



# The Flaming Chalice

September 2023

## Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia & Port Huron

Lochiel Kiwanis Centre, 180 College Ave. N. Sarnia, Ontario [uusarnia.com](http://uusarnia.com)

*A loving community of spiritual explorers who stand on the side of love and justice*

### September Services

In-person & via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83460043365>

### Theme—Connection



#### September 10 : “In-Gathering Water Communion” – Tracy Jutras



Our traditional first service of the new “Program Year” is when we welcome each other back after the summer break. We encourage you to bring a small amount of water from one of your summer experiences (actual or representative) and to add to it to a common bowl. We invite you to share why the source of it is important to you. The blending of all our gifts

of water is symbolic of our connections and of our commitment to come together again as a loving community.

**September 17: “nuSarnia Foundation: Our vision for the future of Sarnia” – Tristan Bassett**— nuSarnia aims to restore and revitalize the neighbourhoods in Sarnia so they become vibrant, thriving places for our community to meet and rediscover. Learn how community-led initiatives can work to create a healthier, more active, and connected community.

#### September 24: “My Journey” – Don Greaves

In my teens and 20’s I was a fan of Ayn Rand, a total right winger, every person for themselves and if you didn’t succeed, it was your own fault. My journey from there to who I am now happened through events in my life that slowly changed my views.

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## President Mark's Musings for September

The UFSPH Executive met for the final meeting of 2022/23 on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Brenda Woolston and Eileen Zinn bid farewell to the Executive Team while Judy Lindberg and Mary Stearns were welcomed onto the Executive Team as new "Members at Large". We agreed during the meeting to donate \$600 to Unicamp from the Development Fund. Unicamp is an opportunity for youth to develop their interest in Unitarian Universalism and it is also a venue for mature members to "connect" with members from other congregations.

September's theme is "Connection".

The July 2020 theme package, "Connection" (see link below) from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto quotes Albert Einstein as saying:

"Although I am a typical loner in daily life, my consciousness of belonging to the invisible community of those who strive for truth, beauty, and justice has preserved me from feeling isolated..."

Although his comment resonates with our UU Principles, it is "consciousness of belonging" that speaks to me of "connection".

It has been a very challenging summer for many people across North America as the boreal forests are burning at an unprecedented rate. Our caring thoughts go out to our connections facing this threat, be they family, friends, or fellow citizens. Although the smoke from the wildfires reached Lake Huron, we were still able to share in some summer festivities...

In July, the UFSPH hosted a picnic at Lamrecton Park. Annette Dillon played her guitar and we connected with a fun sing along.



In August, Mary Abma presented a wild-church experience in Canatara Park. After some thought provoking readings, we had the opportunity for individual wanderings, and then shared our discoveries with the group. It was a beautiful day for building connections.



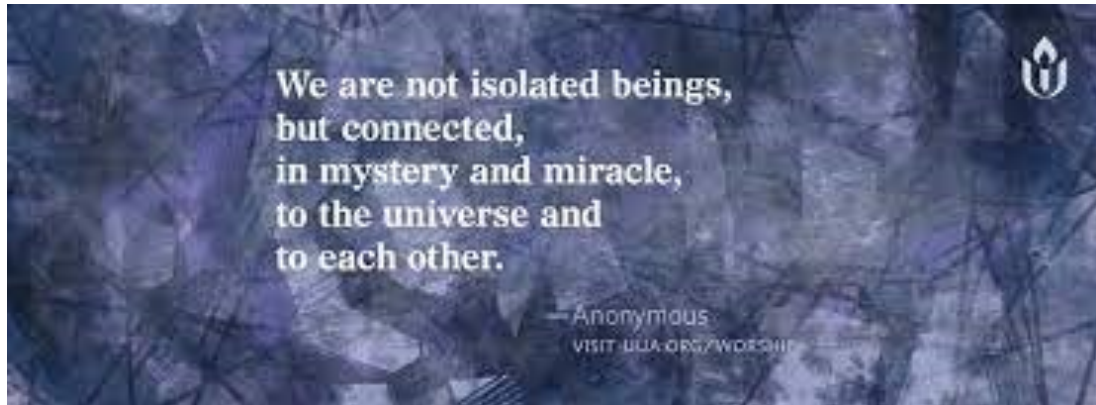
September will soon be upon us. Our first service will be the 'Water Communion' on September 10<sup>th</sup>. It will be a great opportunity to see each other, to share stories of the summer, and to reconnect!

*In Fellowship, Mark Woolston*

'Connection' Theme package from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto:

<https://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/wp-content/publications/nh/2020/New-Horizons-2020-07-Connection.pdf>

## Quotes on 'Connection' To Ponder



Community is about relationships and making connections. **Diana B. Bass**

Since you cannot do good to all, you are to pay special attention to those who, by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstances, are brought into closer connection with you. **Saint Augustine**

In nature we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it and over it.

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

I see a deep connection between peace and change: peace always starts from within, for communities and people alike. The same is true of change: real change starts from within. **Forest Whitaker**

All of us... desire some kind of fellowship and connection. **Eric Metaxas**

It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them. **Leo Buscaglia**

The most important things in life are the connections you make with others. **Tom Ford**

Our ancient experience confirms at every point that everything is linked together, everything is inseparable. **14th Dalai Lama**

Politics isn't won by commanding the facts, but by connecting with people's experiences. **Milo Yiannopoulos**

Understanding and connection can transcend conflict. **Marshall B. Rosenberg**

Isvara is the Sanskrit word for pure awareness, and is represented by the sound of OM, the universal vibration that connects us all. **Patanjali**

I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship. **Brené Brown**

All things are connected like the blood that unites us. We do not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. **Chief Seattle**

It really boils down to this:, that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly. **Martin Luther King Jr.**

## Program Team Information

Dear Fellow Members and Friends,

All of us on the Program Team are constantly striving to keep our Sunday Services vibrant, meaningful and all inclusive.

To that end, when we reviewed this year's services (many of which were excellent), it became clear that three services, in particular, were gratefully and poignantly received. The stories told at these services touched our hearts and opened peoples' souls. Tracy- Lynn Jutras discussed the effect the passing of her Mom had on her life. Larry Cornelius reached out emotionally about his "pet" tree and how he hugs it to this day. Don Greaves shared a very personal journey in a practical and humorous way.

So, the Program Team decided to reach out to you in terms of how comfortable you may feel about sharing significant moments of your life that perhaps changed it. By no means does it have to be tragic or comedic – just something about you that you'd be comfortable sharing for 15 minutes or so. I'm sure all our lives were touched when we heard Tracy, Larry, and Don and, most importantly, we are drawn closer and feel we know them a lot better – which makes us even more accepting and inclusive.

As well, the Program Team would like to identify several people willing to share for 5 minutes about "How I found Unitarian Universalism."

If you are comfortable with either of these ideas, please let us know and we'd love to accommodate you in our upcoming year's schedule.

*In Fellowship, Steve Lane, Program Team Member*

Editor's Note: If willing to participate, please contact the Program Chair, Ann Steadman by email ([asteadman@cogeco.ca](mailto:asteadman@cogeco.ca)) or by phone – 519-542-9708.



## Making Meaning In Liminal Times

Your Program Team has 'opted in' to a new initiative being offered by the Saskatoon Unitarians, "Making Meaning in Liminal Times".



The goal is to explore six urgent questions for our time in collaboration with six UU ministers, Debra Faulk, Brian Kiely, Meg Roberts, Arran Morton, Samaya Oakley and Karen Fraser Gitlitz.

On the first Sunday of the months of October, November, January, February, March and April, there will be a live service which will be recorded in both full-service and sermon-only versions.

On the second Sunday of these months, we will use the sermon-only recording for the presentation portion of our service.

Then, on the third **Saturday** of these months, there will be a two hour "deeper dive" adult religious education conversation for those who want to explore the topic in more depth. These sessions will be facilitated and hosted by that month's speaker. Members and Friends will need to sign up individually for this on-line adult R.E. program on a sliding scale of \$35-\$140. More information to follow.

It is hoped that our Fellowship will be enriched by engaging the questions and ideas presented as well as by connecting and having ongoing conversations with other UUs from across Canada.

*In Fellowship, Ann Steadman, Program Chair*



## Upcoming Events

### Climate Justice – An Invitation to the Unitarian Fellowship

A public rally will be held on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm at the Centennial Park Flag Court at the end of London Road. Climate Action Sarnia Lambton (CASL) invites members of the public of all ages to attend to show their support for urgent action by government and industry to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Rallies are being held around the world on that weekend to send a clear message to world leaders gathering at the United Nations in New York on September 17<sup>th</sup> where a massive protest will take place.

At Centennial Park on the 16<sup>th</sup> there will be speakers, music and more – bring a sign or banner in support of climate action.

For further info please contact Allan McKeown – 519-542-3661 or 519-383-4549 or check the website:

[CASL \(climateactionsarnialambton.ca\)](http://climateactionsarnialambton.ca)

### Valour Remembered

Over the last 3 years, Tom St. Amand and Tom Slater have been researching and interviewing family members, in order to write stories about local soldiers and their sacrifices in times of war. The project is an entirely non-profit, volunteer endeavour.

The book VALOUR REMEMBERED is a collection of 25 stories about soldiers from Sarnia-Lambton, many whose lives and heroism have never been told. All were young men; some were brothers; a few were married with little ones at home; and many made the ultimate sacrifice and never saw their loved ones again. What united them was their unwavering courage as they risked their lives for others' freedom.

Spanning events from The Great War and World War II to the Korean War and The War in Afghanistan, *Valour Remembered* includes the following stories:

- A sailor who faced a four-day blizzard in a lifeboat
- A navy stoker who commandeered a U-boat
- An airman and his crew whose plane disappeared for over two years
- An infantryman who was captured by the SS two days after D-Day
- A sailor whose ship encountered the first stealth U-boat of WWII
- A soldier whose final act saved another's life during the Blitz
- A WWII veteran who promised to look after "his boys" in Korea

**The official launch of VALOUR REMEMBERED is set for Saturday, September 23rd from 1:30 until 2:30 at the Royal Canadian Legion on Front Street. At that time, copies of VALOUR REMEMBERED will be available for \$20 per book.**

*Thank you, Tom and Tom*

## Rev. Rodrigo Emilio Solano-Quesnel (Rev. Rod)

(Feb. 27, 1981—July 11, 2023)



Reverend Rodrigo (“Rod”) Emilio Solano-Quesnel died suddenly at age 42 in a traffic accident early on the morning of Tuesday, July 11, 2023. His life partner Sarah Wert was with him at the time of the accident and suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

Rod was born in Mexico City on February 27, 1981 to Leticia Rosana Quesnel and Luis Pastor Solano Flores. In 1991, he moved to Canada, settling into a new life in London, Ontario with his father and step-mother Martha Patricia Rosas Arellano and later, Patty’s niece Navil Astrid. While attending Carleton University he was introduced to Unitarian Universalism, a religion that resonated strongly with him. He became an active member of First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa and began feeling called to Unitarian Universalist ministry.

After attending seminary at the Montreal School of Theology (affiliated with McGill University), Rev. Solano-Quesnel served as Intern Minister at First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. It was also in Toronto that Rod met his sweetheart Sarah Wert. Following his internship, Rod and Sarah joined Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation (NUUC), also in Toronto, which ordained him in 2016.

Rev. Rod then served as the half-time Developmental Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa for two years, alternating weeks between both Toronto and Ottawa, and calling both places home. Rod moved to Leamington in Essex County in 2018, where he served as the settled minister of the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Church of Olinda from August 2018 to July 2023.

Rod was a boundlessly loving human being who nurtured positive change in the lives, communities, and world which he was - and is - part of. He listened thoughtfully to all who sought his ear, was intensely intentional in his actions, and exuded both childlike joy and understanding beyond his years. Rod was very human and far from perfect, but he was divine in his embodiment of love, grace, and connection. Rod was relentlessly himself and passionately committed to others. He will be profoundly, profoundly missed. Rod is survived by his partner Sarah Wert, his mother Leticia, his father Pastor and step-mother Patricia, and many other loving relatives.

**Further words from the Canadian Unitarian Council:** “Our hearts are heavy as we mourn the tragic death of Rev. Rodrigo (“Rod”) Emilio Solano-Quesnel ... His impact extended far beyond his congregations. He was actively engaged in the national UU community, serving as a Director on the Canadian Unitarian Council’s Board of Trustees for the last several years, and had just stepped into the role of Secretary. He brought levity, insight, level-headed wisdom, and compassion to his work on the Board. He had been a member of the Pastoral Care team for young adults, was a facilitator for the CUC’s Men’s Inclusivity Action Group, and had facilitated several dismantling racism and inclusivity forums. Rev. Solano-Quesnel was instrumental in crafting the CUC’s 8th Principle. His loss strikes at our hearts and he will be deeply missed.”

## Norma West Linder (Sept. 4, 1928 – Aug. 26, 2023)

Norma left us last week after a short stay at Bluewater Health.

Norma was unable to attend our Sunday services in recent years but prior to that she came regularly with her partner James Deahl and dear friends Peggy Fletcher and John Drage. All four of them were well-known and beloved writers and poets and now only James lives on.

Norma spent her childhood on Manitoulin Island and her teenage years in Muskoka. While still a high school student she met John Henry Linder, a drummer in a jazz band who was 10 years older than Norma. She said that they would “turn heads” when they walked down the street together, but she was attracted to this handsome man who was “larger than life”, funny and like Norma, loved jazz.

They married, eventually settling in Sarnia, and had 3 children, Straja Laureen, Karen and Jay. Sadly, John Henry died in his sixties when Norma was in her fifties.

James said, “Norma was loved by all who knew her and disliked by none. She will be mourned by many”. Her literacy legacy includes 8 novels, 16 collections of poetry (her last one “Cabbages and Kings” was published in 2020 and includes a poem about our UU Flower Communion), a children’s book, a memoir of Manitoulin Island, a collection of short fiction and a biography of Pauline McGibbon. She taught English and Creative Writing at Lambton College for 24 years and for many years wrote a monthly column for the Sarnia Observer.

We will miss her gentle presence as we cherish her memory.

A private family memorial service and interment of ashes will take place after Labour Day. Details of a celebration of Norma’s life will be forthcoming.

*Submitted by Allan McKeown*



of

**Norma celebrating her 90th birthday with us at the Fellowship.**

**Those we love and lose  
are always connected by heartstrings  
into infinity.**

**TERRI GUILLEMETS**



**EVANESCENCE**

The moment we are born the die is cast.  
Halcyon days too quickly disappear.  
Each breath we take turns present into past.

Some of us save old pictures, postcards, notes  
In vain attempt to keep those we hold dear.  
The moment we are born the die is cast.

The heady joy of youth can never last.  
Red roses and sweet memories fade away.  
Each breath we take turns present into past.

No vessel labeled *Permanence* exists  
Where we can bottle precious drops of time.  
The moment we are born the die is cast.

The clock of life ticks on; we watch aghast  
As seconds, minutes, hours are devoured.  
Each breath we take turns present into past.

Clearly, the essence of all loveliness  
Lies in its fleeting nature. After all,  
the moment we are born the die is cast.  
Each breath we take turns present into past.

***Norma West Linder***

***From Ode To a Flattened Toad And Other WIT Stories (WIT means Writers In Transition)***

## Canadian Unitarian Council - Communication from Congregational Life Team



### Upcoming Events: Times and links on the CUC Events Calendar

- Unicamp Young Adult (YA) retreat: Sept 8-11/23
- Gathered Here: online drop-in YA gatherings resuming Sept 19/23
- Connect & Deepen: Seasons of Change, online drop-in adult gatherings resuming Sept 24/23
- Leader's Roundtable: Youth Adviser Training Info Session Sept 30/23
- Lay Chaplains' Chat: Oct 2/23
- Rising Together: online drop-in BIPOC gatherings Oct 11/23
- Gathered Here: Oct 13/23
- Connect & Deepen: Being Good Ancestors Oct 15/23
- Decision Making Task Force: Sociocracy Oct 21/23
- Leader's Roundtable: Strategic Planning Oct 28/23

- Gathered Here: Nov 14/23
- Decision Making Task Force: Consensus Nov 18/23
- Connect & Deepen: Looking for Light Nov 19/23
- November Weekend: Nov 25 & 26/23
- Saturday National Workshops: Working Well Together
- Sunday National Service: Reemerging, Reimagining, & Renewal
- Gathered Here: Dec 8/23
- Connect & Deepen: Winter Dreaming, Dec 17/23

To reach us, you can email [congregationalife@cuc.ca](mailto:congregationalife@cuc.ca) or email us individually.



Rev. Anne Barker

[anne.barker@cuc.ca](mailto:anne.barker@cuc.ca)



Rev. Linda Thomson

[linda.thomson@cuc.ca](mailto:linda.thomson@cuc.ca)

*We appreciate you, and are looking forward to the year ahead!*

## Unitarian Universalist Association—New President

### The UUA Welcomes the Rev. Dr. Sofía Betancourt as the Tenth UUA President



It is with great enthusiasm that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) welcomes the Rev. Dr. Sofía Betancourt as the tenth UUA President. We also note that this is Rev. Dr. Betancourt’s second “first day” as a president of the UUA. She was appointed co-president for an interim period in 2017 and provided guidance and care during a significant moment in our history. This time, she will be in the presidential role for a six-year term and we are eagerly anticipating her leadership, working together to continue to advance Unitarian Universalism and live our values deeply in the coming years.

Her presidency comes with a number of historic firsts – she is the first openly queer person and first woman of color to be elected UUA president. She has served Unitarian Universalism for more than twenty years as a religious educator, minister, scholar, and member of the UUA national staff and many volunteer committees at the regional and denominational levels. She most recently served as Resident Scholar and Special Advisor on Justice and Equity at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Rev. Dr. Betancourt holds a Ph.D. in Religious Ethics and African American Studies from Yale University as well as an M.Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry, where she also served on the faculty. She is the author of [\*\*\*Ecowomanism at the Panamá Canal: Black Women, Labor, and Environmental Ethics\*\*\*](#) (2022). You can learn more about her in a new [Q & A with UU World magazine](#), including how early life experiences shaped her path to ministry.

As significantly, she also brings to the role theological depth, a commitment to communal care, and a pledge to continue to organize for justice. She has also expressed an appreciation for the diverse voices and leaders in our community as well as for the hard work that UUA staff does every day. We know that Unitarian Universalists (UUs) across the country and UUA staff will all benefit from her experience, wisdom, and sense of care.

Carey McDonald, our Executive Vice President, expressed his keen anticipation in this way, “we are excited to have the Rev. Dr. Sofía Betancourt at the helm as UUA President to lead us in the next chapter of our faith’s journey. We are already inspired by her deep theology and commitments to community care and imagining the way forward together.” (UUA Press Release—July 10, 2023)





## Vision

*As a spiritual community,  
We embrace diversity,  
We explore openly,  
We stand on the side of love and justice.  
Community ... Spirituality ... Service*



## **Other UU links:**

**Canadian Unitarian Council** <https://cuc.ca/>

Unitarian Universalist Associations latest **UUWorld** <http://www.uuworld.org/>

Newsletter Editor: Ann Steadman

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[asteadman@cogeco.ca](mailto:asteadman@cogeco.ca)