



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A Congregation for Everybody

UCN NEWS

January 2023

Our Covenant

We come in peace
To this place of fellowship and love,
Searching for truth and meaning,
Seeking justice and equity through action,
Supporting each other and serving our community,
Acknowledging and preserving the gifts of this world,
This is our covenant with each other and with all.

UPCOMING SERVICES

January, 2023

January 1 - Deeply Connected - service presented and led by Karen Stovell
In a five part series of UU aspirations, Karen will discuss the objective of deep connectedness to each other and to world around us.

January 8 - The Transformative Nature of Reverence - service presented and led by LesLee Turmel
An exploration into the definitions, nature and expression of reverence, and how it holds a key to individual and universal transformation.

January 15 - An Immigrant's Story in Canada - presented by Abu Hosein
Abu will discuss his experiences, including challenges and insights as a immigrant from Trinidad. - service led by Karen Stovell.

January 22 - Lunar New Year: The Year of the Rabbit - service presented and led by Karen Stovell

January 29 - Being Radically Inclusive - service presented and led by Brian Jones
This is the second of a five part series on UU Aspirations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

Our AGM will be held on **Sunday February 26** at the UCN at 11 am. This event is for members only.

It will be a hybrid meeting.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Matt Virro

I turned to the shelves at UCN for inspiration and came upon a booklet, *Readings for Common Worship*, from 40 years ago put together by the Unitarian Universalist Association. The invocation from one of its contributors, Bruce T. Marshall, set the right tone for me; a message worth sharing.

“ We live in many darkneses. We are often uncertain. We are sometimes afraid.

In the darkness, we light a candle of hope.

We all have sorrows. We have known pain. Each of us carries special regrets.

In our pain, we light a candle of forgiveness.

We are sometimes lonely and the world seems cold and hard.

In our loneliness, we light a candle of warmth.

We have our joys, our times of happiness. Each of us receives gifts.

In our gratitude, we light a candle of thanks.

We have known awe, wonder, mystery; glimmerings of perfection in our imperfect world.

In our wonder, we light a candle of praise.

We bring together many uncertainties, many sorrows, many joys, much wonder.

We bring together many candles, many lights.

Many our separate lights become one flame, that together we may be nourished by its glow.”

On behalf of the UCN Board, I extend a wish for peace, prosperity and health to everyone in our community in 2023! May all our candles burn bright.

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change,
I am changing the things I cannot accept.

- Angela Davis

BEGINNING ANEW

At the edge of 2023, we pause.
An artificial beginning to be sure, but still a time to reflect.
A time to glance back at past joys and sorrows.

That which is past can guide us toward what is yet to be.

Reflect back to 2022 to some of the events of the year that affected each of us personally and collectively, as part of a Unitarian community and as a Global village.

First, think of the good things, our joys. What have we accomplished and what of those things are we proud?
What were the special blessings of the year?
Consider those things for which you are grateful.
Of all these, what do you want to bring into 2023?

We come into this year also with regrets and disappointments - events we might like to forget and put behind us, opportunities missed, losses, failures, unwelcome burdens, anger and fears. Our concerns.

At the dawn of the New Year Unitarians generally write their joys and concerns on two separate pieces of paper. On one piece we write our hopes, dreams, wishes and goals for the New Year. On the other piece we write that which we want to let go. Take the paper with your written joys and keep it in a safe place. We can return to it from time to time to remind ourselves of our pursuits and blessings.

Take the paper with your concerns and sorrows and cast them away. Typically Unitarians burn the paper, symbolizing the release of all we don't want to carry forward. Emptying ourselves of the things which burden us can now be replenished with the spirit of good beginnings which fill us and cast a hopeful light upon the year ahead.

Every year is a weaving of joys and sorrows. Releasing the latter offers an invitation to our hearts to the possibility of growth.

“May we create for ourselves a year of blessing.
May we renew our faith in the power of love
To weather the winters of the heart
and blossom and bear fruit in its season.”
- Joan Schneider

SENIORS' CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

- Maurice and LesLee Turmel

Thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas Senior's Hamper and Fund organized for Community Care. Your donations totalled \$720.00 cash. Additionally you provided many new and necessary items such as blankets, socks, and gloves. Christmas treats such as cookies and chocolates were also provided by our congregation. I know all are appreciated.

I am always surprised and delighted at the extent our congregation so willingly gives to this community initiative. We may never know who directly benefits from your generosity, but we can be confident that Community Care distributes your donations to those seniors most at need. You helped to bring a brighter Christmas many.



FOOD DRIVE

Just a reminder that we continue to collect non-perishable food items to be donated to various food banks across Niagara Region. We ask that UCN congregants contribute one item each Sunday. This way we have a substantial collection of food to donate within a week or two.

You will find a box at the rear of the sanctuary where you can drop off your contributions. Let's help feed those who cannot adequately feed themselves.



NOTEWORTHY

This is the section in our newsletter that provides a forum for UCN congregants to contribute material that is of interest to them. These may include personal reflections, experiences and general information consistent with UU principles and interests.

This month's contributions are from Russ Baird and Paul Pipher.

Bittersweet, Bittergreen

- Russ Baird

One might need to google Lightfoot's Bittergreen. Most other references, including W.O. Mitchell's "Who Has Seen the Wind," would be clear to the child growing up in the 60's. Canada issued postage stamps of many, including Mary Travers, Buffy St. Marie and Stan Rogers. You can weave in others such as Gord Downy, Mon Pays, Springhill, Canadian Pacific, Raise a Little Hell, Aglukark and Jann Arden. I almost put "Where the Lions Are" near the mysterious wind for Bruce Cockburn. I may yet "Go out to Alberta".

BITTERSWEET: Yuletide in Canada, 2022-23

How bittersweet it was.
To Yule like a fool
She could Pox like a fox,
And he could bite like a mite.

How bittersweet the scene
Of Lightfoot's Bittergreen
(Behind closed doors
She went down like a clown).

Like the Edmund Fitzgerald
The Canadian Trilogy
With yer Cohen and his Joni
They could sing up a storm.

Young's old man was there
Writing CFL for the telly
In songwriters' heaven
Just off Runway Number Nine,

Approaching Tomson Highway
Where Buffy serves her buffet
Some fighting for their Canada
Or fighting for the U.S.A.
Oh where have all the soldiers gone?

'Tis bittersweet indeed
Our lack of reconciliation
While loving and respecting
Our challenging points of view.

REFLECTIONS ON HOPE, the service theme of Sunday, December 11, 2022
- Paul Pipher

The Chinese poet *Yuán Mèi* (1716-1797) wrote a series of seven poems on Aging. Here is number three:



Yuan Mei (1716–1797)

From Seven Poems on Aging
III

If at seventy I still plant trees,
Lookers-on, do not laugh at my folly.
It is true of course that no one lives forever;
But nothing is gained by knowing so in
advance.

PLEDGE DRIVE 2023

It is that time of year when we ask our membership to make a financial commitment to UCN.

Your financial support is vital for the continued success of UCN. It is the backbone of our financial resources. Your pledge contributes to our spiritual life, social action initiatives and the day to day functioning and maintenance of our property.

This year, UCN has set a pledge target of a 3% increase for its members. This is an aspirational goal and you are not necessarily expected to meet this target. The increase will address the inflationary impact on all aspects of sustaining and growing a spiritually vibrant and community focused congregation.

Matt Virro, UCN President, and Brian Jones, UCN Treasurer, have emailed a letter of request for pledges and pledge form that can be completed online and submitted to Brian.

Please know your pledges remain confidential and can be changed at any time. Contribute as you can. No amount is too small not to matter.



Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

223 Church St.
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8
905-687-8433

unitarian-stcatharines.org

ucn.communications@gmail.com

Board of Directors

President: Matt Virro
Vice-president: Mary-lyn Hopper
Past-president: Penny Blake
Secretary: Connie Scott
Treasurer: Brian Jones
Member-at-large: Eva Schwartzentruber
Program: Karen Stovell
Social Action: Beryl Stovell

Lay Chaplains: Contact
laychaplainsucn@gmail.com
Beryl Stovell, Karen Stovell

Committee Chairs

Adult Religious Education: Karen Stovell
Music: Penny Blake, Karen Stovell
Communications: Roy Blake
Denominational Affairs: Connie Scott
Lay Chaplaincy: Doreen Peever
Membership: Doreen Peever
Newsletter: LesLee Turmel, Penny Blake
Pastoral Care: Doreen Peever
Property: Peter Skelton
Rental: Doreen Peever
Social: Susan Glassford, Jim Glassford,
Karen Stovell, Abu Hosein
Social Action: Beryl Stovell,
Erdwin Huenikan

Trustees

Jim Glassford, Erdwin Hueniken,
Doreen Peever

Old and New
- Patricia Cisco

Deep in the dark cold, last night
of December
is one tiny flame of a flickering ember
like so many memories
of December's gone by,
tucked in our hearts,
memories safely reside.



Reminiscing our blessings through all
the past years,
of those we have loved,
our regrets and our tears.
As December surrenders
to January's dawn,
that one tiny ember still flickers on,
Sparking the flame
to new memories born
on the horizon of this
New Year's morn!

Deadline for Feb. Newsletter:

Jan. 20, 2023

