

UCG Newsletter

November/December 2015

President's Message

Greetings,

As we move to close out 2015, I thought it would be appropriate to report back on the many initiatives underway through the board to help us live out our mission – which, of course, we revised in May:

As a UU community, we:

- Question freely
- Serve, inspire and challenge
- Seek and celebrate diversity
- Support each other openheartedly
- Honor the web of existence

As a further guidepost, we have the strategic focus areas that also came out of our discussions last year; inreach, outreach and support for families.

We have provided a new mandate to the Building Committee – now calling it the Property and Environment Committee. The members, and especially the chair, Helen Prinold, have been working hard to make sure our building is in the best shape possible to support our mission. The building is truly the centre of our UCG web, and it is important it helps us link out to the broader web around us. Unfortunately, the committee discovered some emergency repairs that needed to be made outside of our maintenance budget. They have made a special appeal to the congregation to help us cover those costs. Special envelopes are available in the collection plate.

We have also partnered with a number of UCG members and friends to support bringing a refugee family from Syria or Eretria to Guelph. Our connection to the CUC makes the paperwork much easier, and we have agreed to use our ability to generate tax receipts. We have not committed any financial resources at the present time; however, as required by the CUC, the board has passed a motion to confirm that refugee support is consistent with and part of our mission. We are very excited about the ability to leverage what we can offer to this effort and walk the talk of that mission in a highly visible and concrete way. For more information, please contact Linda Reith.

We have also had a report back from our ad hoc communications committee. We hope to have a follow-up report shortly that will lead to new outreach initiatives in 2016. In the meantime, we have continued to co-sponsor events with organizations like Out on the Shelf and the Two Rivers Neighbourhood Group to build connections with like-minded and neighbourhood organizations.

We continue to be stretched on the board – the Treasurer and Vice-President positions remain vacant – and on many of our committees. There is also a just-one-job list on the bulletin board which allows you to offer your services for a specific task. As I said in my last note, we exist and serve through the efforts of our many volunteers.

As a new initiative for families, we are proposing a March break camp for children as a test run for a possible summer offering as well. Stay tuned for more information.

It's an honour to continue to serve the UCG and its mission. Thanks for the opportunity.

Sunday Services- Finding Courage

Nov 1 - Samhain

Service Leader: Janice Canning, Earth Based Spirituality Council

This season we have been gifted with a spectacular, multicoloured reminder of the very present cycle of life and death as the fall colours transform our outer landscape from vibrant green to frigid browns and blacks. This service of Samhain (Sowhen) invites us to honour those who have passed from our lives this year and to celebrate the ways that knowing them has transformed our inner landscape. You may choose to bring a photo or memento to acknowledge and honour your beloved dead.

Nov 8 - Hurry Up and Get Over It

Speaker: Christopher Wulff

Service Leader: Lorna Wyllsun

How does our faith call us to lament and to engagement with the transitions of life, when society tells us to "get over it." What does honest, authentic engagement with loss look like?

You won't want to miss this talk by seminarian Christopher Wulff. Christopher was raised UU and brings great insight to all topics he shares with our congregation.

Nov 15 - Exploring Grief and Creative Expression

Speaker: Nicole Fantin

Service Leader: Lorna Wyllsun

Nicole Fantin, Art Therapist at Hospice Wellington, shares her experiences and explores the benefits of alternative therapies supporting the healing process and other grief related journeys. She will lead us through an open discussion designed to generate deeper understanding and awareness related to this relevant topic, including an overview of self-care strategies. Through this presentation, attendees will be invited to explore the roots of human connectivity and branches of creative expression, considering the roles of authenticity, vulnerability and overall well-being within our community.

Nov 22 - Climate Change is Terrifying: Our World View Makes All the Difference

Service Facilitators: Linda Reith and Lorna Wyllsun

Naomi Klein has written a powerful book, *This Changes Everything*. Her challenge to us is to be part of the solution and our spiritual understanding can help or hinder. Let's help each other meet the challenge.

Nov 29 - Aging Courageously

Panel of speakers: London Green, Ruth Slavin

Service Leader?

There is a lot of stigma around growing older within our anti-aging culture. During this service, some of our congregation's elders will share ways in which they find the courage to face the challenges they encounter as they age.

Dec 6 - Swimming in Deep Water: My Journey with Grief and CourageService

Speaker: Emily Matin

Service Leader: Katie Gad

For this service, congregation member Emily Matin, a grade twelve student, will share with us about her changing perspectives on grief and loss as she has gotten older, following the death of her brother. Emily will speak about the role of courage in her own grief journey and the importance of cultivating resiliency during difficult times. "Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle" (C.Larson)

Dec 13 - Finding Courage Through Song

Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo Wellington

Service Leader: Margie Johnson

The Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo Wellington is a community chorus that welcomes members of all genders, sexualities, and gender expressions – and allies of the LGBTQ+ community. Please join us as members of the chorus share their personal stories of courage, through stories and songs.

Dec 20 - Youth Pageant

Service Leaders: UCG Youth

Join our children and youth as we celebrate Yule with traditional story, music and drama.

Dec 27 - Finding Courage in Our Lives

Service Facilitators: Lorna Wylsun and Margie Johnson

Let us begin the New Year with a feeling of strength and courage. During this interactive service, we will have the opportunity to reflect on our fears or feelings of helplessness, and on what helps us to find courage in our own lives. Can finding courage be a spiritual practice?

This month's Theme Package content has been edited from the First Unitarian Church of Toronto's newsletter: New Horizons, Issue 2, Volume 1.

**Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.**

Winston Churchill

The great courage is to stare as squarely at the light as at death.

Albert Camus

These quotes by Churchill and Camus are great reminders that courage comes in many forms. It's safe to say that Unitarians have a soft spot for the courage of the rebel. *Stand up and speak! Take down "the man"! Choose the road less travelled.* These battle cries are regularly heard in our circles. Perhaps this call to courageous resistance is exactly what you need to hear. Perhaps not.

Perhaps the truly courageous task before you is to relinquish your role as village rebel. Perhaps instead of taking on *the man* it's giving someone a second look, a fair shake. Perhaps it's not death or loss but light that scares you right now. In a world where people easily break commitments, sticking to the same, sure path could be the most courageous act of our day.

The point is that there isn't just one way to live a life of courage. What we most often need, perhaps, is not to be told to be brave, but to be given the time and space to contemplate what bravery is asking of us.

Quotations for Inspiration

“Love is the most difficult and dangerous form of courage. Courage is the most desperate, admirable, and noble kind of love.” **Delmore Schwartz**

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.” **Anais Nin**

“We must do the things we think we cannot do.” **Eleanor Roosevelt**

“I learned that courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

Nelson Mandela

“Whereas moral courage is the righting of wrongs, creative courage, in contrast, is the discovering of new forms, new symbols, new patterns on which a new society can be built.” **Rollo May**

“The nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. It first does something to the hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them new self-respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage that they did not know they had. Finally it reaches the opponent and so stirs his conscience that reconciliation becomes a reality.” **Martin Luther King Jr.**

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes it is the little voice at the end of the day that says, “I’ll try again tomorrow.” **Mary Anne Radmacher**

“Perhaps strength doesn’t reside in never having been broken, but in the courage required to grow in the broken places.” **Unknown**

“I will not die an Unlived Life”

I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
To allow my living to open me,
To make me less afraid,
More accessible,
To loosen my heart
Until it becomes a wing,
A torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance;
To live so that which came to me as seed
Goes to the next as blossom
And that which came to me as blossom,
Goes on as fruit. **Dawna Markova**

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Who is the most courageous person you know? Has their courage been contagious? How has their courage inspired and changed you?

When have you been surprised by courage? When have you acted courageously then afterward asked yourself, “where did that come from?” Where did it come from?

Are you as “courageously vulnerable” as you would like to be? Bravery is often talked about as being tough, strong, and determined but sometimes the scarier thing is to be tender, open-hearted, or honest about our weaknesses.

Do you have the courage to ask for help? What are you trying to achieve in life that you simply can’t do on your own? Are there others you can approach for help to get you there?

Books about Courage

Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda Romeo Dallaire

Out of the Blue Jan Wong

How to be Sick Toni Bernhard

The Courage to Be Paul Tillich

The Trauma of Everyday Life Mark Epstein

For Children & Youth

Anne of Green Gables Lucy Maude Montgomery

The Chronicles of Narnia CS Lewis

The Harry Potter Series JK Rowling

Films about Courage

The King’s Speech

Kinky Boots

Milk

For Children & Youth

Tuck Everlasting

Finding Nemo

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Prince

Caspian, Voyage of the Dawn Treader

The Harry Potter films

UCG Helps Sponsor a Refugee Family!

The board is excited to announce that a great opportunity has come to UCG. Some of our members have joined with friends and family to organize the sponsorship of a refugee family. UCG is partnering with that group, so they can have access to the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) designation of CUC. That means the application process is supported and endorsed by CUC and allows the Government of Canada to expedite the application process.

By partnering in this sponsorship, UCG contributes significantly to the success of bringing a family out of danger and into our community. UCG members will be kept informed of progress as it unfolds and there will be opportunities to help out as much as we want. However, the group has undertaken full responsibility for the sponsorship, both in doing the work to settle the family and raising the money to support their first year in Canada. UCG will create a trust account to hold donations and will issue tax receipts.

If you have questions, contact Linda Reith, Nancy Schmidt and Harold Chapman. Welcome to a great adventure.

Youth News

UCG's Youth Group meets alternate Friday evenings from 7pm-9pm at the UCG unless otherwise stated. This group is for youth in grades 6 and higher.

Upcoming Meetings

Nov. 13 – Bowling at Woodlawn Bowl. Meet at the alley at 7pm.

Nov. 27- Movie Night at the UCG

Dec. 3- Youth Council at the UCG 7pm-8:30pm.

Our new Youth Council plans youth group events, Sunday morning youth activities, and special events and projects that enhance youth participation in the life and work of the congregation. Jr. & Sr. youth groupies are encouraged to come to Council meetings.

Dec 6- Special Event, making chocolates with Nancy for the annual bake sale following the service

Dec 11- Seasonal Party at the UCG

Stone Soup

This Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1pm-2:30 at the UCG. On Nov 12 we begin a book study of ***SuperBetter-a Revolutionary Approach to Getting Stronger, Happier, Braver, and more Resilient.*** By Jane McGonigal. This book is available in various formats on Amazon.ca and Indigo.ca and at the Guelph Public Library. All are welcome.

Upcoming Meetings

Nov. 12th & 26th

Dec. 10th

This group will not meet on Christmas Eve.