



The Flaming Chalice

November 2023

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

November Services

In-person & via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83460043365>

November 5: "Revisiting Old Truths" – Rev. Linda Thomson

Like many people, I've left lessons from my childhood behind me. I suspect many of them will stay in the past, but more frequently I find myself discovering wisdom in old understandings. Join with me as we consider if some abandoned beliefs are worth another look.

November 12: "In this polarized world...can we just talk?"

- Rev. Brian Kiely

Conversation has become a dangerous thing! Will I offend if I speak? Will I be attacked for voicing an opinion? Speaking is becoming scary. Unitarian Universalists have always prided themselves on freedom and rational discourse. I believe it's the only way out of this polarized age.

November 19: "Four Learnings That Changed My Life" - Don Greaves

We are constantly seeing and hearing the world around us, we are immersed in it. Most of the time, it makes no difference in our lives. Rarely does this stick. But sometimes, something changes the way we see ourselves, our friends, family, and the world around us. In my training, we call these "distinctions", learnings that powerfully impact our lives. Common examples might be when we learn to ride a bicycle or when we hold our first born for the first time. Don will lead us through the 4 "distinctions" he learned that fundamentally changed his life.

November 26: "A Week in a Thin Place: Reflections on Wild Iona" - Mary Abma

For millennia, the Scottish island of Iona has been a place of pilgrimage. Its history is steeped in conflict and resilience. It is said to be Macbeth's burial place and the place where the Book of Kells was crafted. It is a place of white beaches and geological wonders. Join Mary Abma as she shares her impactful and contemplative journey to Iona. In July, 2023, Mary attended a Waymarkers retreat rooted in Celtic Mythology and Wild Spirituality on the Island whose name means, *The Isle of the Yew Tree*.



Theme—Heritage

The mission of your life should
be to leave a better world
behind than what you
inherited.

- Sri Ravi Shankar

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Making Meaning in Liminal Times
- 3 President's Musings & Theme Info
- 4 Quotes on Theme
- 5 Singing the Living Tradition
- 6 CUC Statement re Hamas/Israel
- 7 UUA Statement re Hamas/Israel
- 8 UU Links & Our Vision

Making Meaning In Liminal Times Project



Presenter Bio for Nov. 12th

Brian Kiely has been a Unitarian minister in Canada for 35 years including 22 spent at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. He is a past president of the CUC and the ICUU. He is sort of retired, but will be starting his second year working with Kelowna Unitarians in the Fall. Declan Kiely is a recently graduated dental technician living in Edmonton.

Sunday Service Schedule

November 13—In this polarized world...can we just talk? - Rev. Brian Kiely

January 14—To be or not to be ChatGPT? - Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz

February 11—What Sustains and Inspires Us in the Climate Emergency?" - Rev. Meg Roberts

March 10—In times of great change, what can the wisdom of our bodies offer us? - Arran Morton

April 14—Who do we choose to be? - Rev. Samaya Oakley

President Mark's Musings for November

November's theme is "Heritage".

The UFSPH Executive Team met for the second meeting of 2023/24 on October 12th. It was agreed that the Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron would send a donation in honour of Rev. Rodrigo ("Rod") Emilio Solano-Quesnel, who died at age 42 in a traffic accident on July 11th. Reverend Rod has spoken to the UFSPH on several occasions, and he is part of our legacy. His death, at such an early age, is a shocking reminder of how fragile our heritage can be.

In the theme package (see link below) from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, there is an optional spiritual exercise, challenging us to:

"...reflect on one of your favorite family mementos and figure out why it has such a hold on you."

My grandmother, Grace Woolston (nee Day), was born in 1898 in London, England. At the age of 2 she suffered from measles and the doctor insisted on warm baths and a warm bed. My great grandfather, Harry Day, purchased a warming pan for her bed. My grandmother recovered, and my great grandfather kept the warming pan for thirty years.

Grace married my grandfather, Eric Woolston, and they took the warming pan to Bexleyheath, England, where they hung it at the top of the stairs for thirty years. In October of 1960 my father, John Woolston, brought the warming pan back to Canada where it moved from house to house with him for thirty years. In 1994 the warming pan came to Sarnia, and it has been hanging on the top of our stairs for almost thirty years.

The warming pan has "graced" the homes of four generations. It is a symbol of love and caring, and in recognizing how deadly measles were in 1900, it is another reminder of how fragile our heritage can be.

I hope that members and friends can take a moment and reflect on your individual heritage and our communal heritage.

In Fellowship, Mark Woolston



'Heritage' theme package from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto:

<https://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/wp-content/publications/tj/2023/The-Journey-2023-10-Heritage.pdf>

Quotes on 'Heritage' To Ponder

When a society or a civilization perishes, one condition can always be found. They forgot where they came from. - **Carl Sandburg**

An old car, a quilt handed down through the generations, a great-grandmother's cedar chest, a steamer trunk that held belongings while crossing the Atlantic. Sometimes, objects in our midst hold memories that are worth saving. - **Michael Tino (CLF)**

We honor and remember
Those who have passed into the mystery.
Their brightness lives on in our vision;
their courage lives on in our commitments;
and their love continues to bless the world through us. - **Florence Caplow**

"I am my ancestors' wildest dream come true, and I would not be here if it weren't for their dreamings, their hopes, and most importantly their living. None of us would be here were it not for those who lived and won a fight that they were not meant to survive." -from [a reflection](#) by **Daniel Gregoire**

Some people are your relatives but others are your ancestors, and you choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of those values. - **Ralph Ellison**

But for the sacrifices made by some of your ancestors, you would not be here; they have paid for you. So, when you enter a challenging situation, bring them on the stage with you; let their distant voices add timbre and strength to your words. For it is your job to pay for those who are yet to come. - **Maya Angelou**

All of us are ancestors-in-training. The ways we live our lives ripple out from us, and those ripples will last long after we are gone. We each have an opportunity to live in ways that help others remember us well. - **Michael Tino (CLF)**

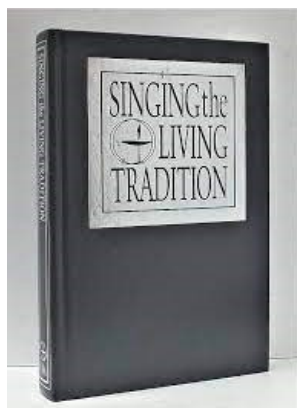
To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves. - **Alice Walker**



I love old photographs. Above my desk are the wedding photos of both sets of my grandparents. On my bookcase are photos of my family members in every decade since the 1940s. There is something about those soft black-and-white photos, some gently water colored, that brings me comfort.

- **Michael Tino CLF—Church of the Larger Fellowship**

A Reflection on *Singing the Living Tradition*—SLT



We Unitarian Universalists, in both the United States and Canada, use as our main hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition*. It was first published in 1993. Like most, perhaps, I had never read the ‘Preface’ to this amazing compilation of songs and readings... until a few days ago. I would like to share with you the first three paragraphs of this ‘Preface’:

“Though the pages of this hymnbook are being bound in the twentieth century, they will open into the twenty-first. That realization permeated our work, for these will be simultaneously the last words of one era and the first words of the next. **We remember the phrase of our predecessors: “Religion is a present reality; it is also an inheritance.” Or to use a more current expression, a living faith must have**

both roots and wings. A hymnbook is one place where we find them both.

Our living tradition began the twentieth century primarily as a liberal Christianity among Universalists and Unitarians and ends that same century also embracing the richness of humanism, feminism, mysticism, natural theism, the Jewish tradition, many other world faith traditions, and the skepticism generated by this century’s disillusioning woes and wars.

Within this thicket of diversity and doubt, The Hymnbook Resources Committee, with the help of many, sought to express the center and edges of our living tradition. We found a wealth of music and poetry, wisdom, and beauty, from which we made a good and useful selection.”

I was drawn to check further into our hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*, due a recent reading used in the Christian Meditation group of which I am a part. Previously, I had considered the phrase “Living Tradition” just as a wonderful UU juxtaposition of opposites. I was wrong.

According to Brother Laurence Freeman, OSB, “Tradition doesn’t mean a freezer-fresh set of beliefs or customs or rituals. It is not something that is frozen in time. Tradition itself literally means a passing on, a handing on, *tradere*. [*trādere* — “to surrender”; “to hand down]. It’s like a relay race, a passing on without dropping the baton, and it is this passing on of a wisdom, of this knowledge... that we are part of a living tradition.” What I take from this quote is that tradition, when appropriately seen as something “living” not “frozen in time”, helps us to not only retain some essential wisdom from the past, but to also evolve this into forms that people in our current times can both relate to and add on to.

So, perhaps take another look at *Singing the Living Tradition*. You will discover that many old Christian hymns have had new words put to them to reflect our evolving UU faith. On November 5th, Rev. Linda Thomson will bring to our attention a couple of these. I also love that the wisdom writings and songs of other faiths and cultures are included in our SLT.

In Fellowship,

Ann Steadman, Program Chair

Canadian Unitarian Council Response to Israel/Hamas Conflict

National Voice Statement on Conflict between Israel and Hamas

October 12, 2023

Our hearts are with all in Israel and Gaza who are suffering and living in fear, and with all those whose lives have been lost. To the members of our community who are Israeli, Jewish, or Palestinian, we are with you in your sorrow and your grief.

We join other faith organizations in calling on the Government of Canada to seek a peaceful resolution to the situation in Israel and Gaza, one that honours international human rights agreements and our commitments to international law and international conventions.

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm and promote “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and aspire to “the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.” Our Principles call us to condemn all acts of violence against civilians.

“There is no context that justifies the immeasurable suffering civilians in Israel and Gaza endure. People of all ages are being wounded, killed, terrorized, and taken hostage,” says Rev. Samaya Oakley, President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada (UUMOC).

Vyda Ng, Executive Director of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) adds: “We do not believe that the solution is for more armed military, and we are in opposition to actions that violate the spirit and letter of international law. The starting point is to recognize our shared humanity and the interdependent web of life that binds us together.”

Ng [quotes](#) Valerie Kaur, author of *See No Stranger* and founder of the Revolutionary Love Project: “If you want to help but don’t know how: begin in relationship. Who in your life is hurting from this? Offer to walk with them, listen to them. There is no fixing grief, only bearing it together.”

We invite Canadian Unitarian Universalists and other people of conscience to write to their [Members of Parliament](#), urging the Government of Canada to take a just, constructive, and human rights-based approach to the current conflict.



UUA Response to Israel/Hamas Conflict

October 17, 2023

Statement on the Current Crisis—Unitarian Universalist Association

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) joins the chorus of voices urging an immediate and total ceasefire, the admittance of humanitarian aid, and the restoration of power and water to Gaza to prevent the further staggering loss of human life that is inevitable under the current conditions. We support [the call from the United Nations](#) for the evacuation order to be rescinded, warning it will have “devastating humanitarian consequences.” We join a wide range of faith-based, non-governmental, and humanitarian organizations across the globe in condemning the government of Israel’s ongoing bombardment, “total siege,” and forced displacement through an evacuation order of more than 1.1 million residents of Gaza in retaliation for Hamas’ atrocious October 7 attacks. We do so in line with our [2002 Action of Immediate Witness](#), “Toward Peace and Justice in the Middle East.”

To address the urgent humanitarian crisis in Israel and Gaza, and to prevent further catastrophic loss of life, the UUA reiterates, as a signatory of [the October 12 statement from Churches for Middle East Peace](#), a call for:

1. Ceasefire, de-escalation, and restraint by all sides
2. All parties to abide by the laws of war, including the Geneva Conventions and customary international law

Prioritizing steps to secure the immediate release of hostages and ensure international protection for civilians

The UUA condemns the horrific terror attacks from Hamas on Israeli civilians, and the taking of innocent hostages. There can never be justification for such an attack.

The UUA condemns the harm to innocent civilians caused by the Israeli government’s retaliation against Gaza, and implores the Israeli government to do all it can to protect innocent civilian life and avoid further escalating military action.

We call on Unitarian Universalists to continue to witness against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and to side with love in this moment by urging their elected officials to leverage the considerable power of the US government to push for an immediate and humane resolution to the crisis in Gaza, including total ceasefire, humanitarian aid access, and rescinding the evacuation order.

<https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/catastrophe-gaza-and-israel>





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

To unsubscribe from this newsletter at any time, please send your request by email to:

asteadman@cogeco.ca