



The Flaming Chalice

May 2022

Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia & Port Huron

Lochiel Kiwanis Centre, 180 College Ave. N. Sarnia, Ontario uusarnia.com

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

May Services - In-person & via ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82456109293>

Theme—'Awakening'

May 1: "Becoming Conscious" – Rev. Peter Boullata

The feminist and gay liberation movements pioneered a method of connecting personal experience with the power dynamics at play in society at large. Known as "consciousness raising," this small group encounter of individuals speaking their truths created enormous social change. How does personal awakening happen and how might it lead to social justice? How might spiritual practice — a paradigm shift of the heart — revolutionize social relations?

May 8: "Break the Silence" – Jennifer Vansteenkiste, ED Woman's Interval Home

Jennifer will speak to us about the work of the Home, give us an overview of violence against women and children in Sarnia- Lambton, how the pandemic has changed the incidents of assaults and femicides, what trauma looks like and how it impacts a person's life and how the Centre is building a new Restorative Practice Program to address these issues.

May 15: "Sarnia as Hydrogen Hub" – Ed Brost

Hydrogen, a colourless, odorless, flammable gas, can be a carbon neutral source of energy. Sarnia already has several producers of hydrogen, has underground salt caverns that could be used for storage, and has access to shipping, rail and major transportation links. Could Sarnia become the hub of Ontario's hydrogen economy?

May 22: "Sarnia in the Age of Climate Change" – Brian White

Several years ago Sarnia City Council declared a "climate emergency" as the impacts of a warming planet grow and threaten us all. Brian White, a city and county councillor will share what the city is doing to address the climate crisis and to mitigate its current and future effects.

May 29: "The Fragility of Democracy" – Bob Sutton

Bob will take a brief global and Canadian look at hard data and several insightful commentaries on the current state of democracy, followed by some examination of efforts already being made to sustain it, and ending with a look at new ideas for action, and those who must make it happen.



"Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law. This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another."

James Vila Blake

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President's Message

The theme for the month of May is 'Awakening'. The following passage speaks to me.

***To awaken from life, you must know yourself –
what you think, what you believe, what you hope to accomplish.
It is an unfolding process that involves learning to live deliberately.
It involves self-acceptance, acceptance of others, acceptance of pain, and acceptance of failure.***

- Randi Fine

Randi highlights that “you must know yourself”. In addition to knowing what you think, believe and hope to accomplish, I feel that the awakening process includes a person examining how one responds to anxiety.

The covid situation has resulted in high anxiety over the past two years for all of us. What have I discovered during this time? Awaking to the realization that I haven't been immune to anxiety has been the first step and then learning what triggers it. I have discovered that reducing my exposure to main stream and social media has been very beneficial. Also making a choice of who and when I spend time with has been helpful.

On the other hand, some level of anxiety can be valuable as long as it results in action. It awakened my deep concern about the social injustices that were with us before covid. It has moved me to act on realizing how far we need to go in addressing the weaknesses of our political system.

As Randi states, awakening involves acceptance of one's self and others as who they are.

In Fellowship, Dwayne O'Neill



Fellowship Executive Team for 2022/23

Thanks to the individuals who put their names forward for the Executive Team positions for the coming program year . The slate of officers was ratified at the April 24th AGM.

Position	Member
President	Mark Woolston
Vice-President	Ann Steadman
Treasurer	Chuck MacKenzie (Dan Danner - Book-Keeper)
Program	Ann Steadman
Secretary	Joanne Alexander
Membership	Don Greaves
Religious Exploration	Brenda Woolston
Member at-Large	Eileen Zinn

Dwayne O'Neill, Tracy-Lynn Jutras and Annette Verhagen choose to not continue on with the Executive Team next year.

Dwayne has been on and off as a member of the Executive Team over several years. His last stint has been as President of the Fellowship for the past two years.

Tracy-Lynn has been a member of the Executive Team for the past three years, initially as a Member at Large and then as Vice President for the past two years. Tracy-Lynn worked full time at long term care facilities under difficult covid imposed conditions during this time period. Tracy Lynn initiated the Facebook page for our Fellowship and has regularly contributed postings that attract and inform its followers.

Annette has been a member of the Executive Team for the past eight years. Annette was initially a Member at Large, then the Membership Chair for three years, then the President for two years and lastly, has served as Past President for two years inclusive of also being the Secretary in 2021-22. Annette was the President when covid hit two years ago and initially steered us through those first few uncertain times.

Thank you for all of your efforts within the Fellowship over the past few years.

In Fellowship, Dwayne



Message from the In-coming President

I would like to thank the UFSPH membership that demonstrated their confidence in me by endorsing my nomination for president. I will endeavour to live up to your expectations.

We have come through two very difficult years for the Fellowship, with our routines being challenged by Covid in many different ways. Our executive rose to the challenge and found many novel solutions.

I would like to thank the executive members that have agreed to continue on the team. Eileen Zinn, Brenda Woolston, Don Greaves and Dan Danner are continuing in their current roles. Chuck MacKenzie and Ann Steadman are taking on new responsibilities.

On behalf of the new executive, I would like to thank our executive members who are completing their roles: Tracy- Lynn Jutras, as retiring Vice President, will be exploring a new role on the program committee, Annette Verhagen, as retiring secretary, for sorting out and documenting what was actually said during our meetings and to Dwayne O'Neill, as the retiring president, for encouraging each executive member to express their opinion and strive for consensus. Dwayne became president in 2020, just as the first wave of Covid was arriving. Dwayne and Don introduced the Fellowship to ZOOM and worked diligently with Dick Felton, Allan McKeown and Ann to make Hybrid services successful.

The 2022/23 executive team welcomes the return of Joanne Alexander as secretary. We are fortunate to have an experienced executive team and several new Fellowship members that will bring new energy and new ideas as we go forward into the new normal. We will be starting the new year as the sixth wave of Covid is receding. The Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron has been the flagship of change for 66 years... I am confident that with "all hands on deck" we can navigate our way through a few more waves in the year ahead.

Thank you, Mark Woolston

Dwayne O'Neill Thanked at AGM

Over many years, I have enjoyed working with Dwayne on the Executive Team and especially with him on the Sarnia Inter-Faith Refugee Partnership (SIRP) committee. Dwayne certainly brings both intellectual gifts and great compassion to whatever he commits to. The last two COVID years have been challenging ones for each one of us individually and certainly for our Fellowship. Many thanks Dwayne for your leadership and commitment. Your efforts have been greatly appreciated.

In Fellowship, Ann Steadman

Social Justice—KIVA Loan Update

Background

The Fellowship set up a Kiva loan account starting in 2015 where micro-loans are made to individuals and small groups in developing countries. US \$1,600 was initially allocated to this by the Fellowship.

By January this year, a total of 137 loans were made. There are currently 38 loans outstanding. The current value of the loan portfolio is US \$1,445.

Our group is part of a larger group called the Unitarian Flames consisting of Canadian Unitarians that are participating with Kiva. The leaders of this group are Lisa and Mike from the Unitarian Church of Victoria.



Recent Information

Lisa and Mike issued an update recently indicating that they will be withdrawing their funds and closing the Unitarian Flames team.

The reasons for this relate to the lack of Kiva transparency (both financial transparency and process transparency). The top 10 Kiva employees earn over 3.5 million dollars and the Kiva CEO was given a raise in 2020 of \$262,000- to bring his annual salary to just under \$750,000 US.

Lisa was a member of the “Captain’s Team” and they met with Kiva in December to express their concerns. They were very disappointed with Kiva’s response and are withdrawing from participation in Kiva.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Fellowship withdraw from participating in Kiva and that we investigate other social action initiative options. A plan is being developed for the Fellowship which will be presented to the membership at the next Annual General Meeting.

In preparation for this, we are not reinvesting any payments into new loans going forward, In addition, with the approval of the membership, we plan to withdraw the funds from Kiva, as the funds become available, over the next couple of years.

Dwayne O’Neill, January 2022

It's exhilarating to be alive in a time of awakening consciousness; it can also be confusing, disorienting, and painful.

- Adrienne Rich

DIVERSITYED Information



Tips:

- Always ask and share PRONOUNS
- Create genderless spaces
- Create visibility that 2SLGBTQAI+ folx are welcome in your spaces
- DON'T police bathrooms!!!!
- Attend Pride Events
- Hire/Recruit 2SLGBTQAI+ folx for your spaces
- ALWAYS use gender neutral salutations
- We are more than our identities
- Create inclusive forms
- Be mindful of phrases like "Hate the sin, love the sinner", "I will pray for you"
- NEVER "out" someone

Services At Diversity Ed.

- QT Coffee Haus (Tues/Wed/Thursday)
- 2SLGBTQAI+ Youth Drop-in (Monday)
- 2SLGBTQAI+ Adult Drop-in (Tuesday)
- Gender Journeys (Thursday evening - youth)
- Trans Support Program (3rd Wednesday of the month)
- The Spaces Between (parent/caregiver support (2nd Wednesday of the month)
- It's All Drag - Youth Expressive Arts Program (TBA)
- QT Camp (5 Day Summer Camp for 2SLGBTQAI+ youth)
- Rainbow Recovery (TBA)

Educational/Training Services Include:

- Various Gender & Sexuality offerings - Mental Health and Addictions, Creating Inclusive Health Services, Creating Safer Spaces in Law Enforcement, Creating Safer Spaces in the Gender-based Violence Sector
- Allyship In Action
- safeTALK
- Verbal De-escalation
- Two-Spirit 101

How To Donate

Thank you for the eTransfers and cheques that have been arriving.

Your continued financial support is appreciated. If you would like to make an eTransfer donation, please send it to: UFSPH.executive@gmail.com. There is no longer a need for a security question. If you prefer to write a cheque, please designate the payee as Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron and mail the cheque to:

Mark Woolston, UFSPH Treasurer, 1993 Rainbow Trail, Sarnia, ON, N7T 7H6

A PayPal donation button has been added to our website, <https://www.uusarnia.com/>. Please note that PayPal charges for this service, and we are only crediting the donor with the net amount.

May's Theme—Awareness



For spiritual nourishment and inspiration, please click on the link below to access the theme package so graciously shared by the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto.

<https://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/wp-content/publications/tj/2022/The-Journey-2022-04-Awakening.pdf>

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/>

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