

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg

The Communicator

October 2021

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

The theme for October is Reverence

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The deadline for the November 2021 issue is **Wednesday, October 20th**

October 3: Draw the Circle Wide

*Leaders: Andrea James DLFD and the Religious Exploration Committee
Coordinator: Steve Lennon*

When you bring a picture of our congregation to mind, who do you see? How can we continue to draw the circle ever wider within our multigenerational congregation? DLFD Andrea James reflects on her time with us, and members of the Religious Exploration (RE) Committee explore how we support one another.

October 10: The Question Box

*Leader: Rev. Meghann Robern
Coordinator: Odell Havsdotter*

Questions clarify for us our understanding, lead us to think, and can reveal for us pathways for further inquiry. Asking questions is a spiritual practice that asks us to be vulnerable by admitting we don't have all the answers as we engage in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. This Sunday, Rev. Meghann is taking your questions from our virtual pulpit.

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Sunday Services continued

October 17: Reserves of Reverence

Leader: Rev. Stefan Jonasson

Coordinator: Marian Siemens

"A religion, old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the Universe as revealed by modern science might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths," declared Carl Sagan in his book *Pale Blue Dot*. People commonly associate reverence with religion – and traditional piety, at that – but it seems to me that reverence is a feeling, an attitude, a way of relating that can spring as easily from science or philosophy and it's as relevant to politics and family life as it is to faith. At a time when it's easy to succumb to cynicism and despair, we need to draw upon our reserves of reverence, wherever we find them.

Rev. Stefan Jonasson is minister of the Gimli Unitarian Church, editor of the Icelandic community newspaper, *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, and chair of the board of regents of the University of Winnipeg.

October 24: Olympia Brown and Beyond

Leader: Rev. Meghann Robern

Coordinator: Odell Havsdotter

This weekend is the anniversary of Rev. Olympia Brown's death. She was the first woman ordained by Universalists, and lifting her up in our history before and after she lived is a legacy of Universalist women, especially in Canada, working for justice and the greater good. We'll explore some of their stories and what gifts they give us now.

October 31: All Souls Day

Leader: Rev. Meghann Robern & Andrea James DLFD

Coordinator: Odell Havsdotter

All Souls' Day is a Universalist holiday when we remember all those whom we have loved and lost. By intentionally remembering, we allow them to continue to shape and guide our lives with their love and inspiration. We will also be releasing our DLFD, Andrea James, from covenant as she moves into the next chapter of her life.

During this time when we are exclusively gathering via Zoom, please email photos of loved ones who have died — pets as well as humans — for our altar of remembrance to Rev. Meghann at minister@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca before October 24.

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From the Minister's Study

by The Reverend Meghann Robern

October brings us to the turn of the wheel into autumn. The days will become gradually shorter, and the nights gradually longer, until the winter solstice in December - when the night will be at its longest.

Religious observances, especially those tied to the seasons of nature, help give structure to the seasons of our lives. For one thing, they call to mind where we were and what we were doing in years past. They're a natural time to consider what has changed and how far we've come. The spring and autumn equinoxes in particular are celebrated in earth centered traditions around the world as sacred times of balance. They represent a moment of poise and stillness amidst the constant change in the natural world. And so they're also a good time to reflect on balance in our own lives, and the constant change we live through as well.

Where do you find balance these days? What changes are underway in this season of your life? And how might you pause at this time of year, to get grounded in the here and now? What does your spirit need as the days grow shorter, and we move toward a quieter and more inwardly-focused time of year?

In gratitude and faith,
Rev. Meghann

Letter to the Editor

by Marlene Schellenberg

What a great summer edition of *the Communicator*.

The significance of our newsletter can't be overstated, especially when people are feeling isolated during the pandemic. Reading about all the work going on is such a comfort: work by our staff who continue to offer support and encouragement, as well as virtual learning and gathering opportunities; teams and committees that continue to meet via Zoom and communicate digitally and by telephone to keep our community vibrant; volunteers who work quietly, physically distanced in and around our building; and the entire Caring Community who reach out to those unable to manage the digital world

Kudos to Marjorie Doyle who patiently pokes, prods, coaxes and gathers contributions out of us and presents all this in a beautiful newsletter.

With deep gratitude to all,
Marlene

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Living Our Faith

by Andrea James, Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Dear ones, this is my final newsletter column and I'm reflecting on our time together.

I've been going through photos, marveling at all the child dedications; youth nights; pageants; bridgings; potlucks; regional fall gatherings; the youth hosted holiday dinners (otherwise known as YoHoHo); a 125 anniversary celebration, and more. I'm remembering building our young adult ministry; holding your reflections, thoughts, and experiences in the sacred spaces of small groups of elders, young adults, and mixed ages. Our shared losses and challenges.

My gratitude for the gifts of being part of your milestones and witnessing your lives, is beyond measure.

When I tell my story, I say that I took a job and discovered a calling. I'm grateful for how much I've grown; for the people I've met and relationships made; for the opportunities that came my way; and to be able to contribute to this faith. I volunteered continentally at a time of great change and growth,

and I hope to continue to be involved in some way.

My loving wishes for you include:

Learn about and practice living within covenant, as it is central to Unitarian Universalism

- Lean into and practice having difficult conversations. This is key to living in covenant (to be able to say or hear "you've hurt me", then work back into covenant), and to deepening our anti-racism and anti-oppression work (it's hard to be anti-racist if you can't

have a difficult conversation)

- Understand that faith development is at the heart of Unitarian Universalism

My gratitude for the gifts of being part of your milestones and witnessing your lives, is beyond measure.

and make it a priority to volunteer at whatever age level suits you best, as part of your commitment to this congregation (children's RE; youth group; young adults, adults, elders).

- Continue to stretch yourselves toward radical welcome. You are a caring, justice-seeking people, always learning. [Here's a resource](#) that Trans Inclusion program participants will recognize. Read through and then apply your learning as well to Black, Brown, Indigenous, and multi-racial people; disabled and neurodiverse people, and more.
- Love the hell out of this world.

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As a reminder, on November 1st, I'll unfriend those of you with whom I'm connected on social media, and I'll be absent from church services and events for at least a year - likely more. This is standard practice for all religious professionals as we leave our beloved congregations. This is how we all make room for grief and for something and someone new to bloom.

With great love and gratitude,
Andrea
dlfd@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca

Faith Development Notes

October

- 2** Wellspring: Sources Retreat
1:00-4:30 pm
- 3** The RE Committee and DLFD
Andrea lead the service
CUC forum on the 8th Principle,
6:00 pm
- 6** Youth Reboot, part 1, 6:00 to
8:00 pm
Wellspring: Sources 7:00-9:00
pm
- 9** Rising Together: UU Youth and
Emerging Adults of Colour,
3:30-5:00 pm
- 14** Gathered Here, for Young
Adults, 1:00 pm
- 15** The 3rd Friday Covenant Group
begins, 10:00 am to noon
- 16** UU BIPOC Space, 11:00 am
Youth Reboot, part 2, noon-2:00
pm
- 17** CUC forum on the 8th Principle,
6:00 pm
- 20** Wellspring: Sources 7:00-9:00
pm
- 23** Bid farewell to DLFD Andrea
- 25** The 4th Monday Covenant
Group begins, 7:00-9:00 pm
Transgender/Non-Binary
Gathering Space, 7:00 pm
- 28** The 4th Thursday Covenant
Group begins, 6:30-8:30 pm
- 31** DLFD Andrea's final service and
last day of work

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Message from the President

by Jim Gardiner, President

Firstly, I would like to thank Marlene Schellenberg for accepting the position of Vice President

to the Board of

Trustees. I look forward to working with Marlene as Vice President within the executive and the Board.

Some thoughts on stepping back into the physical community.

I remember talking to a friend about the culture shock they had when they moved out of province. Nothing serious, just differences in communication...both in the delivering and in the receiving. Subtle changes in the way one takes what's in their mind and translates it into a conversation. They had a similar "culture shock" upon their return. They said it took a bit of time to get back into the swing of former relationships. (Hold that thought and I'll come back to it in a bit...)

It was so exciting to be part of the team broadcasting live from within 603 Wellington Crescent this week! It was really nice to be able to talk to those who attended this September 26th church service. I would have enjoyed it a lot more if I could have talked with you, to have been in conversation with all and each of you. There's not a subtle difference between "to" and "with". It is major. Lack of this "with" has impacted me.

Please be assured that the Board knows how important it is to get back to physical community. We have many inputs that we are looking at, including provincial orders and guidelines, spacing, multi-platform and hybrid service, and thoughts on immunization requirements for physical presence in the service. It is a top priority for the Board to get us back in safely. We are also working on a survey to all of you for your feedback. That feedback, in part, will help us with this process. We currently have teams who are working on back-to-church process, such as the Multi-Platform Team and Hybrid Service Team. More on this in future emails.

One doesn't have to be a social scientist to see the effects that social isolation has had on the worldwide community. We no longer can be blind to global health threats. And it would appear we also cannot shut ourselves away and hope for "return to normal". Our world is different; we are different. How we feel, how we act, what we worry about and our views around personal safety are all morphing.

So, back to my friend returning to Manitoba. I'm wondering if we will also have a version of "culture shock" as we navigate how we return to community - how we see community, how we aspire for inclusion, how comfortable we feel (or don't) in our interactions. I'm wondering if our approach to church community rebuilding may need some adjustments. It may require some

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new skills or brushing up on old ones. We are all coming out of our isolation. We may all be a little more tender. My thoughts have been centered around some of the learnings from UU Youth and the OWL program. Two particular themes come to mind: consent and respect. Both those thoughts are part of the youths' covenant. These will be important components for each of us trying to navigate boundaries. Specifically, with us coming back together the consent and respect will also be about personal space and how we feel about self care.

As your Board we are also looking at our words and actions, their impact, and the messages we send both individually and as a collective. We are examining our processes around relationships, communication and community. Regardless of the changing mechanisms around interaction, we still have responsibilities to perform for you, our congregation.

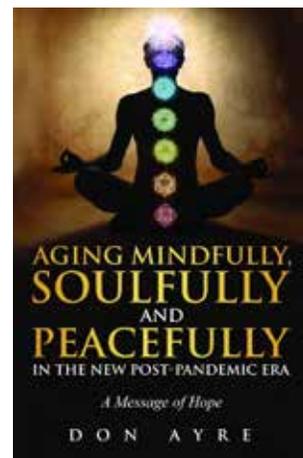
The Board members are also community members. As we all chart new territory, communication will continue to be key. We need open, honest conversations and feedback as well as mechanisms and procedures to facilitate both. All of us - each of us need to be able to speak, to hear and to be heard.

Jim Gardiner

President of your Board of Directors

Don Ayre's New Book

Don Ayre is pleased to announce the publication of his book, "Aging Mindfully, Soulfully and Peacefully in the New Post-Pandemic Era - A Message of Hope". In his book Don shares research and insights that may help a reader thrive after the COVID-19 pandemic. He has developed a series of 4-D Awareness Papers aimed at integrating body, mind, heart and spirit to help readers grow personally and get beyond the effects of the pandemic. Don has published his book on [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) and [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), available in both ebook and paperback formats.



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Dialogue on Death

by Liz Redston

Interesting Events in October

Two years ago we were busy hosting our first Inquiring Minds lecture series with more than a month long series of events called Dialogue on Death. We had hundreds of attendees and lots of positive feedback from our members and community.

Many people asked us when we would do more talks on the topic of death. Now you can participate in an annual national series of events organized by Community Death Care Canada under the banner of "Swan Song".

Check out the link below for all the offerings. Maybe next year we will be on the list hosting another Death Cafe or Death over Dinner event.

The Full List of Swan Song Festival Events! <https://www.communitydeath-care.ca/.../list-of-events-and.../>

Over 25 unique events are taking place October 16th and 17th! Join a contemplative living death ceremony, or a mini-boat flotilla at a meaningful body of water. Learn about virtual memorials, end-of-life rituals, eulogies, legacy projects, and much more!

Don't forget to mark yourself as Going on Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/2yRXLAPio>

Event Supervisor Volunteers Needed

by Liz Redston

Our rental events are picking up and we need some help opening and closing the building. Do you have a few hours to spare to assist with events listed below?

- 1) Every second Monday 6:45 - 8:30pm a small group of nurses meets in the dining room. No set up needed. Next meeting is Monday, October 4th.
- 2) The 3rd Tuesday of the month 9am - 11:30 for Probus Club Winnipeg in the sanctuary. We need someone who is ok to set up 25 chairs for this group. Next meeting is October 19th.

Let Darlene or Liz know if you can assist by sending an email to rentals@uwinnipeg.mb.ca

Thanks for your help.

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Share the Plate

by Doreen Stroud



Oak Table serves the people in our community who are often overlooked and underserved. People come to Oak Table for food, to feel part of a community, to access items they need to make it through the day, and resources to meet emergent and long term needs.

Many guests come because they need human contact and it gives them a brief reprieve from the isolation they feel. It is a place they can count on for acceptance, where they are known by name and accepted as they are.

UU Summer Camp Reunion

by Liz Redston

Our annual UU summer camp was planning for the 10th Anniversary in 2020but you know what happened that summer! Finally this year we managed a mini reunion at the church for a few short hours. The occasion may not qualify as worthy of a 10th Anniversary celebration but it was momentous in that it was the first church event in our building since the start of the pandemic.

People talked about how great it felt to just sit in our sanctuary again and be with our church friends. We shared some of our happy memories from camp and talked about new ideas or possible locations for future camp events.

We are hoping to host a UU Summer Camp weekend in 2022. Mark your calendars for the last weekend in August and look forward to once again gathering on the shores of Lake Winnipeg at Hnaua's Unitarian Centre.



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Remembering our Members

by Gini Martin



It is a curious error to suppose that you can carry on effectively a great liberal tradition while remaining ignorant or almost ignorant of

the beliefs and achievements of the people who have handed that tradition on to you.”~ Harry Meserve

From time to time, we remember Unitarian Universalist people and events from the past. For the month of October we remember

Magnus Eliason (1911-2005)

Gini Martin

A long time member of our church, Magnus was a Winnipeg city counselor for twenty years. He was born in 1911, and raised on a farmstead in North Laufholli, Manitoba, the youngest of four sons. The son of Icelandic pioneer parents, he was born with only 10% of his vision. His parents refused to send him to the school for the blind.

Early in his life. Magnus made an objective evaluation of the things he could do and the things he could not and then focused on what he could do. He began being active in politics when

he was 21. Magnus was deeply committed to the social democratic cause all his life. His determination was demonstrated when he lost thirteen elections before finally being elected to the Winnipeg City Council in 1968. He served until his retirement in 1989. He contributed to work on low-income housing and preservation of heritage buildings.

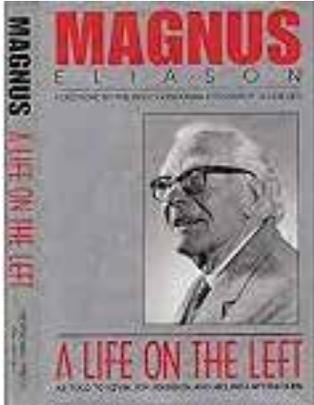
He helped build the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in British Columbia. As a founding member and organizer of the Co-operative Commonwealth Foundation (CCF), the forerunner of the New Democratic party of Canada (NDP). He met and worked with J.S. Woodsworth, Tommy Douglas and Stanley Knowles all prominent in the social democratic movement in Canada. He became a known orator and organizer for the CCF and NDP. His extraordinary memory helped him be an effective political organizer. He once studied with Dale Carnegie in New York. (Carnegie was the author of the widely known book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*).

Magnus, in addition to his political contributions, was committed to his Icelandic heritage. He worked endlessly for the Icelandic community and Scandinavian Centre. He was fluent in both Icelandic and English. Magnus had a beautiful voice and he could recite Icelandic Poetry from memory. He was familiar with many poems both serious and light.

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Remembering our Members continued



The Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre, is a park in Winnipeg, part of the city recreation centres, located at 430 Langside. The Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA) is located at the Magnus Eliason

Recreation Centre.

On its website the SNA states, "The purpose of the Spence Neighbourhood Association is to activate and engage the people of Spence Street in building and rebuilding their neighbourhood in the primary areas of holistic housing, community connecting, environment and open spaces and community economic development and youth and families."

In 1997 Magnus published his autobiography *A Life on the Left*. The collection of his papers was donated to

the University of Manitoba archives and special collections.

For his political and cultural contributions he received the Order of the Falcon from the Icelandic government. He also received the Distinguished Service Award from Heritage Winnipeg.

I have a vivid memory of Magnus, in the former church on Banning street. After the service, Magnus described the excitement in his household when he would have been seven years old and his mother got in the buggy to vote in the first election in Manitoba that allowed women voters. As a subscriber to *Freya*,^[1] his mother may have signed one of the petitions sent to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in support of women having the vote.

^[1] *Freya*, a women's magazine in Icelandic was edited by Margret Benedictsson and her husband. Margret was one of the founders of our church and the first president of its Ladies' aid. When the ladies aid disbanded in 1978, the money in their treasury started the Margret Benedictsson Unitarian Fund at the Winnipeg Foundation. The proceeds of the endowment come to the church each year.

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Indigenous Accord Signing

by Heather Emberley



Michael Thiessen (Bear Clan), Jim Gardiner (Board President), and Esther Kathryn (Board member) represented our church at the Indigenous Accord signing at Winnipeg City Hall on September 9th.

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Tuesday Covenant Group

by Heather Emberley

The Tuesday Covenant group chose as its service project to clean up the parking lot and were joined by Libby, the dog and Paula K. from AIM. We were delighted with a visit from the Salvation Army Mobile Unit who fed everyone tea, coffee and pastries!

All photos by Michael Thiessen, a most grateful Properties Chair for their support: Marlene S., Cheryl S., Rob M., Kathleen T., Doreen S. & Heather E.



How does this grab you - Paula K. on her trusty Ruby covered a lot of ground using pick-me-ups donated by Take Pride Winnipeg.



Doreen S. made rental parking spots even more inviting.



Libby takes a break from picking up sticks.

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To CUC, CUC Delegates, Canadians, CUC Young Adults, Board, Staff

by Vyda Ng', Executive Director, Canadian Unitarian Counsel



Dear all,
We realize that there has been some difficulty downloading the videos about the forums - our apologies for this. The videos are now on the CUC's YouTube channel but they're unlisted and won't show up on a search so access them with these links (which have now been updated in the [8th Principle resource folder](#)):

- YouTube [Video Playlist](#)
- V1 [Introduction](#) (6 mins)
- V3 [Responsibility Covenant](#) and Why It's Important (37 mins)
- V4 [What's Ok & not Ok](#) (in the forums) (10 mins)
- V5 [Assumptions in Approaching the Forums](#) (8 mins)
- V6 [Chalice Bundle Explanation](#) (10 mins)

The first forum was held on Sunday, September 19 at 7pm ET. As you prepare, please be sure to familiarize

yourself with the items in this [Resource Folder](#). There is a graphic/document for each forum that explains what we will cover in a concise manner.

We also realize that we haven't allowed much time for you to view the videos before the first forum. Videos: 2 (Responsibility Covenant), 3 (What's OK/Not Ok) and 4 (Assumptions) are all essential for the safety and understanding of all participants.

But if you only have time to view one before the first forum, the [Responsibility Covenant](#) video is the highest priority as we will be using it as the Covenant that will hold us accountable in the manner in which we share. In order to ensure that we do not harm each other in our processing, and thinking specifically of our members of colour who will be joining us, we will assume that each person who shares is doing so in full knowledge and support of the Covenant, Assumptions and Ok/Not Ok information.

Thank you for taking the time to make this a priority.

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Faith Development

by Andrea James, Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Adults

Our core groups for adults this year are our two small group ministry programs and a workshop on caring.

Covenant Groups

Covenant Groups are small groups of 8-12 participants, with two co-facilitators. They gather monthly to reflect on the church-wide theme, broadening personal spiritual growth, and forming connections and deepening relationships as they go. They are a wonderful way to create community.

We have three times for you to choose from:

- 3rd Friday of the month, 10:00 am to noon. Begins October 15, 2021, with Paula Kierstead and Stephanie Harvey
- 4th Monday of the month, 7:00-9:00 pm. Begins October 25, 2021 with Janet Toews and Debby Lake
- 4th Thursday of the month, 6:30-8:30 pm. Begins October 28, 2021, with Odell Havsdotter and Diane Pearce

For full details, and to [register by October 7, visit our website.](#)

Wellspring: Sources

Explore your sense of identity as a UU through your connection to the six sources of Unitarian Universalism in this transformative program.

Facilitated by Rev. Meghann Robern and our Interim Director of Lifespan Faith Development (DLFD), on Zoom video conference.

Opening Retreat: Saturday, October 2, 2021, from 1:00 to 4:30 pm.

Regular sessions: 7:00 – 9:00 pm, every other Wednesday, from October 6, 2021 to June 29, 2022.

To see if there are any spaces available, [contact DLFD Andrea](#)

Creating Our Caring Community

Are you interested in how our community practices care for one another? Would you like to enhance your listening skills? Participate in this four-hour workshop.

Facilitated by Rev. Meghann Robern on Zoom videoconference.

Saturday, November 20, 2021, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

For full description and to register by November 12, [click here.](#)

Children and Youth

For information about children's programming and family ministry, and to register, [click here.](#)

For information about programming for teens, ages 13-19, and to register, [click here.](#)

RE Mail Time

Would your child like to *send* a note to another child in RE?

Would your child like to *receive* a card from another child in RE?

[Complete this form to opt in](#) to this program of connection, care, and community

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UU BIPOC Space
Saturdays, October 16
11:00 am



A space for UUs who are Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour, ages 18 and up, to gather safely to share experiences, stories, and be change-makers. Join Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana and Vyda Ng to share what is on your minds and in your hearts.

Details [here](#).

Join on Zoom at http://bit.ly/UU_BIPOC



8th Principle **Process: Forum**

The CUC will hold a series of four forums to bring congregations together in respectful conversation. The forums are cumulative and each one will build on the one before it, and participants can attend these as a series or as stand-alone sessions, although we encourage you to attend all four, especially congregational leaders and delegates. The forums will focus on reflection and embracing action to prepare us for making a significant decision at the Special Meeting on November 27th.

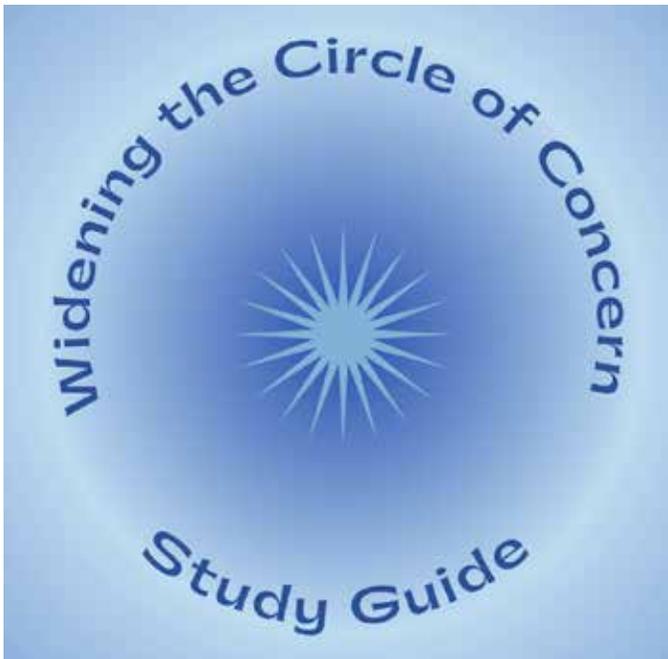
Sundays, October 3 and 17, 6:00 pm

More information is available at <https://cuc.ca/events/8th-principle-process-forum-1/1632078000/1632083400/>

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Widening the Circle of Concern: Canadian Perspective

October 16 & 30, November 13, and December 4, 10:30 am- 6:30 pm



Join us for a Canadian UU exploration to broaden our understanding of social justice and its implementation within our communities.

More information is available at <https://cuc.ca/events/widening-circle/1634383800/1634410800/>

Media, Racism, and Censorship with Christine Genier

Wednesday, October 20, 2021



Indigenous broadcaster Christine Genier speaks to us about her experience as a truth-teller in a predominantly white institution that promotes itself as multicultural.

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/media-racism-and-censorship-with-christine-genier-tickets-164031220797>

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Communicating from the Heart

**1st weekend:
October 22-24**
**2nd weekend:
October 29-31**

This webinar is a multi-part advanced communications training, with a focus on building effective listening on the first weekend, leading to building effective speaking skills on the second weekend, with some exercises in between.

More information is available at <https://cuc.ca/events/communicating-heart/1634925600/1635096600/>



ComUUnities & Mental Health Matters

The CUC welcomes people to consider that mental health lies on a continuum from health, to issues requiring professional support. We know that approximately 20% of Canadians will experience a mental health-related challenge in their lifetime. People in our congregations can be directly and indirectly, through their relationships, affected by mental health struggles. How can we provide a supportive and welcoming community while also respecting appropriate and respectful boundaries in our congregational roles?

On November 6th, we welcome you to join us for a day long workshop considering these and other questions.

For more information, or to register, please visit <https://cuc.ca/events/comunities-mental-health/1636201800/1636218000/>

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Please submit materials to the editor Marjorie Doyle by email to: communicator@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca
The **deadline** for the **November** issue is:
Wednesday, October 20th

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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