



The Flaming Chalice

September 2015

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

... a refreshing alternative for religious explorers

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October Services

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!

October 4: **Rescue Work in Nepal - Bonnie Kearns**

We welcome the return of Red Cross nurse, Bonnie Kearns, as she shares with us some of the challenges of her mission to Nepal after the devastating earthquakes there, one of which she experienced personally.

October 11: **"Canadian Thanksgiving Service"**

Sharon MacKay will lead us in a circle service in which we will ponder and share that which we are grateful for. Please come prepared to share within our beloved community.

October 18: **Syria - What is the Situation?**

Why is the situation in Syria so drastic now - how does it relate to the issue of Climate Change? Is our Fellowship interested in sponsoring a Syrian Refugee family? Join us as we discuss these and other current issues around the Syrian crisis.

October 25: **"Finding Francis" - Rev. Lori Kyle**

The life of St. Francis of Assisi is widely celebrated in October. Although credited with significant contributions to the reform of the Medieval Christian Church, his influence goes far beyond medieval times and the tenets of Christianity. On this Sunday, we will explore the relevance of Franciscan ideology in our contemporary world.

*"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 Highlights from September 17, 2015 Meeting



Your Executive Team's Priorities for 2015-16 Program Year are:

- Recommend a social justice focus and implementation plan to the membership
- Promote Children's Religious Exploration
- Evaluate engaging a regular visiting minister for another Program Year
- Explore possibilities for a community project such as a 'Peace Garden'
- Plan for the celebration of our Fellowship's 60th Anniversary in Winter/Spring 2016
- Update policies and procedures for the Membership portfolio.

*There is a calmness
to a life lived in
gratitude*

Ralph W. Blum

Religious Exploration: The new R.E. Teacher, Melissa Stewardson, is recent graduate of the University of Guelph with a degree in Theatre Arts. A warm welcome to Melissa! It was agreed that the Child Care Worker, when there are no children from 1 - 5 years of age attending on a Sunday, will assist the R.E. Teacher to ensure that there are always 2 workers downstairs with the children. The fall Adult R.E. offering will be **Meditation with Bonnie Clark**. (Please note that as of September 20th these sessions have a full enrollment of 12 persons. Contact me if you would like to go on a 'wait list'.) We warmly welcome Mary Marg McGrail to the role of R.E. Chair for this year

Finance: We had an operating surplus for our 2014-15 'Program Year' (July 1 2014 - June 30, 2015). This surplus is due mainly to not using budgeted monies for Children's R.E. and the income from our Lay Chaplains. Many thanks are extended to the KIVA Team (Dwayne O'Neil, Alice Walent-Bellar and Brenda Woolston) for making our first micro-loans. The 'Investment Options Team' was unable to meet in August but will do so in the near future. We are so grateful to Dan Danner for his many years of service as our Treasurer and his willingness to carry on! As well we welcome and thank Mark Woolston who will serve as a Co-Treasurer with Dan this year helping out with some financial responsibilities on the Canadian side of the border.

Membership: The Canadian Unitarian Council's Annual Certification of Membership form has been completed indicating that as of September 1, 2015 we have 42 voting members. A new Directory is now ready for printing. This will be distributed to Members and official Friends in the near future. It was suggested that our 'Telephone Tree' needs updating. The 'Tree' is the way we can get in touch with people quickly to communicate such things as the death of a member or friend, the cancellation of a service or to promote a Fellowship event. (The 'Tree' has been refreshed and has been sent out to the Executive Team.) Thank you Annette Verhagen for being willing take on the role of Membership Chair this year!



President's Message

(continued)

Program: The Fall line-up of programs has been finalized until Nov. 8th. As well, the Rev. Lori Kyle (our regular visiting minister) has been confirmed to lead our services on April 3, May 1 and June 19, 2016. Wendy Cornelis has received several favourable comments back about the 'new look' of our newsletter. Many thanks to Wendy C. for getting our newsletter out each month! "Great thanks" was expressed for the efforts of our Web Master, Christy Plommer. As noted last month, Christy has saved the Fellowship a considerable amount of money by transitioning our website to our own 'domain' following the exit from business of our previous service provider, EBTech. To view our website go to <http://www.uusarnia.com/>. We are grateful that Wendy Starr has agreed to serve as again as Program Chair. The Program Team members are: Allan McKeown, Steve Lane, Sharon MacKay, Wendy Cornelis and Mary Marg McGrail.

Social Justice: I announced in the September Newsletter that "*Fellowship Members and Friends will be polled in early September regarding a new Social Justice focus.*" Given the recent events concerning the Syrian refugee crisis your Executive Team has decided to investigate ways in which the Fellowship can help to sponsor a refugee/refugee family from Syria. We are too small a group to do this on our own. Consequently, we will be reaching out to see who we can partner with. We have made a connection with the Muslim Association and there seems to be an interest in working with us. Once the Executive Team has some concrete possibilities for partnership(s) and a greater understanding of what 'sponsoring' entails, we will bring a recommendation forward to the membership. I say this to you fully remembering that in the June newsletter I was suggesting that Climate Change might well be the key social justice issue for us to consider. Well, Wendy Starr reminded us that the Syrian refugee crisis and climate change are in fact related. You can see how this is has happened by going to <http://www.upworthy.com/trying-to-follow-what-is-going-on-in-syria-and-why-this-comic-will-get-you-there-in-5-minutes?c=ufb2> We do not have a Social Justice Team at this point in time. Would someone be willing to get one going?

Lay Chaplaincy: As of August 31st our Lay Chaplains have performed 71 weddings, 31 memorials, 2 child dedications and one other service. The Lay Chaplaincy Team looks forward to welcoming, in 2015-16, two Fellowship members who have expressed an interest in Lay Chaplaincy. Current Team members are Sharon MacKay, Chuck MacKenzie and Ann Steadman.

Executive Team Meetings are open to the members of the Fellowship. They happen at 6:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month from September to June at the Lochiel Kiwanis Centre in our basement "Unitarian Room". **The next meeting will be on October 15, 2015.** The minutes of our meetings can be made available to any Member by contacting me at asteadman@cogeco.ca .

In Fellowship, *Ann*



*"Those who are awake
live in a constant
state of amazement"*
Jack Kornfield



Investment News

Kiva Loan Summary Update

At this year's Annual General Meeting, the membership agreed to invest US\$1,600 in Kiva as a social action initiative. Kiva has the mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty with micro loans. Leveraging the internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, Kiva lets groups and individuals lend money to help create opportunity around the world.

A Kiva Investment Team for the Fellowship was formed with Brenda Woolston, Alice Bellar and Dwayne O'Neill as members.

As of the end of August, the team has made a total of 11 Kiva loans totalling US\$1,475 (with an additional \$75 not invested and a \$50 donation to Kiva) from the total US\$1,600 commitment. The loans have been made to individuals and small groups in 7 different countries. Individual loans are described in a summary document that was distributed to the Executive Team along with the loan criteria and overall Kiva description.

This initiative is making a significant difference to the lives of several people.

The following provides a summary of one of the loans:

Maria Elvira

Puerto Cortes, Honduras



María is the mother of 3 children, who is 56 years old and lives with her husband and a grandchild in a village in the municipality of Puerto Cortés. For 25 years, she has worked selling powdered chocolate, flour to make pinol, rice creams, and atoles [cornflour drinks]. She sells these products to her neighbors in the local market on the weekends. With that, she has managed to get her children ahead and give her family well-being. She is asking for her third loan which is for 4,000 lempiras to be able to invest in a larger quantity of products such as cocoa, corn, rice, spices, cinnamon and more to prepare chocolate and the products she sells, with the end of increasing her sales and her customer base. She dreams of growing her business and continuing to help her whole family to get a better quality of life and well-being.

Please contact anyone on the team for additional information.



*"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

Events

Unitarian Central Regional Fall Gathering

Saturday, October 24th 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

First Unitarian Church of Hamilton

<http://cuc.ca/event/central-regional-fall-gathering>

Community Events

All-candidates debate on health care: [Wed., Sept. 30th 7 - 9 pm](#)
Sarnia Library Theatre, sponsored by the Ontario Health Coalition.

All-candidates meeting focusing on poverty in our community:
[Thurs., Oct. 1st 7 pm](#) at the Dante Club hosted by Sarnia Lambton Social Services.

Community Forum about Syrian Refugees: [Fri., Oct. 9th 9 am](#) at the Lambton College Event Centre, coordinated by the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership. Registration required.
<http://blackburnnews.com/sarnia/sarnia-news/2015/09/18/sarnia-lambton-refugee-effort-advances/>

Anti-Poverty Rally: [Fri., Oct. 16th at noon](#) in front of City Hall. Organized by the Poverty Reduction Network. Please come out to walk alongside those who are not able to pay for both rent and food and for those who are barely managing from day to day.
<http://thesarniajournal.ca/squaring-circle-helping-individuals-break-free-poverty/>

How (not) to Read the Bible: Catch the Story

Four sessions led by Western University Chaplain, Michael Wagenman
[Sunday, October 4th & 18th](#) from 6:30 - 8 p.m. at Redeemer Christian Reformed Church, 5834 Blackwell Side Road, Sarnia [519-542-4202](tel:519-542-4202).
[Sunday, November 1st & 15th](#) from, 6:30 - 8 p.m. at First Christian Reformed Church, 1105 Exmouth Street, Sarnia [519-336-8808](tel:519-336-8808)
All welcome - FREE admission.



"There are always opportunities for the faith community to actively live out their faith by participating in healing ways in the neighborhoods and communities in which we live"

"Difference of religion breeds more quarrels than difference of politics."

Wendell Phillips



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](#).