First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg

The Communicator

May 2024

Sunday Services are at 10:30 am via Zoom and in the sanctuary.

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The deadline for the June 2024 Communicator is Tuesday, May 21st.

Sunday Services

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

May 5, 2024

Service Leader: Rev. Stefan Jonasson

Service Coordinator: Steve Lennon

How do you make decisions? Oftentimes, the choice is easy; other times it may be especially difficult. "We still haven't figured out any satisfactory systematic way of deciding these things," observed the late Daniel C. Dennett. "Anything that can relieve the burden of figuring out how to make these hard calls is bound to be an attractive idea." While some may wait for a sign, I prefer to discern a reason.

Five Funerals, Some Weddings and Not Enough Child Dedications

May 12, 2024

Service Leader: Christina Swindells-Nader

Service Coordinator: Cate Ziegler

The Canadian Unitarian Council'sLay Chaplaincy program started in 1971, from a belief that everyone has a right to a rite, no matter their religious affiliation. The program, to paraphrase the CUC, helps people in need of meaningful rite of passage ceremonies that recognize their personal beliefs and the needs of everyone attending the ceremony, reflecting Unitarian and Universalist values. The thresholds innate to rites of passage can be daunting. John O'Donohue wrote, in *To Bless the Space Between Us*, "To acknowledge and cross a new

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Sunday Services continued

threshold is always a challenge. It demands courage and also a sense of trust in whatever is emerging." Join us on May 12th as Christina Swindells-Nader explores the specific rites and rituals that have shaped her and how they led to becoming a lay chaplain.

Building Community with Food and Mutual Aid

May 19, 2024

Service Leader and Coordinator: Ashlyn Noble

Everyone needs to eat, but not everyone has the money, time, energy, or desire to cook good food. In early 2023, I decided to see what would happen if I offered to cook dinner once a week for friends, asking only that they pitch in for groceries as they could. Over a year later, I'm now regularly making 30 meals for old friends and new comrades every Tuesday on an entirely Pay What You Can basis. This Sunday, I'd like to share some of the laughs and lessons I've learned along the way in my quest to feed people really good food in the spirit of mutual aid.

Finding Unity in Diversity

May 26, 2024

Service Leader: Rev. Stefan Jonasson

Service Coordinator: Jill Moats

"Pluralism that reflects no commitments whatever to the common good is pluralism gone berserk," according to John W. Gardner. Robust pluralism, the diversity that resolves itself in unity, requires sufficient shared values and mutual trust to work. As it turns out, pluralism is more work than universalism, but more achievable for religious communities, and between religious traditions, not to mention for whole societies.

Mark your Calendar

AGM, Sunday, June 9th after the service.

A light lunch will be served and our 2023 Financial and Reports will be accepted.

Board Notes

by Larry Phillips

May is a busy time for the board as we complete the stewardship campaign, prepare the 2024-2025 budget from the pledges received, develop the 2024-2025 staffing plan, and prepare for the church's June 9 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in addition to all the regular issues that arise.

In February Rev. Stefan held workshops on various models of ministry for us to consider. Please ensure that you use the canvass opportunity to provide feedback on the model that you would like to see the church adopt. Feedback received will be summarized and used by the board to make a recommendation for consideration at the AGM.

A number of projects are also underway. By the time you read this, we should have new shingles on the Sanctuary roof. We have placed an order for engraved bricks for the Memory Garden. Work continues on getting approvals from the City for the elevator that will provide access to the basement and second floor. And design work continues on the new streetside signage. These projects have all been fully funded from special donations, a federal grant for the elevator, and our capital fund. No dates are available yet as to when these projects will be completed, but we expect them all to be finished by end of summer.

The church attendance remains strong in March/April with a 10% increase over last year (including both in person and virtual attendees).

Our 2023-2024 financial results look promising. Expenses are trending lower than budgeted and revenue is trending higher. Revenue from building rentals continues to be strong – it makes up about 30% of our total operating revenue.

Over 70% of our operating donations now come in using direct deposit. This is a very efficient, safe way for the office (and you) to make your donations. Donations can be scheduled once or twice a month, quarterly, or annually. If you don't use direct deposit please consider doing so. Contact the office if you have any questions.

Look for an information packet about the June 9 AGM in late May. A reminder that committee and cluster annual reports are to be submitted to Marjorie Doyle at secretary@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca by April 30th. Hope to see you there.

Larry

From the Rebranding Committee

Kris Breckman, Marjorie Doyle, Stefan Jonasson, Ann LeDuc, and Peter Miller

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback via the online form and email regarding the possibility of a new brand name for the church.

As mentioned in earlier communications, the legal name will remain the same, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg, Inc.

The feedback was gathered beginning on February 2. A total of 29 responses were received (see below). On March 8 and April 18, the Rebranding Committee met to review the feedback from the congregation. The feedback did not provide a consensus regarding rebranding.

At this point, the committee is focusing on the name that will be displayed on a new sign, which is being planned for the front of the church property. This sign will not only display some form of our church's name, but also communicate our activities. Our activities and actions always speak louder than our words. Based on our initial feedback, for the new sign the committee recommends "Unitarian Universalists." The committee considered many factors, including space constraints on the new sign.

We will hold a special Town Hall meeting on May 26 after the service, and hope everyone will attend. The discussions at the Town Hall meeting, along with the feedback from the online form will inform the committee on our final recommendations. These recommendations will be presented at the upcoming annual congregational meeting.

Brand name suggestions included:

- Winnipeg Unitarians
- Winnipeg Unitarian Church
- Winnipeg Unitarian Fellowship
- Winnipeg Unitarian Congregation
- Unitarian Universalist Church
- Winnipeg Unitarian Universalist
- Unitarian Church
- Winnipeg Unitarian Center
- Winnipeg Unitarian Society
- Unitarian Centre
- Unitarian Place
- We Believe in U
- Winnipeg UU Centre
- First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg
- Unitarian Universalists of Winnipeg
- Winnipeg Unitarian Universalists

Religious Education

Ana Gabriela Castañeda Aguilera Cordinatior of Lifespan Religious Exploration

Here are some news and updates from our Religious Education (RE) program I want to share with you.

Our youth group is preparing to embark on an enriching journey to CanUUdle, an annual gathering for Unitarian Universalist youth across Canada. This trip is an incredible opportunity for our young UUs to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds, engage in meaningful discussions, and deepen their understanding of Unitarian Universalism. The two adults who will accompany the youth will be Rob Malo, who has offered to drive all the way there, thank you Rob! and myself.

Also, you may have noticed we started a new Our Whole Lives (OWL) program. Eveline Buehlmann has adapted the program to meet the needs of the kids in our church and with the help of Pat Lane the program has been a great success, the children are enjoying and learning a lot, thank you to you both. By tailoring OWL to our community, we ensure that our children receive relevant, inclusive, and affirming education, which is so important for our church.

Our RE children's program continues to thrive with the help of our dedicated volunteer Debby Lake. Debby's passion for nurturing young minds is evident in everything she does for the children. I am grateful for her unwavering commitment to our children's development and the vibrant community she helps cultivate.

Last but not least, our nursery remains a nurturing and welcoming space for our youngest members. Led by our compassionate caregiver Paulina and with the help of Amari a young volunteer, our nursery provides a safe and loving environment where children can play, learn, and grow while their families participate in worship and community activities.

As we continue to nurture the spiritual growth and development of our congregation's children and youths, we are reaching out to invite you to become a vital part of our Religious Education (RE) programs.

Our RE department plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of our children, youth, and families, providing them with opportunities for learning, connection, and spiritual exploration. However, none of this would be possible without the support and dedication of volunteers.

We are currently seeking volunteers to assist with our RE program in:

- Children's Group Activities: Assisting in implementing our RE children's Sundays program, activities, discussions, and events for our group one Sunday a month.
- Join our RE Committee.
- Provide snacks for the RE program.

Thank you for your continued support and participation in our RE programs. Together, we're building a brighter future for our congregation and our world.

For more information or if you have questions you can send me an email at: clre@uuwinnipeg.ca

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.

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

Who's Who

Minister

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Coordinator of Lifespan Religious Exploration

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