



# The Flaming Chalice

September 2024

## 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/83101536641>

### Theme—Acceptance



#### September 8: “In-gathering Water Communion” – Sharon MacKay

Our traditional first service of the new “Program Year” is when we welcome each other back after the summer break. Bring a small amount of water from one of your summer experiences (actual or representative), add it to a common bowl and share why the source of it is important to you. **For this intergenerational service, the children will remain upstairs and participate. IN-PERSON ONLY**

#### September 15: “Creating a Local Kids’ Book” – Rich Bouchard

This presentation outlines the "Smash Hits" project, a collaborative effort between Hashtag Charitable Foundation and Noelle's Gift to Children, to create a local kids' book. The book celebrates community organizations and inspires the next generation. We'll explore the project's background, its community impact, and what comes next.

**IN-PERSON ONLY**

#### September 22: “How Procrastination Makes You More Creative”

– Karen Minty

Are you a procrastinator? Do you often engage in frivolous activities in avoidance of more important tasks? What if I told you that you can use your procrastination to be more creative? Karen majored in Creativity in Adult Education in both her B.Ed. and M.Ed. and teaches at Sheridan College and Brock University.

#### September 29: “Housing in Crisis” – Philip Dack

Our ‘housing crisis’ has reached a threshold point where governments have decided they must take action to support the developers who want to build housing. The basic economic principles are clear: more supply = lower costs. Communities, however, fight municipal approving bodies to ‘protect’ their neighbourhoods. **SOUP SUNDAY**

**Each of us, imperfect and vulnerable bodyspirits that we are, is connected to a vast web of love which holds us and will not let us go.**

**Meg Riley**

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## Reflection by President Tracy Jutras

Welcome back everyone to the start of a new program year.

In July, we came together in Lamrecton Park for our annual picnic and in August we gathered for the Church in the Wild service at Canatara Park. I hope everyone had a wonderful summer.



As much as I enjoy the summer, I look forward to the Autumn Equinox or as some call it “Sweater Weather.” It’s a season of changing colours, cooler days, cozy blankets, and a warm drink. A highlight for me in September is seeing all the joy on every-



one’s faces as we gather again for our “Water Communion” service. I look forward to seeing you all there on Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.

### *Circles of Acceptance*

Our theme for this month is ‘Acceptance’ and how it reflects our third principle, “Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.”

The idea of a circle being used as a metaphor for ‘acceptance’ has been popular for years. It goes something like this. You were born into a small circle that held your parents, grandparents, and siblings. They infused it with love, light, and acceptance. Your circle then widened to include your family, friends, neighbours, and your community at large. With each new phase of your life, you have either widened your circle of acceptance, or for whatever reason, have chosen not to.

Eventually though, you found your way to our Unitarian Fellowship where those that came before you widened their own circle to include you. You settled into our circles of love, light, and acceptance.

This September, as we return to our fellowship and gather to celebrate our annual “Water Communion” service, I encourage our members and friends to continue to be the sanctuary for others that you sought here. More importantly, to support each other in the spiritual journey that’s right for them.

In closing, at the end of our “Water Communion” service, let us remember Richard Learn, our long-standing and celebrated “Honorary Life Member” of our fellowship who passed away in Michigan on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. For those who haven’t travelled this summer, you are more than welcome to bring water from the St. Clair River or Lake Huron in his honour. A tree will also be planted at Wawanosh, from the Fellowship, in honour of Richard.

*In Fellowship, Tracy Jutras*

**‘Acceptance’ Theme package from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto:**

**[Acceptance - New Horizons April 2021 V2 \(firstunitariantoronto.org\)](https://www.firstunitariantoronto.org)**

## Quotes on 'Acceptance' To Ponder

"No person is your friend who demands your silence or denies your right to grow."

— **Alice Walker**

"For after all, the best thing one can do when it is raining is let it rain."

— **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

"Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like."

— **Lao Tzu**

"Maturity, one discovers, has everything to do with the acceptance of 'not knowing.'"

— **Mark Z. Danielewski**

"Beauty is about being comfortable in your own skin. It's about knowing and accepting who you are."

— **Ellen DeGeneres**

"Let go of certainty. The opposite isn't uncertainty. It's openness, curiosity and a willingness to embrace paradox, rather than choose up sides. The ultimate challenge is to accept ourselves exactly as we are, but never stop trying to learn and grow."

— **Tony Schwartz**

"Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good."

— **Elizabeth Edwards**

My happiness grows in direct proportion to my acceptance, and in inverse proportion to my expectations."

— **Michael J. Fox**

"Don't look for peace. Don't look for any other state than the one you are in now; otherwise, you will set up inner conflict and unconscious resistance. Forgive yourself for not being at peace. The moment you completely accept your non-peace, your non-peace

becomes transmuted into peace.

Anything you accept fully will get you there, will take you into peace.

This is the miracle of surrender"

— **Eckhart Tolle**

"Nothing brings down walls as surely as acceptance."

— **Deepak Chopra**

"Sometimes you just have to regret things and move on."

— **Charlaine Harris**

"You are accepted...fully and totally

accepted...now, always, without condition, without deserving, without question. To be accepted in this way means to be cherished, to be loved...It means that who we are is valued, honored and respected. It means that we don't have to earn or deserve such care; it is simply there for us, ours as a gift outright."

— **Margaret Guinness**

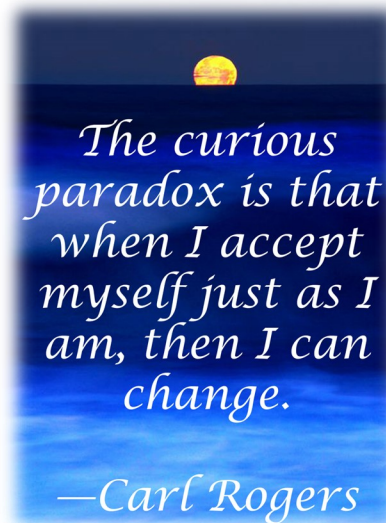
"Because one believes in oneself, one doesn't try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval. Because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her."

— **Lao Tzu**

"Acceptance is something we're taught not to do.

We're taught to improve uncomfortable situations, to change things, alleviate unpleasant feelings. But if you accept the reality that you have been given... you free yourself to begin filling up again."

— **Anne Lamott**



## Richard Learn: September 3, 1935—August 3, 2024



Richard John Learn, 88, of Fort Gratiot, died Saturday, August 3, 2024.

He was born September 3, 1935 in Windsor, Ontario, Canada to the late Murton and Mona Learn. He married Elizabeth A. "Betty" Bonin on September 23, 1977 in Port Huron.

Richard was employed as a painter/insulator at Polysar in Sarnia, Ontario for 35 years before his retirement. He was a good man who loved his family and friends.

He was interested in social, political and spiritual ideas and was an active member of the Unitarian Church, PFLAG and a Sarnia drumming group.

Richard kept busy with woodworking and knitting projects and was always so excited to make furniture, blankets and clothing for the new grandbabies. He shared a love of reading with Betty and they always had a book ready to discuss with others.

He and Betty enjoyed numerous activities together, from cross-country skiing, golfing, biking, camping and travel, including several road trips across the country to Oregon and British Columbia to visit family.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Betty; two sons, Richard Learn and Robert (Grace) Learn; daughter, Tally Wellman; seven stepchildren, Mariah (Marilyn) Ureel, Martin Ureel, Jane (Brent) Matthews, Deborah Mueller, Karen (Michael) Hallay, Steven (Karen) Ureel and Michael (Flor) Ureel; many grandchildren and great grandchildren; and two sisters, Susan (Ronald) St. Pierre and April (Donald) Beatty. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Reginald (Jean) Learn; and daughter-in-law, Ann Marie Learn.

Private services for the immediate family will take place at a later date. Inurnment will be in Mt. Hope Cemetery, Port Huron.

Arrangements are by Karrer-Simpson Funeral Home. To send condolences, visit [karrersimpson.com](http://karrersimpson.com).

To plant a tree in memory of Richard J. Learn, please visit [Tribute Store](#).

<https://theobserver.remembering.ca/obituary/richard-learn-1090412290>

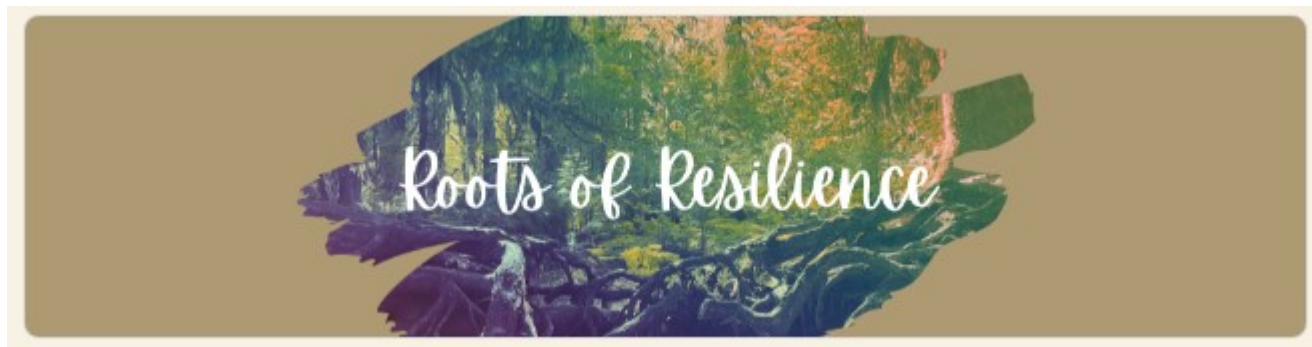
Editor's personal note: I celebrate Richard as a man who was as comfortable with woodworking (still enjoy the mediation bench he made for me) as with knitting. This open hearted soul tried, when ever possible, to knit together, to bring together and to advocate for what he believed in. Richard was a proud Union member. The picture on the right is of Richard and Betty joining in a health care rally at Queen's Park on Nov. 5, 2005. RIP Richard, yours was a life well lived.



*Respectfully, Ann Steadman*



## Meaning Making in Liminal Times - 2024-2025



Again, this program year, our Fellowship will be joining in 'The Meaning Making' project. For 2024-25 this initiative will explore the roots of resilience in these liminal times. What does resilience feel like in our bodies? How do we recognize and support resilience in our communities? What are the theologies, values, and practices that support our individual, communal, and societal resilience?

This year, 8 monthly theme packages, worship services suggestions, and sermons/talks will be offered. Five of the themes will be connected to our 5 Canadian UU aspirations. For our Fellowship, the series will run one Sunday a month from November to June.

### Services

Each service is created by a Canadian UU minister who has a passion for their topic. We will be able to download the extensive service package, and most importantly, the sermon /talk video. To ensure that the presenter's face is easy to see, their voice clear, and the talks as accessible as possible, all talks will be recorded direct to zoom using a quality microphone with captions turned on.

### Theme packages

The theme packages will be created by a team of four ministers: Arran Morton, Fiona Heath, Meg Roberts, and Karen Fraser Gitlitz, following the same theme cycle as the worship services. Theme packages will include an image, a short reflection by one of the ministers, questions, quotes, individual practices, and a complete script for group discussion.

*In Fellowship, Ann Steadman, Program Chair*



## Canadian Unitarian Council

### CUC Response to the Unitarian Universalist Association's Revised Article II

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), our US counterpart, after meaningful engagement with member congregations over the last few years, has just passed a new "Article II" – the section of their by-laws that previously outlined the Principles and Purposes of their organization. Information about this process can be found [here](#).

If you're new to this conversation, the UUA's seven Principles are contained in their bylaws as Article II, which are reviewed periodically.. The "Article II" conversation at the UUA over the past few years has been about a reimagined Article II which now focuses, instead of the Principles, on a theological message commonly referred to as "Love at the Center".

At the recent June 22 UUA General Assembly session, delegates approved the revised Article II by 80.2%. The full text of the updated Article II is [here](#).

At the CUC, we've received queries asking: "What does this mean for us as Canadian Unitarians and Universalists, and for the Canadian Unitarian Council as our national organization?"

Here's our 3 part answer about what this means for Canadians:

- First, the Canadian Unitarian Council is an independent organization, with our own [by-laws](#). 'Article II of the UUA' has no legal or practical bearing on our CUC by-laws. Technically, nothing has changed here.

We voted in November 2021 to add an [8th Principle](#), and this, together with the [6 Sources](#) and [5 Aspirations](#), remain the primary guiding agreements for our national organization. We haven't encoded these within our by-laws, so as a living



tradition, we are able to continuously evolve our guiding values by keeping them separate from the bylaws.

So if the question is "Do we still have 8 Principles here in Canada?", the answer is yes!

- Second, when the CUC and UUA separated in 2002, the CUC became the primary membership organization for our Canadian members. The CUC took over support of and engagement with congregations, while professional [ministry](#) and [settlement](#) services remained with the UUA, supported by the CUC's Congregational Life staff.

Many resources are shared back and forth between the CUC and UUA, with staff of both organizations in relationship and communication with each other, but we are distinct organizations primarily serving two independent countries.

Some CUC congregations also retain a second membership with the UUA. If you're not sure if your congregation is one of them, [check here](#).

If your congregation is also a member of the UUA, you'll likely be wondering how it works to have both the CUC's Principles, Sources and Aspirations, and the UUA's Article II's 'Love at the Center' as your guiding agreements. This is a great opportunity for conversations at the congregational level, and individual personal discernment. We see no conflict between the two statements, and look forward to meaningful conversations with you as you reflect on your dual memberships. Let us know if you have questions, or if we can be helpful in some way.

- Finally, the CUC and the UUA both have, at the heart of our efforts, a commitment to support Unitarian Universalism and our member congregations and communities with shared goals of well-being and a thriving future for all.

The border is porous and we are collaborative in nature. We share ideas, resources, events, and especially, wisdom. There is great meaning and value in both of our approaches. We are complementary!

We do expect to see a change in the UUA resources – prioritizing this new message of 'Love at the Centre.' And we regularly share links to UUA tools and events. So you will be seeing 'Love at the Center' crossing your browser. Please know that it does not diminish or disparage the 8 Principles we love. It incorporates and reimagines their essential messages. And it works beautifully alongside our CUC Vision: As Canadian

Unitarian Universalists, we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.

Put simply ... it's a layered, but not troubling, situation.

The CUC and its congregations have 8 Principles, 6 Sources and 5 Aspirations. We govern ourselves in accordance with our CUC By-laws, which is different from the UUA's. Some of our congregations may want to explore what holding dual membership means to them, and all of us can expect to be inspired and influenced by the work of our US neighbours.

We encourage you to check out the meaningful work the UUA is doing around 'Love at the Center'. There's a great book now available online, helping people to explore this newly crafted message.

- [Love at the Center – the ebook](#)
- [Article II study resources](#)

*From your CUC staff, in collaboration with the UU Ministers of Canada Executive and the CUC Board of Trustees.*

Contact: [executivedirector@cuc.ca](mailto:executivedirector@cuc.ca)

Read the [UU World article](#) published after General Assembly.

*Each week, there may be someone for whom our congregation is a lifeline. Maybe they need the tolerance and acceptance offered in liberal religion. Maybe they need a community to support and encourage their growing soul...We hope to always be ready to welcome the stranger into our midst, and give them a place of shelter.*

*Bob Janis-Dillon*

## Earth Matters Series #6 “Talking Climate Change”

Polls repeatedly show that the majority of people around the world are very concerned about climate change; how it is impacting our lives and the greater impacts our children and grandchildren will have to confront if we fail to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

If my life was a football game, I am living in the final quarter. My grandchildren are still in the first quarter but their future is fraught with uncertainty. The least I can do is to try to do something meaningful. If everyone tried to bring about even a small change that inspires hope then we might be surprised by how much of a positive change can result.

In 2018 I was one of about 100 people who came together in Sarnia to share our concerns about climate change. Out of that gathering Climate Action Sarnia-Lambton (<https://www.climateactionsarnialambton.ca>) was formed. CASL is a diverse group of volunteers who are committed to raising awareness and understanding of climate change in the community, advocating for greater political action, and supporting various environmental initiatives.

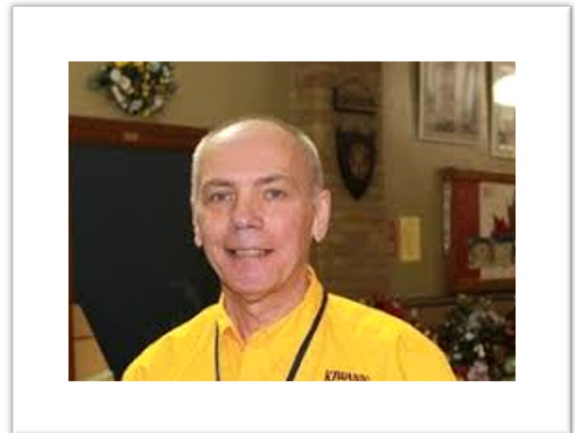
In 2019 we advocated for City Council to adopt a “climate emergency declaration” which they did, joining hundreds more municipalities across Canada and around the world. The government of Canada declared a “National Climate Emergency” which was supported by all parties except the Conservatives. Sarnia followed up by developing a “Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan” to put in place measures to protect citizens and businesses from the worsening impacts of climate change.

CASL has, with the support of the city and financial support of a number of organizations led tree plantings in several city parks. We have also organized public rallies and sponsored a “Winter Speaker Series” for the last 3 years, offering a variety of important environmental topics, presented by knowledgeable speakers.

Katherine Hayhoe is a leading Canadian climate scientist who reminds us that one of the most important steps we can take is to talk about climate change with family and friends. We owe it to our children and youth, who may look to the future with fear and a sense of hopelessness, to offer them support and understanding and the knowledge that there are many ways out of this crisis.

Climate change is already having widespread mental health effects on those who have experienced out of control wildfires, flooding, heat stress or other serious and traumatic events made worse by climate change. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and even suicidal tendencies are being increasingly documented.

Even in those not directly impacted, mental health issues are a growing concern. Many children and youth, for example, now experience “Eco-anxiety”, a feeling of dread about the future which leads to despair and





depression. It is vital, therefore, that parents and educators reach out to our children and youth with empathy and engage with them to inform, educate, build hope, resilience and a positive mind-set.

“Hope” is not wishful thinking. Hope is an action word that leads to meaningful actions and progress.

“Hope” begins with being honest with children and youth about climate change without causing undue alarm and fear (“climate doomerism”). Check out Alaina Wood, a sustainability scientist in Tennessee whose TikTok videos debunk extreme examples of “doomerism” and is part of a group called “Eco-Tok”. Their hashtag#ecotok has so far amassed over 200 million views!

Parents can help cultivate in their children a love and respect for the natural world in many ways. If you need some ideas check out “Outdoor Project” <https://www.outdoorproject.com>.

Parents can also find support by joining online groups such as “Science Moms” <https://sciencemoms.com> and “Climate Dads” on Facebook. Grandparents can communicate with other seniors across Canada by joining “Seniors for Climate Action Now” <https://seniorsforclimateactionnow.org>

Parents and teachers can access teaching resources at CLEAN (Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network) <https://cleanet.org>

There are many other excellent resources but certainly a good option is to create personal connections with like-minded groups in your community. Did I mention Climate Action Sarnia Lambton? You can connect via our website. We also have hundreds of followers on Facebook.

Our children need to be reassured that they will have a future that they can believe in. We owe it to them to encourage and mentor them to become involved in constructive ways to effect real change. Today’s generation deserves a future that will offer them the opportunity to raise their own children in a world which will be in balance again with Nature.

*Allan McKeown, Member of Climate Action Sarnia-Lambton*

**Allan has written a series of articles for the Sarnia Journal on important climate action topics. This is number 6 in the series. To find the previous articles go to the Sarnia Journal website and search under the columns tab.**





### 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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