, 2022

*Service Leader: Rev. Ren Rohe
McFadyen*

*Service Coordinators: Cate Ziegler,
Jill Moats*

In Christianity, **Grace** is considered "spontaneous unmerited favour received from God". Universalism conceives of Grace as the timely gift (help/money/approval/wisdom etc.) that comes without our having lifted a finger. **Karma** is a key concept in traditions like Buddhism, Sikhism and Taoism referring to intentional actions that impact one's future. Westerners think of

Karma as "inevitable consequence", where whatever you do is returned to you. What then can Grace and Karma mean to a liberal religious community where reason and science temper our understandings of what is Holy, and given our ideas of human self-determination and Unitarian Universalism's loose notion of "salvation by character"?

Living into Covenant: A CUC National Service

November 20, 2022

at Noon, *Winnipeg time*

We Unitarian Universalists are a covenantal people. Our faith tradition believes in the power and possibility of covenant, a set of shared promises, agreements, and understandings that hold us together. How does a vision of covenant hold us together when we disagree? How does our faith community covenant overlap and diverge from the other covenants of our lives (being a partner or parent or friend or citizen of the world)? How is all of this impacted by how well we are keeping a covenant with ourselves, our own well being?

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Sunday Services continued

Celebrating UU Volunteers

November 27, 2022

***Service Leaders: Sonya Watson
and the Volunteer Resources
Team***

Service Coordinator: Norm Cobb

Our church community rises to the occasion over and over, when word goes out that help is needed. But how often do we stop, look around, and count our blessings here? The Volunteer Resources Team will lead a service of celebration and appreciation of our wonderful volunteers.

Two beautiful pieces by our own Jo'Anne Kelly



The Communicator

Board Notes

by Peter Miller, Treasurer



Greetings from the Board!

Let's begin with four recent decisions.

- Mark November 13 from 12

to 2 p.m. on your calendars for a fall financial congregational meeting. See our notice and all-church emails for details.

- We are extending our contract with Rev. Ren Rohe McFadyen for another 6 months. For the past 3 months, Rev. Ren has shown us what an imaginative pastoral ministry can be. They will continue in that role and offer an occasional Sunday service.
- New Board members Larry Phillips and Darlene Payne have agreed to assume the role of personnel supervisors. The departures of Rev. Meghann and Marlene Schellenberg, who both served as chief of staff, have left a big gap in our operations. Larry and Darlene will recreate and perhaps modify that role. We will see how this important function evolves.
- We have changed our Covid pro-

cedure for mask wearing at in-person UU functions from mandated to **strongly recommended**, in line with practice in other public spaces. We need to be mindful that Covid is still active and a risk and practice preventative measures.

Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18)

We have experienced a lot of turbulence over several years, but we have also "engage[d] our imaginations to craft new ways of being and doing" (Joanna Macy). We created a new church Mission statement and then a broad plan to realize it, Mission-into-Action (<https://uuwinnipeg.mb.ca/about-us/what-is-uuism/mis-sion/>). The quest continues.

- In an August *Dialogue on our Future*, we asked, what ministries and programs do we need
- To repair relationships and restore compassion and trust;
- To build a Caring, Learning, Socially Engaged Community;
- To retain, bring in and energize members;
- To serve our congregation, the public and the planet?

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Board Notes continued

You said we need religious exploration for all ages, a strong community presence and outreach with multiple dimensions, spiritual services on Sundays and otherwise, varieties of pastoral care and adult programming, and attention to congregational health and vitality.

- In fall workshops *Towards Understanding our Conflict* led by Jan Schmidt, we asked "How do we move forward and heal?" You said we need to:
- **Address unmet needs** such as gaps in understanding and continuing pain and alienation;
- **Address root causes** such as false accusations, disrespectful and unkind communication, and lack of understanding of leadership demands;

- **Address structural and process deficiencies**, as noted by the Shared Ministry Team, in governance, handling conflict, personnel policies, and communication and consultation; and
- **Renew/enhance community-building and mission-following activities** identified in our visioning work.

Looking for meaningful, purpose-driven volunteer opportunities? Our visioning work has identified them in spades, which we need to parcel out amongst ourselves. The Board continues to work on providing ministerial, staff, and Board support for the many opportunities our church provides.

In the words of Mission into Action,

Be bold! We demonstrate our resilience and problem-solving abilities again and again. We step up to emergencies and opportunities. We have the capacity for great change, quickly. Let's do it.

The Communicator

From the Board

Notice of Congregational Meeting

What? - Fall Financial Meeting to approve Financial Statements prepared by Scarrow & Donald.

When? - Sunday, November 13, 2022, from 12 to 2 p.m. Please mark your calendars.

Where? - 603 Wellington Crescent and on-line by Zoom (with the Sunday Service link).

Why? - The formal requirement of the Autumn Financial Meeting is to pass two motions: to approve the accountant's financial statements and to re-appoint our accountant to review books next fall for the current financial year. The meeting also provides an opportunity to review church finances, updates, and planning. Explanations of this process and financial controls were provided in last year's Treasurer's Report.

Links:

[Scarrow & Donald review opinion and Financial Statements.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13Ac5C2UtxHYkpWBMtYTPEy9E8EmqscYI/view?usp=sharing)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13Ac5C2UtxHYkpWBMtYTPEy9E8EmqscYI/view?usp=sharing>

[Last year's Treasurer's Report 2021-12-05.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IFpFB4byWn_MOx--h-UE1Y-7v350SJ-y3/view?usp=sharing)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IFpFB4byWn_MOx--h-UE1Y-7v350SJ-y3/view?usp=sharing

Motions

a. MOVED: That the Financial Statements for the fiscal year July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, prepared by the church's accountants, Scarrow & Donald, be approved as presented.

b. MOVED: That Scarrow & Donald be appointed to review church finances and prepare financial statements for the fiscal year July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

Change in Covid protocol

In line with practice in other public spaces, the Board has authorized a shift from a mask mandate to a **mask strongly recommended for in-person church functions**. Covid is still with us and, indeed, is expected to increase again with more indoor exposure, so continue to protect yourselves. Provincial guidelines on Covid prevention are [here](#). They include:

- Get vaccinated. And get the bivalent booster, if eligible
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently
- Cover your cough/sneeze
- Stay home when you are sick
- Assess your risk
- Make decisions about additional measures based on personal risk and preference
- Know if you are eligible for treatment

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Introducing our New Board Members



Paula Keirstead

Paula brings a deep-seated belief and commitment to social justice issues with particular experience in

addressing disability rights, Women's health issues and poverty reduction. She has had the opportunity to develop advocacy and facilitation skills as well as mediation and investigation skills. The majority of her work and volunteer experiences has been with nonprofit organizations implementing community development principle.



Larry Phillips

Larry is a twenty-five-year member of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Win-

nipeg, and has been on the Finance Committee, the Properties Committee, the Building Committee, the Volunteer Resource Committee, and has previously served as treasurer on the board from 1999 to 2005.

Larry was raised on a farm in Minitonas, MB and moved to Winnipeg to complete a computer science degree in 1973 at the U of M. In 1985 he completed his MBA at the U of M and worked for a number of companies (including a two year stint in Toronto in the 1980s) before retiring from the Province of Manitoba in 2012 after a 39-year career in IT.

Since retirement he has volunteered as an EAL teaching assistant, at Winnipeg Harvest teaching computer classes, and with CESO (Canadian Executive Services Overseas) on short assignments mentoring clients in IT. With CESO he has had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines, Guyana (twice), and most recently, in mid-October to Bolivia.

Larry is married to Anne Bigelow and they have three sons and three grandchildren and one more expected in early November. Larry and Anne have been spending winters in Mesa, Arizona since 2015 and enjoy traveling, playing bridge, and spending time at their cottage on Traverse Bay.

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Introducing our New Board Members



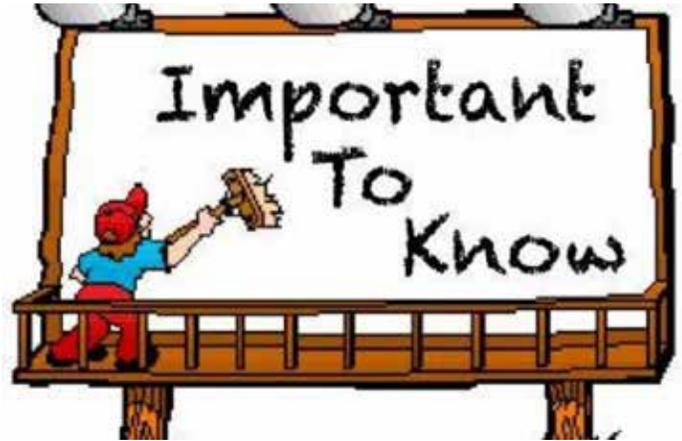
Darlene Payne

A member since 2005, and living between Winnipeg and Newfoundland and now back to the prairies.

I am currently the lay chaplain

for the congregation and always feel honoured to officiate at weddings and memorial services.

I am a retired teacher, sewist, serial renovator. I have two children who have families of their own.



Your Board of Directors

Claire Nimmagadda - President

Darlene Payne - Vice President

Peter Miller - Treasurer

Marjorie Doyle - Secretary

Kris Breckman - Director

Paula Keirstead - Director

Larry Phillips - Director

Doug Wasyliw - Director

Tanya Brothers has resigned but will continue to support the board with special projects.

The Communicator

Living Our Principles - A Follow-Up

by Sara Allen

In the September Communicator, I wrote an article about gender-inclusive bathrooms at the church. Here is the promised follow-up article with comments from congregants. The next steps of this project are detailed at the end.

1. *I like any idea that makes the church space more inclusive and open to more people.*

My only concern is that we should make both washrooms downstairs gender-neutral instead of just the current women's one. I thought I read that one idea was just to make changes to the women's one and I am worried that would cause lineups.

I went to Red River college when they were trying out gender-neutral washrooms and for a while, they just had the old women's changed to gender-neutral and kept the men's the same which caused lots of lineups.

A: Thanks for sharing your experience. Though the article highlighted changing the current women's washroom, the Pilot Project will see both washrooms in the basement become gender-inclusive.

2. *Can you tell me whether these plans have gone through, or will we be able to have a discussion on it?*

A: The pilot program must be approved by the Board before being implemented. During the pilot program, feedback and suggestions will be collected. The decision to not hold a town hall was made as this is a human rights issue. The concern was also that an unstructured group discussion would be seen as denying the dignity and diversity of our congregation as well as that of the groups that rent the space.

3. *Thanks for all the research in putting together the Communicator article. I've read many of the links provided and think that each environment has vastly different considerations. As far as our Church is concerned:*

Comments:

1. *It appears that our washrooms are in the low-usage and small-occupancy-time category.*
2. *Our space (as well as our funds) is limited so major renovations are not likely;*

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Living Our Principles - A Follow-Up cont'd

3. *My thoughts are with people needing to change clothes for performances whether it's children or adults. The only space we have is in the washrooms. I think that no one would feel comfortable stripping in front of everyone.*
4. *Many say we could do that in the stalls. Being practical here, the toilets have no lids (even after what we've learned from Covid about aerosols, lids seem to be passé now) so aside from the toxicity sprayed into the air, there is no place to put costume pieces in the stalls.*

My suggestions would be:

- Convert only the current men's washroom into a gender neutral (with stalls) and leave the women's as is (for those identifying as female);
- Simply install lids on the toilets so the stalls could be used as small changing rooms.

Hope this makes some sense – I think we will have to arrive at some compromises in any case.

A: I'm glad that the research and links were informative. We don't know what the demand for washrooms is. There have been concerns raised about

lineups before and after service as things currently are. The men's washroom has one stall and two urinals while the women's washroom has more stalls and a door to the child-care room.

The Gender-Inclusive Pilot Project can begin without renovations and gather feedback to learn what changes are desired. You make an excellent point about the lack of lids on the toilets.

4. *I believe the perception of a lack of safety for making the basement washrooms non-gendered is quite legitimate. Non-gendered washrooms such as those at Stella's on Grant are definitely very safe. These washrooms have stalls with secure floor-to-ceiling doors and the stall area is visible from the restaurant. The stalls in the basement are in an enclosed room with stalls that have doors that do not go floor to ceiling and in fact, do not close tight on the sides. They are also in a secluded part of the building. For safety reasons before making them open to all genders, I think that the stalls need to have floor-to-ceiling*

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Living Our Principles - A Follow-Up cont'd

doors and the doors to the washrooms need to be removed and the doorways widened to open up the area. As a temporary measure before these changes, I would suggest changing the signage to Women and Nonbinary and for the other room, Men and Nonbinary.

A: The location of the basement washrooms is not ideal, but I think making them gender-inclusive would make things safer. After all, if someone means to harm another, a sign isn't going to stop them. Having more people using the space means less likelihood that someone would be cornered alone.

Floor-to-ceiling stall doors like the Stella's on Grant and the new River Heights library make the stall feel more private, like a room. The compromises are that it is harder to get to someone in an emergency if they fall unconscious, and the cost. The West End Cultural Centre, on the other hand, wasn't building new, so they changed the signage and kept the stalls that don't go all the way down to the floor.

The question of cost may hold us back from creating the ideal gender-inclusive and accessible washroom but it need not prevent us from making the changes we can.

5. *I think gender-neutral bathrooms should be the standard. They indicate our appreciation and inclusion of folks of all gender identities. My two daughters have partners who appear to be men. One of them is in the process of transitioning and the other is a non-conforming woman. Gender-neutral facilities would remove the fear and abuse they experience when using gendered washrooms. That one barrier affects the freedom that they have integrating fully in normal day-to-day activities. We all use a washroom several times a day. We need to make it safe for all of us.*

I would also like to point out how difficult it is for caregivers to provide toileting support for a person who requires assistance. My husband had Alzheimer's Disease and I was his full-time caregiver for many years. The one activity he enjoyed was walking so we went on long walks pretty well every day. He often

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Living Our Principles - A Follow-Up cont'd

needed to use the toilet and needed help.

Washrooms are confusing for folks with dementia - turning on the water, getting the soap, and drying your hands is not consistent from one bathroom to another. My husband needed help with all that and often could not even find his way out of the bathroom. I knew almost every "Family Washroom" in the city. They made it possible for me to take him out into the community. I couldn't take him into the "Women's" and I sure couldn't take him into the "Men's".

I believe gender-neutral bathrooms would be a blessing for everyone. I hope this will make a difference for our church.

A: The Social Justice Committee and the AIM Committee have partnered together on this project are all the reasons you stated. Gender-inclusive washrooms are welcoming for people of any gender identity,

anyone with small children, and those with disabilities or health conditions that require a helper.

What's Next

The first step was education, now it's time for implementation. The Social Justice and AIM Committees are bringing forward a proposal to the Board for a Pilot Project.

Following Board approval, the Pilot Project will begin in the new year and last six months. There will be new paper signs showing which washrooms have urinals and which have stalls. An educational poster, explaining why the washrooms are gender-inclusive, will be posted outside each restroom. There will be an email address listed to provide feedback and suggestions.

At the end of the six months, the project will be evaluated, feedback will be reviewed, and suggestions, such as better closing locks that show if a stall is occupied, will be investigated.

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Volunteer Corner

by Sonya Watson

for Volunteer Resources Committee (VRC)



Religious Exploration

I spent a couple of fascinating hours speaking with Rob Malo recently about the Religious Exploration (RE) program. I learned some history, and many possibilities. The time flew by.

Rob says, "I gained a greater understanding of UU values as a whole community through my involvement with RE." Rob has found his RE volunteering extremely rewarding and elaborated that we may have a narrow misconception that RE is all about taking care of kids, "but it's really about changing yourself."

We're currently seeking three or four volunteers to join the RE Committee.

One individual will have the administrative skills and interest to take meeting minutes and keep in touch with the Board. The RE Committee will initially review the June RE Consultants' Report on our website, and look at ways to operationalize some of the recommendations. A great opportunity for creative thinkers! Do you want to help ensure the church is active and relevant for generations to come?

At the same time, we want to identify five or six individuals who will work directly with children once the RE staff person is hired. Background criminal record and child abuse registry checks are required and we want to apply now. Let's help children and youth enjoy their time at church, and learn together as part of a community of all ages.

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Volunteer Corner con't

Our congregation recently set a clear priority to better serve children, youth, and young families. Can you help make this happen? You don't need to be a parent or grandparent to get involved.

It's easy for young families to do virtual church, and not attend in person. They can eat and drink at home, talk together, the children can go play for awhile...

Also, when young families attend church, does the congregation expect the parents to remain downstairs with their children all the time, thus missing the service? (Why then are parents putting snowsuits on their children at -20 degrees? It's easier to stay home.)

Virtual Sunday services will continue to be a great option for some families. This option however, omits the rich interaction of intergenerational time together. Are you interested in inquiry-based learning? How do we offer active areas and quiet areas for all? How do we bring together UUs of all ages and abilities? How do we support young families – our future?

If these questions interest you, please send the Volunteer Resources Committee a quick email at vrc@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca. We'll be in touch for a chat!

The Communicator

Share the Plate for November - RaY



Each month, we support the work of caring for our wider community by doing our own 50/50. We share half of our undesignated cash or online

offering each week with a local charitable organization serving community needs or working to protect the environment. Our Share the Plate partners are chosen based on the criteria that they are local, share our Unitarian Universalist values, and be small enough to benefit from the support we can offer. As part of our partnership, we hope as individuals and as a church community, to learn more about their work and engage with them in helping to make our city a better place for everyone.

Our Share the Plate partner for November is RaY. For over 25 years, RaY has operated as a “one-stop shop,” providing wrap-around services for youth in need. It is a single place where street-entrenched and marginalized youth ages 0 – 29 can access everything they need, on their terms, to better their lives. Their website is <https://rayinc.ca/>



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Early Women Ministers in Universalism

by Gini Martin



Olympia Brown
"...believed that freedom of religious thought and a liberal church would supply the groundwork for all other freedoms"

Olympia Brown, age 85, was one of the few original suffragists alive to vote in the 1920 U.S. presidential election. Although Olympia, aged 25 in 1860, had a degree from Antioch College in Ohio, she received rejections—some because she was a woman—from theological schools. Meadville, the Unitarian School replied to her application saying "The trustees thought it would be too great an experiment"... "to admit a woman". A Universalist institution, St. Lawrence University's Theological School in New York accepted her but added that the president "did not think women were called to the ministry." When she arrived, she was not expected as the school thought she would be discouraged. She said:"... his discouragement was my encouragement..." Brown persevered and, in 1863, became the first woman in North America ordained a minister.

Brown worked one year in Vermont and five years at the Universalist church in Weymouth Landing, Massachusetts. She invited area intellectuals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson to speak at her church. She was an abolitionist and suffrage supporter, working with Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and others. Rev. Brown traveled to Washington to testify before various legislative committees to support suffrage.

In early 1876, she left Bridgeport. When she heard the Universalist church in Racine, Wisconsin needed a minister, she wrote. The clerk of the society replied that the parish was adrift, in debt, homeless and he doubted any pastor could rouse them. She later wrote "Some may think it strange that I could only find a field of run down or comatose churches but they must remember that the pulpits of all the prosperous churches were already occupied by men ...all I could do was to take some place that had been abandoned by others and make something of it and this I was only too glad to do."

Along with increasing the membership and building the society

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Early Women Ministers in Universalism cont'd

in Racine, she made it a centre of learning and cultural activities, inviting speakers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Julia Ward Howe. That church still exists as a UU church now named The Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church.

Although Jennie Petersson was a founder of the Winnipeg Icelandic church and often preached with an Icelandic interpreter, she was never ordained.



The first ordained minister to serve in Canada was also a Universalist, Lucia Fidelia Woolley Gillette. She accompanied and helped her father who travelled a Universalist minister's circuit

in New York and Michigan. An early reader and accomplished writer and poet from her teenaged years, she along with other Universalist women became more active on the public stage during the early 1860s.

In August 1873, Fidelia was approved by the Universalists for a

license to preach. Like many Universalist ministers of the time she had no formal training but learned by participating with other ministers. She served churches in Michigan, and Iowa. In the 1880s she spent time writing articles, poems, hymns and also speaking at various Universalist meetings including the dedication of the new Universalist church in Nixon, Ontario. The Nixon church was then a part of the Ontario Universalist Convention which included Bloomfield, Smithville, Port Dover, Blenheim and Olinda.

In 1887 Fidelia was called to the Bloomfield church. She served there almost two years. (of these congregations, Olinda is the only one of the former Ontario Universalist Convention still a UU church, now named the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda. Its church building from 1881 is the oldest church in Canada built by a Unitarian or Universalist congregation still in use as a UU church.

Fidelia continued her writing and preaching until her death in 1905.

The Communicator

Early Women Ministers in Universalism cont'd

The Winnipeg churches, both English and Icelandic did not hire an ordained woman minister until 1989 when Rev. Susan Van Dreser was called. Subsequently we have had women ministers serving our church, several interim.

To honour the centennial of Rev. Brown's ordination in 1963, the

Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinder

Theological School at St. Lawrence University unveiled a plaque which reads in part:

*Preacher of Universalism
Pioneer and Champion of Women's
Citizenship Rights Forerunner of the
New Era The flame of her spirit still
burns today.*

Thanks to the Dictionary of UU biography on line.

This church was founded on the faith that love is a more positive force for good than fear. It exists as a haven of religious freedom, offering fellowship, knowledge and inspiration to all who would seek truth, live responsibly and courageously, and be of service to humanity.



The Communicator

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg Mission Statement

We are a diverse and caring community that is loving, inclusive, responsible, and encouraging.

We are a learning community open to evidence and varied insights that encourages reflection and exploration.

We use what we learn to strengthen our relationships and our capacity.

We are a socially engaged community that works collaboratively, compassionately, and urgently for a just society and for our life-sustaining planet.

We are Caring, Learning and Socially Engaged.

Please submit materials to the editor Marjorie Doyle by email to: communicator@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca

The deadline for the December 2022 issue is:

Monday, November 21st, 2022

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.

Who's Who

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