



The Window

The newsletter of Grand River Unitarian Congregation

Spring 2017



"Our ultimate goal,
after all, is not a good
death but a good life
to the very end."

— Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal:
Medicine and What Matters in the
End*

A Board on the Waves

For Grand River Unitarian, 2017 has arrived with fireworks! The Syrian family we are sponsoring has finally made it safely to Canada. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) gave us a budget, a new board member, and four delegates to the annual meeting of the Canadian Unitarian Council, and our much needed classroom renovation will start this summer.

The Board has also been busy keeping pace with the energy and drive of the congregation. January's meeting was spent preparing for the AGM and setting some priorities for property upgrades. As mentioned above, the congregation approved the classroom renovation plans. Construction will begin this summer and should be completed by September—in time for the commencement of the new church year. Work on finding the best option for a hearing assistance mechanism in the sanctuary continues. We hope you have noticed the new, water conserving toilets that have been installed in the washrooms off Whitton Hall (HUGE thanks to Jamie Wilson!).

February was a joint meeting with the Board and Leadership Council. Members of the Committee on Ministry made a presentation to the Council on covenants and encouraged each team leader to take the information back to their team for consideration. Jack Horman presented some ideas on the types of items that should be preserved in the congregation's archives and gave some examples of the important information that can be gleaned from them. The Board ironed out a few more details for the AGM and gave the Music Team approval to hire an interim music director while Stephen Preece takes a six month leave.

The Board elected officers at the March meeting—the first one following the AGM. Three continue in their previous positions: Janis Collins as president, Colin Read as vice-president, and Neil Hunt as treasurer. Kristen Wilson was elected secretary. We were also able to take some time in this meeting to brainstorm some thoughts on strengthening our infrastructure (property, finances, procedures) to enhance the congregation's momentum and energy for fulfilling its aspirations—personal growth, supportive community, and meaningful action. As our thoughts coalesce into ideas and actionable items, we will share them with the congregation. We also began work on a Board covenant, as suggested by the Committee on Ministry at the February combined Board/Leadership Council meeting.

I look forward to our next year together.



Inside Out

“You may not control life's circumstances, but getting to be the author of your life means getting to control what you do with them.”

— Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*

In my vocation, I have more opportunities to deal directly with death than most people. It is a privilege to engage in deathbed conversations with inspiring people who have shared their thoughts on legacy, finality, and what matters in the end. Learning about dying helps me discern how to live a ‘livelier’ life. Embracing endings encourages change.

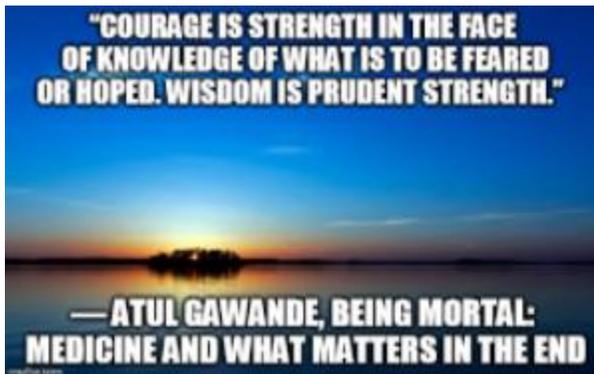
For the coming year, I’ve committed to a personal spiritual practice of re-prioritizing. The process has involved examining my habits of how I spend my resources (time, talent and treasure), integrating my values more finely into all aspects of my lifestyle, and attuning my everyday choices to better reflect my personal and professional aspirations. In effect, I have turned my life *inside out* to engage with a new level of intentional living in a quest to learn more about

what matters.

My inspiration and courage to change is in part motivated by an exploration of Dr. Atul Gawande's book *BEING MORTAL*. Gawande writes: "In the end, people don't view their life as merely the average of all its moments—which, after all, is mostly nothing much plus some sleep. For human beings, life is meaningful because it is a story. A story has a sense of a whole, and its arc is determined by the significant moments, the ones where something happens. Measurements of people's minute-by-minute levels of pleasure and pain miss this fundamental aspect of human existence. A seemingly happy life may be empty. A seemingly difficult life may be devoted to a great cause. We have purposes larger than ourselves."

I look forward to sharing our stories as we explore the purposes of our lives as individuals and as members of this community.

See you Sunday, Rev. Jess.



Message from the DRE

Yesterday I started reading our GRU Reads book, *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande. What a fascinating read! One of the assertions he makes early in the book is that for most of our history death was NOT something to be associated with the elderly; very few made it there. For any average,

healthy person, death could come any day, in the form of accident or infection.

I think of the story of my dear Aunt Vera (a character who could turn any room, including hospital wards, into raucous parties.) When she was a child she contracted Scarlet Fever. Seven of her siblings had already died from various causes, leaving only five children to work the farm. When she became ill she was quarantined to a bedroom at the front of the house for months. Her mother left meals outside her door and never even laid eyes on her during that time, so determined was she not to spread the illness to the remaining children. When my aunt told me this story I was horrified, but she insisted that it was not a big deal and her mother did what had to be done.

How lucky we are to live in a time where we would never think that a medical crisis could force us to physically and emotionally detach from our child. How fortunate we are to live in a time where we don't have to tell our children graphic and frightening fairy tales to keep them out of the woods. How fortunate we are that our questions regarding our children are "how can they thrive" rather than "will this one survive?"

Yet, with death not being ever-present in our lives, how do we teach our children that it is inevitable and natural? I'm hoping that as I make it further into Gawande's book, he will have some insights into how we can normalize it and gain some tools for how to discuss it with our kids. In the meantime, our library has some wonderful books that touch on the subject: The Heart and the Bottle by Oliver Jeffers, Ghost Wings by Barbara M. Joose, I Found a Dead Bird by Jan Thornhill, and The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst.

Coming Up in Children's Religious Exploration:
Spirit Jam, Grade 10-12 OWL and Coming of Age continue as per normal, but dates to watch for this spring are:
April 16 (during service time) - Easter Party
April 29 6-9pm - Puzzles and Board Games Night
June 25 (after service) - Picnic



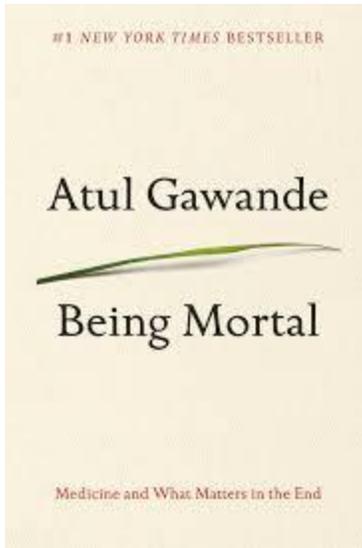
Kids and Parents: Come to Family Fun Nights

Are you looking to build connections and have fun at GRU?

Join us for fun family events!!!

The final game night of the year (puzzles and board games) will be on
Saturday, April 29, 6:30-8:30pm.

Talk to Judith Koeller for more details.



BEING MORTAL: the Spring 2017

GRU Reads Challenge

by Rev. Jessica Rodela

A couple of years ago, Charlie Macdonald recommended I read Atul Gawande's book BEING MORTAL. No other book has had such a dramatic impact on my way of thinking about how we prioritize choices of living and dying. In the past year, a number of people have asked me to host a book discussion on the important challenges that Gawande proposes. So, by popular demand, the GRU READS challenge this spring will be Dr. Atul Gawande's *BEING MORTAL: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. We have planned a number of discussions, forums, and a workshop to encourage deep conversations on this compelling book and its implications. I look forward to exploring it with you.

Gawande's website* says:

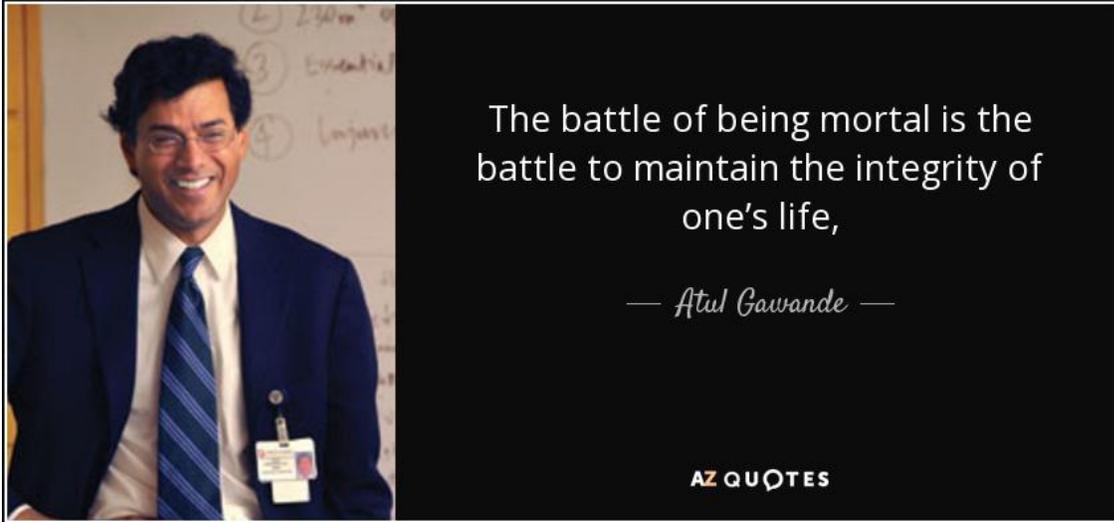
“Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming the dangers of childbirth, injury, and disease from harrowing to manageable. But when it comes to the inescapable realities of aging and death, what medicine can do often runs counter to what it should.

Through eye-opening research and gripping stories of his own patients and family, Gawande reveals the suffering this dynamic has produced. Nursing homes, devoted above all to safety, battle with residents over the food they are allowed to eat and the choices they are allowed to make. Doctors, uncomfortable discussing patients’ anxieties about death, fall back on false hopes and treatments that are actually shortening lives instead of improving them. And families go along with all of it.

In his bestselling books, Atul Gawande, a practicing surgeon, has fearlessly revealed the struggles of his profession. Now he examines its ultimate limitations and failures – in his own practices as well as others’ – as life draws to a close. And he discovers how we can do better. He follows a hospice nurse on her rounds, a geriatrician in his clinic, and reformers turning nursing homes upside down. He finds people who show us how to have the hard conversations and how to ensure we never sacrifice what people really care about.

Riveting, honest, and humane, *Being Mortal* shows that the ultimate goal is not a good death but a good life – all the way to the very end.”

(<http://atulgawande.com/book/being-mortal/>)



QUEST Spring 2017

RSVP for our events is requested so that facilitators can be prepared, and participants can be notified of changes or cancellations in advance. Sign up at the QUEST table, email the event coordinator, or contact quest@grandriverunitarian.ca.

GRU READS: BEING MORTAL by Atul Gawande

WELLSPRING with Julie Taylor

Thursday April 27, 7:00 p.m.

Join Julie for a spirited exploration of our GRU READS themes through art, meditation, reflection, improv, and informal discussion.

Advance Care Planning Workshop with Jessica Hutchison

2:00-4:00 pm Saturday, April 29 in Whitton Hall

If you were in the hospital, too ill or hurt to speak for yourself, do you know who would make your health care decisions for you? Do they know what kind of health care you would want or not want? Attend this seminar to learn more about Advance Care Planning, Substitute Decision Making, Power of Attorney for Personal Care and Health Care Consent in Ontario. Many free resources will be provided. Bring your loved ones along! The

session is brought to you by *Conversations Worth Having*, the Advance Care Planning program of Waterloo Wellington. More information can be found *at* www.acpww.ca.

POPCORN THEOLOGY with Janis Collins

Friday, May 5, 7:00 p.m.

Enjoy a thought-provoking movie and discussion related to our GRU READS theme for the quarter. Popcorn and beverages provided!

Tea/TED/Theology: Exploring Our Mortality with Rev. Jess

3 Thursday Afternoons: May 4, 11, & 18

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. in the GRU Board Room

In each of these drop-in sessions, we will explore an aspect of the GRU READS selection, view short lectures related to the theme, and discuss the implications of our priorities of living and dying. *NO RSVP is required – drop in and join the discussion for any or all of these sessions.*

BEING MORTAL: Book Discussion with Rev. Jess

Tuesday, May 30, 7:00 – 9:00 pm in Whitton Hall

Gawande's book poses many challenges to our customary priorities. Come for a free-ranging discussion of the issues and implications of this book over tea and light refreshments. *This session is designed for people who have read the text.*

MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH: A Discussion with Rev. Jess

Sunday, June 11, 12:15 – 1:00 pm in the Sanctuary

What matters most to you? Come for a free-ranging discussion of our ultimate concerns. Consider: what do you want your family, friends, doctors, and minister to know about your priorities?

Watch for future announcements about other possible gatherings on the theme, including:

Dignity Therapy, Death Café, and Green Burial Forum.

Truth Healing and Reconciliation: Continuing the Conversation

Take 40 with Hope Engel: “About Indigenous Spirituality and Its Role in my Life”

Sunday, April 9, 12:00 in the Sanctuary.

Hope says: *"I learn from Anishnaabe teachers, and Haudenosaunee and Huichol Turtle aunties and uncles. I am very involved in our culture, ceremonies, and maintaining our traditions. I am also passionate about understanding and building relationships between all people. My background is in the arts, sustainability, peer counselling and advocacy, frontline work in diversity and relational worldviews and spiritual traditions, "whole-istic" health for people and communities, proposal writing and research, and empowerment and well-being for all people."*

**Sunday Service and TAKE 40 Q&A with Shawn Johnston
Sunday, May 21, 10:30 followed by TAKE 40 at noon.**

Our guest speaker is the Events Coordinator for the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre. Shawn, Anishnaabe from Treaty #3 Territory, grew up on Couchiching First Nations. He recently received a J.S. Woodsworth Award for his work on anti-racism. Besides his work at the Aboriginal Centre, Shawn has been active with groups such as Idle No More and has helped combat racism through advocacy, education, and helping to build bridges between campus and Aboriginal communities. He has won several other awards in recent years, including the Western University Young Alumni Award of Merit (2015), the King's University College Adult Learner Award (2013), and a WPIRG Social Justice Award.

FOOD ALLERGIES



What Do We Eat?

**Results from the Great Grand River Food Survey
by Sophie Wilson**

Thanks to the many GRUers who completed the Food Survey this winter. The results are in. Here are some highlights:

- 92 people responded, on behalf of 201 people who attend GRU.
- 52% of GRU households have someone with some kind of food concern.
- 46% of households have someone with an allergy, intolerance or sensitivity.
- 20% of households have someone with a diet of conscience or religious belief.
- The most common food concerns are:

	# of GRU people	% of GRU people
Wheat	29	14%
Milk	25	12%
Sugar	22	11%
All Grains (includes 9 wheat responses)	15	7%
Peanuts	11	5%
Paleo	10	5%
Eggs	10	5%
Corn	10	5%
Food colouring	9	4%

Vegetarian	8	4%
Shellfish	8	4%
Fish	8	4%
Tree nuts	6	3%
Vegan	7	3%
Soy	6	3%

And how do we respond? Here's what people said would be reasonable and helpful:

	% of all households willing	helpful to % of affected households
Supply a list of ingredients with all foods	79%	78%
Supply your name with all foods	68%	41%
Bring foods free of major restrictions	59%	39%

- The next step will be how (and whether) to act on this new information. Stay tuned as the Board considers proposals.
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Did you know?

At the February 2017 AGM, members voted to rename the downstairs coffee hall "Whitton Hall" to honor one of GRU's 1956 founders, Bob Whitton.
Bob's daughter reports that he is delighted!



Child Haven Dinner

Mark your Calendars! The **Kitchener-Waterloo Child Haven Dinner** will be held on Sunday, April 23rd at Golf's Restaurant, 598 Lancaster St. W., Kitchener. Unitarians form a large contingent of this memorable gathering. Get your tickets early: go online: www.childhaven.ca Early Bird Special: \$40! Carol Burrows Tel: [519-744-8449](tel:519-744-8449) / Deepti Celetti [519-846-0505](tel:519-846-0505) (children 4-12: \$20 – under 3 are FREE)



GRU Picnic, Sunday June 25th

Mark your calendars for the GRU picnic, to be held after the service on Sunday, June 25 at GRU, rain or shine. We will have a potluck lunch with food served inside and the option to eat and socialize inside or outside. Barbecued hot dogs and veggie dogs will be provided.



Mill Courtland Community Centre: a local social action initiative

Our hope for the future lies with children, and they participate by asking the Four Questions, and by illustrating The Story, with hand puppets, as it unfolds.

The Seder plate holds foods which symbolize liberation struggles - the latest addition is the orange, as a tribute to the fruitfulness that women and GLBT - previously marginalized - bring to their communities.

Participants can contribute by bringing one of the traditional ceremonial or accompanying food dishes/or/ beverages.

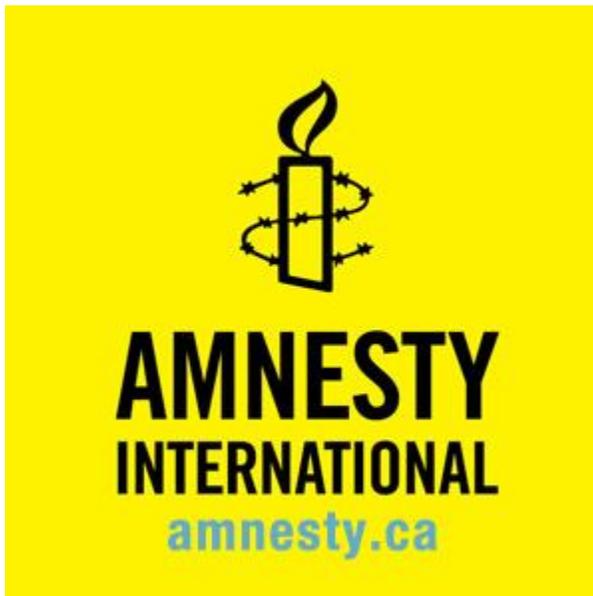
Vegetarian options will be available!

Please sign-up on the sheets downstairs.

Set up begins at 5:15 with the ceremony beginning at 6:00p.m.

Contact person is Tui Torrie...

Thank you in advance to all who will be helping to make this Seder a special celebration!



Amnesty International Action Circle

A120

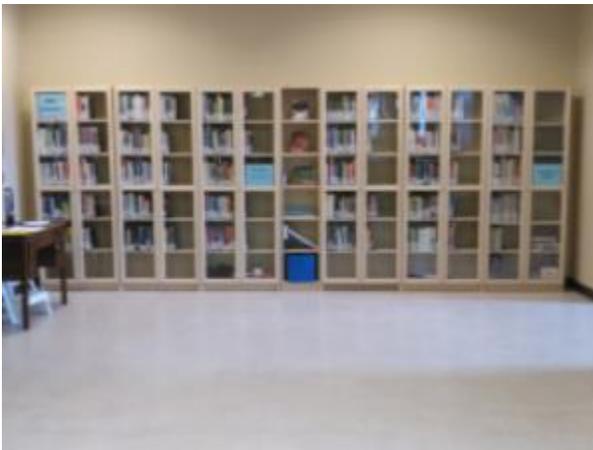
Grand River Unitarian's Amnesty International Action Circle 120 meets monthly, on the last Sunday of the month after the service, from 12 noon to 1 pm, in the GRU Board Room. At our meetings, members sign letters and/or petitions relating to human rights in various parts of the world with the help of information from Amnesty International's Canada branch (www.amnesty.ca). Our focus is always on efforts toward ending human rights abuses; we usually choose to take action on one case involving Canada and one elsewhere in the world, as well as signing a "Quick Action" online petition or email.

Other aspects of our meetings are raising our awareness of human rights concerns worldwide and of the work which Amnesty International is doing. We also make time each month to hear encouraging "Good News" about that work, and to discuss each other's particular human rights concerns and related local activities. If a member cannot attend meetings, there are opportunities and encouragement to write letters and take actions individually.

At our most recent meeting on March 26th, we wrote letters to the Field Officer of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security expressing our concern about refugee families seeking asylum who have been detained for 500 days in the U.S. after escaping violence in their home countries,

and to the Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship urging that the designation of the U.S. as a "safe third country" be rescinded. We also discussed other Amnesty concerns which are of particular interest to our members.

Our meetings are currently chaired by Colin Read, while members volunteer for various other tasks. If you're interested in furthering human rights, you'd be most welcome to join us. (Our next meeting will be on April 30th.) Coming to a meeting does not commit you in any way – and if you can't attend meetings but share our interests, we'd be delighted to put you on our email list and to send details of actions you can take on your own. Just let me know, at uutreadwell@gmail.com, or Colin at cread33@gmail.com.



Library Now in Whitton Hall

The Library has moved to its new location in Whitton Hall, thanks to the hard work of all those who helped with the move. We invite you to check

the wide variety of books that we have on many different topics, including a comprehensive selection of the different aspects of Unitarian Universalism. You can also search our catalogues online at <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/grandriverunitarian> and (for the children's collection) <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/GRU-CRE>. The Library Committee will be happy to help you after the service and if we aren't there to help you with signing out your choice, in the large white 3-ring binder please record your name, contact information, book title and call number found on the book spine, and the date. Our loan period is 3 weeks, which you can also note on a GRU bookmark for your convenience. Returns can be made any time to the centre bookshelf.



Beans Donated by the Elora-Fergus Unitarian Church

by Jim Sannes

Here we are with 187 bags of 25Kg filled with Romano Beans from last year's crop at the foodbank.

For a limited time these beans are available for pickup in Kitchener by anyone who is interested in cooking with them. I just need 24 hours' notice to get a pickup time organized. Last year they were all gone within 3 months.

We really want the beans to be used and get people excited about this marvelous source of protein replacing animal agriculture! It is so much better for the environment to eat a plant based protein, not to mention compassion for the animals and our own health.

Best to contact me by e-mail and i will return the information of when and where to get them.



Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ)

CUSJ is a non-charitable membership organization of Unitarians committed to social justice, a stakeholder group and associated member of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). The CUSJ was formed in 1996 when about 70 members of five Unitarian Universalist Congregations and Fellowships of Greater Toronto met to discuss their concern with government cuts to social services.

The founding group, of about 35 members, felt that more must be done by

Unitarians within their churches and the greater community to protect the social programs that define Canada as a civilized and compassionate nation. From its modest beginnings, the CUSJ has grown into a national organization with membership extending from coast to coast. Our membership now numbers approximately 350 (in 306 households) representing 44 Congregations and Fellowships.

Unitarians have a proud history of being in the forefront of the struggle for social change and justice. CUSJ follows in the footsteps of our forebears by keeping their spirit very much alive.

CUSJ creates opportunities for expression of Unitarian values through:

- our website <http://cusj.org>
- our Newsletter JUSTnews and discussion papers (which are available in the pamphlet rack at GRU)
- our discussion list (listserv@cusj.org)
- our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cusjca/>

President Margaret Rao declares that this is the time for citizens to engage in shaping the policies and directions of Canada, especially as they relate to Canadian Democracy, Climate Change, First Nations rights and reconciliation, and Social Justice.

We do this with letters and briefs to media, politicians, and corporations.

Some of the groups we have partnered with are:

Aboriginal Rights Coalition, Association of Community Organizations For Reform Now (ACORN), Canada without Poverty {formerly the National Anti-Poverty Organization), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), Canadian Council for Refugees, Canadian Peace Initiative to establish a Department of Peace, Canadian Unitarian Council (Affiliate organization), Citizens for Public Justice, Climate Action Network (CAN), ClimateFast, Council of Canadians, Democracy Watch, Fair Vote Canada (FVC) and the Every Voter Counts Alliance, Hassan

Diab Legal Defence Fund and The Secret Trial Five, Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC), International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG), Kairos, Mercy for Animals, Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan (RAWA), UU Animal Ministry (UUAM), UUA Facebook, Unitarian Universalist Association, Standing On The Side of Love (UUA Social Action), Voices/Voix Coalition

--Jim Sannes (CUSJ South Western Ontario Board Member) and member of the Social Action Committee



How CUC Was of Value to the World in 2016

**by Keith Wilkinson, CUC President (reprinted with
permission by the author)**

The CUC Board of Trustees knows that the Canadian Unitarian Council provides valuable engagement and support to Canadian UU communities and congregations. The value of this may not be immediately evident to members in congregations, and so in 2015, I prepared a summary of

some of the benefits I saw resulting from CUC's existence. This is an update of the 2015 report.

In 2015, as now, the CUC board was engaged in discussion of annual objectives and budgets, proposed changes to annual program contribution (APC) method, and options for APC fee increases to ensure that the CUC remains sustainable. No APC fee increases were made in 2016 pending further analysis and a vote by delegates at the May 2017 AGM. Note that there has been no change in CUC fees since 2013 (from \$91 to \$93/member) and no application of a cost of living index (CPI) over the intervening years, which means that congregations have been contributing less each year to the CUC over the past six years. If adjusted for CPI, the per member fee would now be \$100. Reduced APC income has had several impacts, not all bad: increased efficiencies (e.g., more telecommunications, less travel for CUC Board and staff), reduction of some services (e.g., less support for monitoring groups), and fewer face-to-face board meetings.

As I see it, the main value of our national organization is this: CUC provides a national presence in support of the principles and vision of Unitarians and Universalists across Canada and around the world. **The CUC extends the reach of every Unitarian and Universalist community in Canada, bringing our shared vision and values to national and global attention.**

Here are some specific moral and practical benefits that came to our congregations in 2016 because the CUC existed:

1. Continued to help 26 UU congregations and other community groups across Canada sponsor refugees privately. As of February
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- 2017, Canadian Unitarians have brought and helped re-settle 172 refugees. Applications for another 176 refugees are in process;
2. Through our international and national networks, helped Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana leave the violence of Burundi and come safely to a ministerial role in Saskatoon, and helped reunite him with his family;
 3. Brought Unitarians from across the country to connect at the national conference (in Vancouver); began to plan the next one (2018 in Hamilton);
 4. Began planning the 2017 Annual General Meeting in Toronto with significant online participation and voting capability;
 5. Organized a national youth conference, CanUUdle, and began to plan the next one in Edmonton;
 6. Collaborated with congregations to organize three regional conferences (West, Central and Eastern Regions) and related youth cons;
 7. Organized webinars on topics of common concern including legal and practical aspects of boards and charities, Young Adult membership, Canada Revenue Agency regulations, & Lay Chaplaincy; launched 'CUC Roundtables' – an on-line forum for discussion and sharing on topics of interest to Canadian UUs;
 8. Through our Executive Director, provided consultation upon request to the Ministry of Revenue and the Charities Directorate regarding reform of the CRA regulations governing charities; published an article in UU World on tax matters; and developed resources for congregational leadership on CRA requirements;
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9. Through our National Voice Team and our President, wrote to government and/or the public on six social justice issues: opposition to Saudi Arabian arms sales, support for UN action to abolish nuclear weapons, support for a national affordable housing policy, support for a spirit of openness in the face of world violence, support for our American siblings in difficult times and a reminder of the World War 2 origin of the flaming chalice as a symbol of refuge;
 10. Through a National Task Force, created Truth, Healing and Reconciliation (THR) Reflection Guides for congregational use, and trained facilitators in the use of these guides; facilitated congregational and regional action on Truth, Healing and Reconciliation amongst indigenous and non-indigenous peoples;
 11. Provided engagement and support to congregations and communities on matters of importance to congregational vitality in both large and small communities and congregations from CUC staff – two regional congregational development leads, a youth and young adult coordinator, a social responsibility coordinator, and a small network of trained facilitators;
 12. Fostered the establishment of a new congregation in Nelson, BC;
 13. Started a new initiative on Welcoming Young Adults into congregations;
 14. Helped 12 congregations manage ministerial transitions (every church with a minister gets a turn!);
 15. Facilitated the creation of selected national affinity groups (e.g., lay worship services, small churches, large churches, congregational innovation...);
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16. Organized Our Whole Lives training, and supported several congregations in their training;
 17. Maintained a website that provided information for all of us, including lists of CUC resolutions and action plans over the past 50 years; began to redevelop the website;
 18. Maintained a CUC Facebook page for connecting members and promoting CUC initiatives;
 19. Provided a national voice team (NVT) that offers an official Canadian UU perspective on selected issues (the NVT is comprised of CUC ED, CUC President and UUMOC President);
 20. Maintained connections with the Unitarian Universalist Association which provides employee compensation advice, and, through UUMOC, supports UU ministers serving in Canada;
 21. Provided connections to affiliated Unitarian Universalist communities nationally and globally including UU Ministers of Canada, Canadian Collective of UU Musicians, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, Canadian UU Religious Educators, International Council of UUs, Canadian UU Women's Association, Unitarian Universalist Association and the UU-United Nations Office;
 22. Promoted and administered Sharing our Faith and Northern Lights grant programs in support of special congregational projects;
 23. Administered a number of special purpose funds—Theological Education, Sharing Our Faith, Northern Lights, UU-UNO, ICUU and others;
 24. Established a Vision Implementation Team to work with
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congregations to actualize our vision:

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.

If the CUC didn't exist, I think we'd want to invent it. Let's give it our strong continued support!

In faith,

Keith Wilkinson, CUC President



Book Corner

by Peggy Hagen

Kathryn Robertson received her B.A. from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, where she graduated with an English Major and a double minor in History/Psychology. She received her B.Ed. at the University of Western Ontario, London.

In her 2016 poetry anthology *Poetic Ponderings*, Kathryn responds to many "seasons", i.e. mourning in "But Not This Year", sexual abuse in "Rock of Ages", social unrest in "Writing On The Wall", maternal bonding in "Newborn." Some poems are strong scaffolds of nouns and verbs that lift the reader to her satisfying conclusion. Some are delicate and mystical as "A Tap On The Shoulder." Some are personal and intimate.

Her themes, wide-ranging from family memoirs, travel, nature, childhood and wild life, reveal her appreciation of life and her sensitive response to images, events and people. I read her poems slowly which let me reconstruct for myself the context and emotions Kathy wrote from. I appreciated the clarity and depth of her perceptions and her talent for communicating them.

The "Seasons" section includes color photos of her former homestead in Elora. Kathy's dedication and benediction are for her Mother who died at 93. Copies of her publication may be obtained from Kathy herself by contacting her at poeticponderings2016@gmail.com, or by ordering on line at www.volumesdirect.com. To date, thirty-five of her poems have been published by a variety of anthology and poetry collections including Tower Poetry Society, The Ontario Poetry Society, and Craighleigh Press. Thank you for sharing your ponderings, Kathy. They are a delight.



Obituary for Barb Lefcourt

LEFCOURT, BARBARA ELLEN (nee Morn)

With deep sadness, we announce the passing of Barbara Ellen Lefcourt on Tuesday, February 28, 2017, in her 82nd year. She was surrounded by loved ones during her final days while under the compassionate care of the many staff and volunteers at Innisfree House, Kitchener. Barbara is predeceased by her husband of 53 years, Dr. Herbert Michael Lefcourt, parents Lillian and Joseph Morn of Brooklyn, New York, and her sister, Suzanne Sosa, also of Brooklyn. She is the loving mother of Mike (Laurie), Jack (Mika) and Rachel (Brian) and cherished partner of Richard Lapointe. She will be greatly missed by her grandchildren, Cameron, Miranda, Lucas, Isaac and Callum.

Barbara earned degrees from Barnard College, Columbia University, and Yeshiva University in the United States, and moved to Kitchener-Waterloo with her young family in 1963. Barbara acted as a role model for her children, demonstrating her love of learning through pursuing a biology degree in midlife, sharing her passion for adult literacy by tutoring with local organizations, and demonstrating that one is never too old to explore and pursue a dream. During her professional life, she was a teacher of literacy and adult education with the Waterloo Region District School Board, and, nearing retirement, started writing poetry, and has been published many times over. Barbara was proud to be a member of the Cambridge Writers Collective and The Ontario Poetry Society, and found inspiration during summers on Manitoulin Island and on her travels to Australia and Japan when she visited family there.

As Barbara was a founding and long-time active member of the Grand River Unitarian Congregation (previously, the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo), a celebration of her life will take place at the congregation's home, 299 Sydney Street South, Kitchener, on Tuesday, March 7 at 10:00 am. A morning tea reception will follow. As expressions of sympathy, donations to Innisfree House in support of their important role in end of life care, or to the Grand River Unitarian

Congregation in support of their new immigrant sponsorship efforts would be greatly appreciated by the family and in keeping with the values that Barbara held true to throughout her life. Arrangements for this may be made through the Henry Walser Funeral Home, 507 Frederick St. Kitchener, [519-749-8467](tel:519-749-8467). (www.henrywalsers.com).



In Memoriam: Mark Paul

Just before The Window went to press, we were saddened to learn that Mark Paul, longtime GRU member, passed away at his home in Kitchener on March 30, 2017, at the age of 76. Mark worked for many years as the Managing Director of the Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation, where he retired only a couple of years ago. Before incorporating COCHF in May 1992, Mark worked on the development of many housing co-ops throughout British Columbia.

At Grand River Unitarian, Mark served as editor of this newsletter for many years, was a member of the 2008 ministerial search committee, and at the time of his death was serving on the board.

Mark will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by all his co-workers and

friends at GRU,

Friends will be received at Grand River Unitarian Congregation, 299 Sydney St S Kitchener, ON, where a memorial service has been set for next **Saturday, April 8, at 2:00 p.m.**

As expressions of sympathy, donations to the charity of your choice would be appreciated. (Cards available at the funeral home). Arrangements entrusted to Henry Walser Funeral Home, Kitchener, 519-749-8467.

Visit www.henrywalser.com for Mark's memorial.



Spring Services

10:30 on Sundays

Spring 2017: GRU READS Atul Gawande's BEING MORTAL.

April 9, 2017. "The Ultimate Conversation." Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. Today we launch the spring GRU READS challenge. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* invites us to explore our

priorities of living and dying. Doctor Atul Gawande says: “If end-of-life discussions were an experimental drug, the FDA would approve it.”

April 16, 2017. “Hereafter.” Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. This Easter Sunday we examine eschatology. What legacy do we leave by our living? What do our beliefs about an afterlife reveal about our living priorities? Is there an afterlife? Heaven? Irkalla? Mictlan? Niflhel? Yomi? Olam Haba?

April 23, 2017. “The Discipline of Divinity School.” Ben Robins. I was told that divinity school would change me. I'll describe the process and offer tips for deepening the discipline of your own personal growth and social justice work. *Ben Robins is a student at Emmanuel College in Toronto, preparing for UU ministry. He likes inclusive diversity, contact improv dance, and intentional community.*

April 30, 2017. “Liquid Modernity.” Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. The work of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman holds lessons for our current political climate. He writes: “In a liquid modern life there are no permanent bonds, and any that we take up for a time must be tied loosely so that they can be untied again . . . when circumstances change.” What are the ethical implications of such a state?

May 7, 2017. “WHATEVER!” Today the WHATEVER Teen Group hosts their annual service, guaranteed to be lively and inspiring.

May 14, 2017. “Maternal Math: Stories from the Prophetic Sisterhood.” Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. In honour of Mother’s Day, we’ll explore the stories of some of the first women ministers in North America.

May 21, 2017. Special Guest Shawn Johnston, Events Coordinator from Aboriginal Education Centre, joins us for a talk about indigenous concerns. Shawn’s sermon will be followed by a Take 40 Q&A.

May 28, 2017. “Wake, Now, My Vision.” Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. Are you reticent to talk about Unitarian Universalism? Should we learn to be UUvangelists? Come and learn how to better articulate our faith.

June 4, 2017. “PRIDE.” Lyn McGinnis with Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. It’s Pride Week in KW – how do we live into our commitment of being a Welcoming Congregation to the LGBTQ community?

June 11, 2017. “Last, Not Least.” Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. Author Atul Gawande writes: “Our ultimate goal, after all, is not a good death but a good life to the very end.” But what constitutes a “good life”? Unitarian Universalist professor Randy Pausch, facing his last weeks of living delivered this challenge in his *Last Lecture*: “The key question to keep asking is, Are you spending your time on the right things? Because time is all you have.” (*Join Rev. Jess in the sanctuary for a post-sermon discussion at 12:15*).

June 18, 2017. "The Good Stuff: Reflections on Father's Day." Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. Author Robert Fulghum's daughter entrusted him with a set of keepsakes that remind him of the treasures of parenthood. What relics and rituals of fatherhood are we entrusted with?

June 25, 2017. "Flower Communion: *Long Live the Weeds.*" Rev. Jessica P. Rodela. Poet Theodore Roethke's parents were wholesale florists. The poet reflected: "[Greenhouses] were to me ... both heaven and hell, a kind of tropics created in the savage climate of Michigan It was a universe, several worlds, which, even as a child, one worried about, and struggled to keep alive."
