



The Flaming Chalice

November 2015

Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia & Port Huron
180 College Ave. N. Sarnia, Ontario
www.unitarian.sarnia.com

... a refreshing alternative for religious explorers

November Services

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Sunday services begin at 11:00 a.m. followed by refreshments at Noon or shortly after. We meet in the Kiwanis Room of the Lochiel Kiwanis Community Centre (LKCC) at 180 College Ave. N. (enter at Forsyth St. main door). Dress is casual and religious dogma is hard to find, although spirituality abounds. A warm welcome awaits you!

November 1:

“Samhain Memorial Ritual” Join us today as we create a circle of compassion to honour our beloved dead. Your memorial items, pictures, letters, loved objects, are welcome on the altar table. Your love, compassion, memories and sadness are welcome in our circle, led by Wendy Starr.

November 8:

“How to Love a Wind Turbine” The proliferation of wind turbines in Lambton County has “fueled” heated debates on their value in combatting climate change, their energy generation efficiency and their impacts on health. Can wind turbines make people ill and do we want them in our Countryside? Allan McKeown will offer a passionate defense!

November 15:

“A Rainbow of Remembrance” - Rev. Lori Kyle Remembrance Day is generally associated with celebrating the sacrifices of those made in military wartime. Today, we remember them as well as others who have made similar sacrifices in the name of justice, and in doing so could have the direct experience of upholding life.

November 22:

“Celebrating the Human Spirit”-Valerie McGregor-Rempel Valerie will share with us the three weeks she spent in Cambodia documenting the amazing people there. The perseverance of those people was astonishing, especially given horrible living conditions.

November 29:

“Passion for the Great Outdoors”-Tony Arnold - The Lambton Outdoor Club has a long tradition of encouraging local residents to take time to enjoy the outdoors in various ways all year through. Tony will share his passion with us as well as the benefits of connecting with Nature.

*“Anybody can create community with people who believe just like they do. The true test of **community** rests in the ability to create it with people who disagree with us.”*

- Lee Barker, Unitarian Universalist Minister

President's Message

By Ann Steadman



Executive Team Update from October 2015

Please note that the Executive Team Meetings are open to all members of the Fellowship. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, **November 14, 2015** at 6:30 p.m. Meeting minutes can be made available to any member by contacting Ann Steadman.

Religious Exploration: Unfortunately, our R.E. Teacher, Melissa Stewardson, has resigned due to assuming a new job which requires her to work on Sundays. We wish Melissa well in her new endeavour. Christy Plommer has graciously agreed to take on the Teacher role on an interim basis. Mary Marg McGrail, our R.E. Chair, has begun the search for a new full-time teacher and has a promising lead.

Finance: For the first quarter of 2015-16 Program Year, we have a surplus of some \$3,566.90. There will, however, be significant expenses in December and January, namely, the last instalment of our CUC Annual Program Dues, Fellowship Insurance and a payment into the CUC's Lay Chaplaincy Training Fund (\$15. fuor each fee generating service performed in 2015)

Membership: The updated 2015-16 Directory has been printed. Please pick up your copy at the Sunday services.

Program: Many thanks to Wendy Starr and Allan McKeown for the October 18th service about Syria which led so well into our Special Membership Business Meeting.

Lay Chaplaincy: As of September 30th, our Lay Chaplains have performed 83 weddings, 31 memorials, 1 child dedication and 2 other services during the calendar year 2015.

Special Business Meeting: A special business meeting of the Fellowship was held on Sunday, October 18th with 22 voting Members and several non-voting friends in attendance. Results were documented and appear later in this newsletter.

*"Hatred never ceases by
hatred; but by love alone
is healed."*

Buddha



Special Meeting Results

1. R.E./Unitarian Room Lease

By ballot, it was agreed unanimously that the St. Clair Child & Youth Centre can assume the full lease of the R.E. Room as long as a Memorandum of Agreement is signed to ensure our free use of this and the 2 Drop-in rooms (weekends & evenings) and free storage of our UU materials. This arrangement will save the Fellowship \$269.51 per month or \$3,234.12 per year.

2. Sponsoring a Syrian Refugee Family

By ballot, the following motion was adopted: ***“We, the Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron, agree to negotiate a partnership with the Sarnia Muslim Association to sponsor a Syrian Refugee Family. While we will not commit to a specific financial contribution, we will strive to be an equal partner, both financially and from a human resource point of view, to ensure the success of this endeavour.”*** The Muslim Association is very excited by the possibility of this partnership. From our perspective, some “next steps” will need to include discussions with the Association to develop a common understanding of each other’s role, the resources required and the framework for decision making ... basically sorting out, in practical terms, how the partnership can work.

President’s Comments As a Fellowship, I think we can be proud of our decision to not only sponsor a refugee family but to do so in partnership with our local Muslim community! As our two groups work together on this common humanitarian cause, surely greater mutual understanding and interpersonal connections will evolve.

Interestingly enough, First Unitarian in Toronto has also recently partnered with a Toronto mosque for their “Save a Family from Syria” project. First Unitarian has been involved with sponsoring refugees since the late 1970’s. Families from Laos, El Salvador and Ethiopia have all “integrated well into their new lives here in Canada and are living happy, peaceful existences.” <http://cuc.ca/the-part-we-play>

This refugee initiative will call us to put our principles into action and is in direct alignment with the 6th principle of Unitarian Universalism where we all ***seek to create a world community of peace, liberty and justice for all.***

In Fellowship, Ann



For more information,
visit:

<http://cuc.ca/three-things-you-can-do-to-help-syrian-refugees>

Some Facts About Syrian Refugees

Sourced from Amnesty International Canada

- Of the 14.4 million refugees of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) around the world, less than one per cent is submitted to countries for resettlement. A small number of countries take part in the UNHCR's resettlement program. Overall, three countries, the United States of America, Canada and Australia provide 90% of global resettlement places.
- Those Syrian refugees reaching Europe represent a small percentage of the 4 million Syrians who have fled. The majority (95 per cent) of the 4 million plus refugees from Syria are in just five countries Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Nearly four in five of them are women and children
- Syria is the biggest single source of refugees in the world and the worst humanitarian emergency in more than four decades
- In the past four years, the United Nations has received less than half the funding it needs to care for the refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. Over halfway through 2015 donors have contributed only 37 percent of the \$4.5 billion the United Nations says is required to provide for the refugees in 2015. This means refugees face tough new cuts in food aid, and struggle to afford lifesaving health services or send their children to school.
- Since 2013, less than 2,500 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Canada. Of those, 27% have been resettled by the government and 70% by private sponsorship groups.
- In January 2015 Canada committed to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2017. In September 2015 the government said it would speed up the process and these refugees would arrive by Sept 2016.
- In comparison, in 1979 the government raised the quota on Vietnamese refugees from 5,000 to 60,000. In the 1990s, Canada took in 35,000 Bosnians and 5,000 Kosovars who were victims of wars in the former Yugoslavia.
- The most vulnerable refugees include women and girls at risk, survivors of violence and/or torture, refugees with medical needs or disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex refugees at risk, vulnerable older adults, and refugees in need of family reunification. Refugees who face serious threats to their physical security, particularly due to political opinion or belonging to an ethnic or religious minority group, may also be vulnerable.

So you've decided to sponsor a refugee...What's Next?

- 1. How do I find someone to sponsor?** There are various paths to identifying refugees in need of sponsorship. There is the Blended Visa-Office Referred Government Program (updated in September 2015) and private sponsorship (family or friend referrals, and direct online requests from refugees). There are many things to consider when choosing the right person or family to sponsor. (Please note that we will be applying through the Blended Visa-Office Referred Government Program.)
- 2. How much will it cost?** The government covers about a quarter the costs under Blended Visa-Office approach. The cost to sponsor an individual refugee under the Blended Visa Office approach is \$15,000, a couple \$22,000 and a family of 4 \$30,000. An additional \$2000/person is recommended for larger family groups. These can be in kind or cash donations. For private sponsorship, the full costs need to be covered.
- 3. What is the overall time commitment to sponsor a refugee?** When sponsoring from a government list, the Blended Visa-Office Referred, things may happen very quickly since much of the overseas processing is already approved. Private sponsor-referred cases can take longer, although they are currently being processed within 90 days of receipt. The second stage, overseas processing, is estimated at 4-8 months but may take longer, leading to wait times of up to 2 years.
- 4. Pull together a good project team:** You cannot do it alone. You need about 3 people on the team for every person you sponsor. So a family of 4 requires about 12 people. Strike up a committee with clear accountability: fundraising, applications, bookkeeping, communications, and settlement. If you can, reach out and engage a partner organization that speaks the same language and/or has the same religion. Partnership enriches the experience.
- 5. Once a refugee arrives...?** Once a refugee arrives in Canada, our commitment to them is for 1 year of support. Some examples of support required include assistance with medical appointments, banking and legal documents, as well as being a source of information and support for newcomers. You will find support from local Settlement Agencies to assist your group with these challenges.
- 6. Are other UUs doing this?** We are more than pleased to confirm that many of our congregations are coming forward to sponsor refugees! As well, we have a number of congregations and members who have recently or are in the process of sponsoring refugees. There are also collaborative efforts among UU congregations, constituent groups and individuals that you may be interested in joining.
- 7. What is the CUC's role?** The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). This is one of the many ways we represent our member congregations at a national level. This Agreement allows the CUC to authorize our congregations to sponsor refugees under its agreement.

Refugees by Martha Sprackland

I sit on my coat
and think about home:
the warm cosy glow of the fire,
the smell of home baked bread...
I brush tears to the grass.
A small child wanders over,
sits down with a bump.
I glance at him,
and he gazes at me intently.
A sharp, blue gaze,
I offer him a piece of bread
and he takes it. A flicker of a smile.
I put my arm around his skinny shoulders.
Silently, together, we sit, and think, and cry



Regular Events

Book Club: Continues to meet on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 9:15 am at 'Parkside Perk' on Front St. In October, we will be reviewing the book **"419"**, the National Bestseller by Will Ferguson. In December, we will discuss Cheryl Strayed's book **"Torch"**. Future book choices will be discussed at the November and December meetings. Everyone is welcome to come out and join the discussion, whether you've read the book or not.

Men's Group: The Men's Group plans will be announced at a later date.

Women's Circle: Thursday, November 12, 2015 - a visit to the Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery to view the touring "Masterworks from the Beaverbrook Art Gallery" - we will try to arrange for a guided tour - admission is free or "give what you can". In December, we will be having our annual Christmas dinner out - potential dates are Thursday, December 3rd or 10th.

Small Group Ministry: Members meet every other Thursday afternoon at chosen locations. All are welcome. Contact Betty Learn for info at: 519-337-4039



"Because of the role that religion has historically played in denying gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people their full humanity, I believe that we now have a special calling to reach out to our GLBT sisters and brothers. We need to offer an explicit welcome, because the world can still be a very unwelcoming place. We need to offer radical acceptance, because neither family nor society can always be counted on to be accepting. We need to offer unconditional love, because Love is at the heart of religious community."

— Allison Barrett, Canadian UU Minister

Please consider sharing this newsletter with a friend and invite them to a service. Every Sunday is “Bring a Guest” Sunday!

Each issue of the “Flaming Chalice” newsletter is printed by the Organization for Literacy Lambton (OLL): helping every person acquire the gift of literacy.

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To unsubscribe to this newsletter at any time, please send your request by email to: wendycornelis55@outlook.com



We Are A Green Sanctuary Congregation

(certified by the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#))

The Green Sanctuary Program:

- Invites congregations to embark on an exploration of what it means to live today within a religious community on an imperiled Earth.
- Is a way for all Unitarian Universalists to join our efforts, both symbolically and explicitly, in becoming stewards of the Earth.

Learn more about [the Green Sanctuary program](#).