July | Aug 2025

The Communicator

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg

Services in July | August

Sunday, July 6, 2025 – 10:30 a.m.

Learning to Live by Losing Control

The hardest part of life is allowing yourself to live it. Join Octavia as she takes you through her own journey, of learning how to lose control to take back control of her power in life.

Service Leader: Octavia MacIsaac

Service Coordinator: Steve Lennon

Sunday, July 13, 2025 – 10:30 a.m.

Sacred Sound: My Faith Journey and How I Was Restored to Sanity Through the Power of Music and Mantra

I was invited to talk about my personal faith practice as someone who has for the last 15 years been an active member of the Hare Krishna community in Winnipeg. I am going to talk about that, but I decided to frame it within the story of my "faith journey", how I came to my current faith practice, and the role that music and sacred sound has had in shaping my spiritual evolution through life.

Service Leader: Daniel Clark

Service Coordinator: Jill Moats

Sunday, July 20, 2025 – 10:30 a.m.

Life as an Engaging Journey

Clarence Bauman, a former theology professor shared that "... some people die at 30 and are buried at 60" How do we encourage ourselves, our families and friends, our communities and world, to keep living fully?

You are welcomed to hear stories of engaging life, regardless of age and situation. And then reflect upon your own journey, potentially sharing insights of your own.

Service Leader: Joan Carolyn

Service Coordinator: Cate Ziegler

Sunday, July 27, 2025 – 10:30 a.m.

A Midsummer's Daydream

Aah – the sights and sounds and feel of midsummer! Shorts and sandals, the splash of lake water, the squeals of children playing in the park, and retired people out for a stroll.

There's a great sense of ease that comes with the warm season. Come celebrate with Steve the many gifts of midsummer.

Service Leader: Steve Lennon

Service Coordinator: Steve Lennon and Norm Cobb

August service info coming soon — watch our website, social media, and all-church email for updates!

Lifting Our Spirits

By Diane Pearce and Paula Keirstead on behalf of The AIM Team

Our long-awaited dream of a lift to access all levels of the church has been achieved after more than two decades. Our church on Banning St. greeted folks with steps everywhere. When our current building was designed an elevator shaft was included. As most of you know, we didn't have adequate money to build the church, never mind a lift. The building was realized with a lot of sweat equity and creative donations. There was a ramp, access to the main floor and an accessible washroom but no lift.

My dad, Ken Pearce, who had rheumatoid arthritis, was able to climb stairs when we left the Banning Street church but needed a wheelchair by the time we were meeting at our temporary sites. We had hoped we would be able to fund a lift within a few years but at least the shaft was there with thoughts that something could happen in the future. After dad passed on November 2, 2002, our family asked if a lift fund could be started. It collected donations for over 20 years. There were a few attempts to get the lift funded and built but none were successful.

In the summer of 2018, a group of folks said we need to get moving on a lift. I believe the initial after church chat was Steve Lennon, Linda Henderson, Paula Keirstead and Diane Pearce. Rev Meghann told us about the AIM (Accessible Inclusive Ministry Program) through UUA. The AIM team was created, and we eventually became the first and only Canadian congregation to be certified. As all of you know, AIM is about much more than just lifts and we have become a more physical and attitudinally accessible and inclusive church because of us working with this program.

There were ups and downs on the journey to fund the lift. We were confident that we would be able to get grant funding for the lift. However, we were supposed to have paved the parking lot 20 years earlier so we would not have been able to get permits for a lift. We did a grant proposal to pave the parking lot and received some money from the Winnipeg Foundation. The parking lot was paved in 2020. We looked for more grant opportunities. We applied to both the Enabling Access Fund from the Federal Government and the Building Sustainable Communities from the Provincial Government. We initially were unsuccessful. The federal fund was a first come first served and getting it submitted a day early wasn't enough. The fund folks did say that we might get funding later depending on what happened with other folks. The latter was supposed to be June, but it ended up being November. Ben Carr, our M.P., and staff were aware of our submission and when funds became available, we were contacted. The Enabling Access Funds were significant. This meant that the grant along with our lift fund allowed us to proceed without needing additional funds.

We had an elevator dedication ceremony on June 8 along with an acknowledgement of the commitment of the Pearce family to making out church accessible and inclusive.

The process of getting the lift installed has been very long; many delays and bumps along the way.

Thank you to everyone who helped us realize this dream.

Riverbank Tree Planting

By Elizabeth Redston

On June 12th we had a great turnout for our potluck supper and tree planting event. Trees Winnipeg partnered with us for this community event and covered half the cost of the **thirty-two trees and shrubs we planted**.

Now comes the job of keeping our new trees alive through summer. If you can help with a watering routine, please contact Diane Pearce at diane.pearce1@gmail.com

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INQUIRING MINDS

09.09.25 Save the Date

09 SEPTEMBER 2025 7PM

Adult Programs and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation invites you to a presentation on the Legacy of Residential Schools and actions we can take toward healing and reconciliation **at 7 pm Tuesday, September 9th, 2025,** at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg (603 Wellington Cresent)

MLPD Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities

Our Share the Plate Partner for July | August

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 charitable local 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.

For the months of July and August, our Share the Plate partner is the **Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities (the MLPD).** Established in 1974, The Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities (MLPD) is a provincial not-for profit organization that promotes accessibility and inclusion for people of all abilities. The MLPD is a united voice of people with disabilities, and their supporters, that promotes equal rights, full participation in society, and facilitates positive change through advocacy and public education. The organization works locally, provincially, and nationally by contributing to other community initiatives and organizations. They help to remove barriers people experience, whether or not they identify as having a disability.

MLPD's activities include many projects and events. Their Social Enterprise, which offers trained reviewers to assist businesses and

organizations, remove barriers to inclusion of people with disabilities. The recently produced Community Access Guide is a practical tool for community staff and volunteers as they work alongside persons living with disabilities and accessibility barriers, as well as Indigenous people with gifts. There is also a Handbook for Seniors which provides resources for older folks who may be new to the disability community.

Earlier this year, MLPD's Executive Director, Melissa Graham hosted a virtual Elections Townhall to share the experience of campaigning, the opportunities and challenges of participation in the democratic processes for people with disabilities. Whether for access to casting a vote or becoming a candidate for elected office, MLPD has been working with Elections Canada focusing on accommodation of persons with disabilities in the election process.

Over the years, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities has gathered the lived experiences of people in the disability community, bringing attention to such issues as accessible public transportation, barrier-free community spaces, sidewalk snow clearing and more. Most importantly, they have advocated for the Charter rights of people living with different abilities and gifts, whether or not they identify as having a disability.

Visit their website at https://mlpd.mb.ca or scan the QR code below!

Moments That Matter

Sometimes it's the smallest things that leave the biggest impact — a shared laugh, a quiet act of service, a gathering in the park, or the joy of singing together. This section highlights those brief but meaningful glimpses into our congregational life.

Whether it's a friendly face representing us out in the world, a spirited Sunday service, or a simple improvement to our shared space, these are the moments that connect us and remind us why we come together. After all, it's not always the headlines that shape a community — sometimes, it's the moments that matter.

Freshly Capped

By Peter Hill-Carroll

The Old chimney cap was removed and a new one has been installed.

Grannies in Action

On June 15, the Winnipeg Raging Grannies brought spirit, song, and social justice to the sanctuary. With humour, heart, and a healthy dose of harmony, they led us in powerful protest songs and invited all to sing along. A gentle, angry people indeed — and deeply

Photo submitted by Heather Emberley

Yarn Works in the Park

By Heather Emberley

Shar Lynn represented our church as coordinator of Yarn Works at the 20th anniversary of World Knit in Public Day at Assiniboine Park on June 14.

Taking Pride in Our Colours

The front of our church continues to reflect our values of welcome and inclusion — captured beautifully in this photo featuring our rainbow-painted bike rack. A joyful reminder that Pride lives not just in a season, but in the spirit of our community year-round.

Photo submitted by Heather Emberley

Regrets & Sorrows

Nancy Eckles Gilbert

June 24, 1931 - May 26, 2025

Nancy Gilbert approached life with creativity, a playful wit, and a positive outlook.

Nancy was born in New York City, and, like her parents, she was artistic. Her mother, Adele Godchaux, was a painter, writer, and herbalist. Her father, Harry Eckles, and stepfather, Bradley Smith, were both photographers. The oldest of six, Nancy grew up in a lively, eccentric home frequented by artists. As a girl, she explored the natural world, sketched and painted. She and her sister Susan were constant companions, often performing plays of their own invention. Every summer, they made the epic train trip from New York to New Orleans to visit family, memorably free of adult supervision en route.

Nancy enjoyed her studies at Oakwood, a progressive Quaker boarding school in Poughkeepsie, New York, where she met her future husband, John Gilbert. She went on to Antioch, a liberal arts college in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Antioch was the source of life-long friendships, and she said it taught her to look at the world thoughtfully and critically, as an idealist and a realist.

Her working life began with Antioch Co-Op job placements in Chicago and in New York,

where she did layout for trade publications and assisted in book production at Doubleday. She and John lived in Greenwich Village and subsisted on lentils in order to enjoy the city's cultural offerings on a shoestring budget.

A move to Indiana in 1955 brought graphic design work at Purdue University and, later, the arrival of Victoria and Bart. Around this time, Nancy and John discovered Unitarianism, a denomination that appealed to their spiritual and intellectual curiosity and sense of social justice.

The 1960s saw the family move to Wisconsin, where Sarah was born. Nancy supported the family and put John through theological school. When he was called to be the Unitarian Minister in Winnipeg in 1977, she embarked on the Canadian half of her life, forming friendships and community connections that sustained her.

Her active membership at the First Unitarian Church of Winnipeg began as the minister's wife and extended long after John Gilbert's ministry there ended. Nancy led discussion groups; chaired the Welcoming Congregation committee; programmed summer services; for decades served as head usher; and participated in fundraising. She also designed the church logos and, with dear friends Shirley Kitchen and Lois Whyte, founded a feminist Unitarian women's group.

Professionally, Nancy continued to evolve, writing copy in addition to creating graphics. When technology changed, she adapted, deftly acquiring necessary new skills. Her collaboration with friend and colleague Brian Brooks at Howes, Waldon Associates Limited lasted for two decades, until the firm closed.

Nancy was an independent spirit who never stopped learning. Over the years she took courses in graphic arts, drawing, photography, printmaking and linguistics. She was always reading—newspapers, magazines, novels and poetry. As a mother and a grandmother, she was eager to sit on the floor, play with blocks, paint, draw, laugh, make elaborate Halloween costumes, and read book after book, raising a family of readers. As her grandchildren grew, she paid attention, wanting to discover who they were becoming.

She often mused that E.B. White put it perfectly when he said, *"I arise in the morning torn between a desire to save the world and a desire to savour the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."* Nancy saved—contributing in vital ways to countless groups and causes—and savoured. Her delights, among many others, included summer afternoons, trees of all kinds, ice cream, and zinnias.

Nancy was preceded in death by her son Bart Gilbert; and is survived by her siblings, Susan Van Kleeck (Paul Garrigue), Robert Eckles, Michael Smith (Nancy Shaw), Terrence Smith (Roberta Smith), Sharon Smith; her daughters, Victoria (Bryan Johanson), Sarah (Francis Miquet); daughter in law Christine Martin; and her grandchildren, Molly Johanson (Niccolo Pizarro), Matthew Gilbert (Rynn Letkeman), Cameron Gilbert, and Amelia Miquet. The family extends warm thanks and appreciation to Theresa at Reliable Homecare for her help and kind attention over the past 18 months.

A celebration of life will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at 603 Wellington Crescent (the First Unitarian Church of Winnipeg). Please check back for a Livestream Link to the service, coming soon.

Nancy's family kindly requests that all of her friends and relatives take a few minutes to honour her memory by sharing photos, memories, and stories, using the comment section on the Ethical Death Care website by visiting https://www.ethicaldeathcare.com/obits/gilbert-nancy or scan the QR code below.

This Summer's Gimli Services

By Rev. Stefan Jonasson

Gimli Unitarian Church invites Winnipeg Unitarian Universalists and their friends to join us on summer Sundays if they find themselves in our neighbourhood along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. The church will hold five Sunday services this summer in our landmark church on **Second Avenue just off Centre Street** in the heart of town. **Services begin at 11:00 a.m. and are followed by refreshments and conversation.** Some head off for lunch at a local eatery while others head to beach. Dress is casual.

July 6: The Summer of Our Discontent

This summer is shaping up as a season of protest, much like the summer of 2020 and many summers before. Depending on your point of view, this may be either welcome or threatening. However, you can be sure that varied propagandists will seek to bend the narrative in their favour.

- Rev. Stefan Jonasson

July 20: In Praise of Rain

"Into each life some rain must fall," sighed Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, seeing our human days as "dark and dreary." Yet in another poem, he exclaimed: "How beautiful is the rain!" This year, we have been reminded that rain is a blessing when it falls on a parched and thirsting earth.

- Rev. Stefan Jonasson

August 3: The Threads We Follow

The theme for Íslendingadagurinn is "Woven Together." The history we honor this year is composed of many different threads. We hope to identify several of the distinct threads that come together this weekend and weave them into a sermon that will illuminate both the perils and the possibilities of historical storytelling.

- Rev. Wayne Arnason & Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

August 17: Wheezing to the Finish Line

"Most runners run not because they want to live longer, but because they want to live life to the fullest" argues Haruki Murakami. Whether you view life as a sprint or a marathon, it demands speed and endurance –and the drive of a runner, even if running isn't our thing.

- Rev. Stefan Jonasson

August 31: This Inexplicable Continuity

Religions seem curiously fixated on creation stories and apocalypses, beginnings and endings, origins and destinies. By contrast, Ralph Waldo Emerson saw what he called "the inexplicable continuity of this web of God," which lies at the heart of our concept of "the interdependent web."

- Rev. Stefan Jonasson

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