



**UNITARIAN
CONGREGATION
OF NIAGARA**
September 2021 Newsletter

Upcoming Services

All services will be hybrid services: See the article about them in this newsletter.

September 19: Covid, Community & Culture. Service leader and speaker: Penny Blake.

We are in an 'in between' time now — We are not who we were before the pandemic; we know that we will not be “going back to normal.” And yet it is not yet clear who we are becoming, what the contours are of the paradigms of our new reality, how we organize our sense of self personally and collectively.

I want to examine how the pandemic has affected us — what has changed for us and what has not, and look at some of the concerns that face us. All of us will be dealing with the future in a still-uncertain present, as we go back to our building and try to regain our sense of home here at the UCN.

September 26: Truth and Reconciliation - Where We Have Been and Where are we Going? Service leader and speaker: LesLee Turmel.

October 3: The Eighth Principle Process. Service Leader: Penny Blake

A most important meeting! I have been to many of the discussions regarding the Eighth Principle Process, but the most important aspect of these discussions — namely you, the congregants — so far has been missing. See the September 13 UCN Update for the link to material about this proposal from the CUC, including the report this is based on, along with how to join CUC Zoom conversations on **Sept 19, Oct 3, Oct 17 and Nov 7**. I will also send out some précis of the conversations that have already taken place. We need to respond by Oct. 20.

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A Note of Appreciation

A big thank you to Karen Stovell for leading our congregation with creative interim summer services. The vast topics stimulated dynamic conversation and sharing, and created a congenial and open environment to learn more about our fellow congregants. Her unique approach could be a model for revised summer services in the future. I think it is certainly worth exploring and discussing.

LesLee Turmel

UCN Seeking Volunteer

We no longer have the expert services of Darcy Ewanchuck to format and contribute to our monthly Newsletter. Consequently, we are in a search of an individual with computer formatting experience who is willing to volunteer their time and expertise to assist me in the production of a professional newsletter. It would require several hours of your time each month, much of that time working independently, and some of that time working directly with me. If interested, please contact me for further information.

LesLee Turmel

President's Message

Greetings!

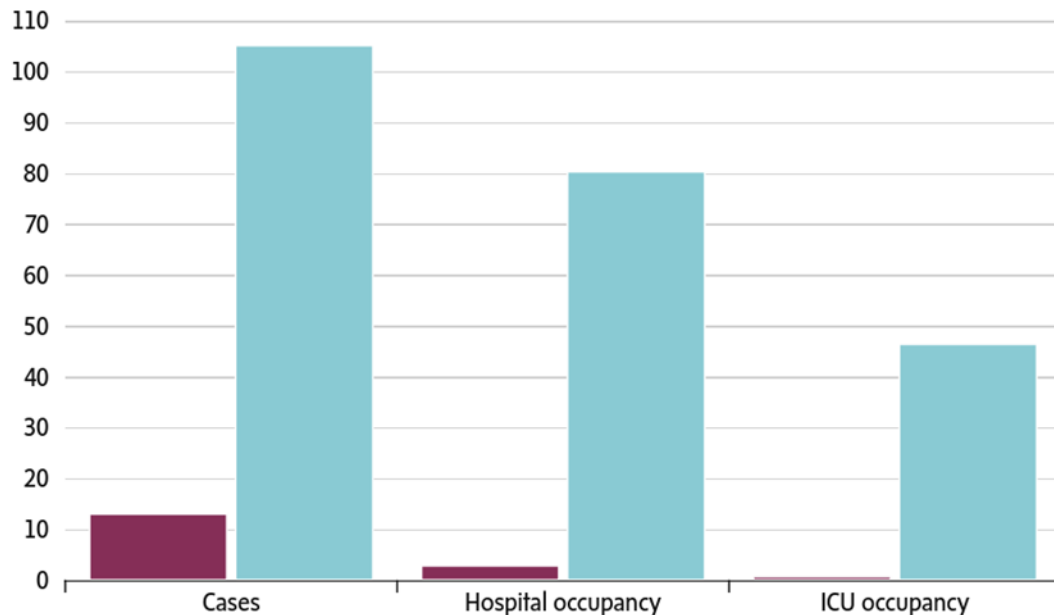
I hope you all had a happy and restorative summer. We certainly enjoyed meeting family and friends, and being outside in nature. It's always good, but during these times when we've been forced to limit our interactions to 'virtual only' meetings, it felt especially liberating.

Now it's time to go back to regular services, and hopefully a return to our building. Despite the advent of the Delta variant, vaccinated people are well protected, and the majority of cases have hit the unvaccinated.

Fully vaccinated vs. unvaccinated: COVID-19 rates for cases, hospital occupancy and ICU occupancy among Ontario residents

Rate per million, hospital and ICU occupancy adjusted for age differences in vaccine uptake and risk of severe disease

● Fully vaccinated ● Unvaccinated



THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: JÚNI P, MALTSEV A, KATZ GM, PERKHUN A, YAN S. ONTARIO DASHBOARD.SCIENCE BRIEFSOF THE ONTARIO COVID-19 SCIENCE ADVISORY TABLE. 2021.

[DATA](#) [SHARE](#)

- from the Globe and Mail (Saturday, August 19).

Many of us were very social people before the pandemic, but now the prospect of meeting others in person can be stressful. This is a normal reaction because we have been told for several months to stay at home and avoid others. For those of us who have become accustomed to limited contact, with no touching or hugs, or face-to-face meetings, this may be a challenging transition. Our outdoor gatherings have been met with joy. There is no substitute for in-person meetings and many of us look forward to returning to them.

I propose we move forward with appropriate caution, one step at a time. According to Government of Ontario guidelines, our numbers are restricted to those we can fit in with social distancing. We are expected to wear masks indoors, and keep the environment sanitized. Services will still be available on Zoom for those that cannot participate indoors.

But many of us will be together, at last, in person. I am hoping that gradually we will regain our sense of normalcy. So, I am very happy that we had an outdoor service in Mary-lyn's back yard on Sept. 12. I'm looking forward to our first service in a year and a half at our UCN building on Church Street on Sunday, September 19, where we will examine what Covid has taught us about community and connections.

Has Covid 19 deepened your sense of the importance of community?

Have you kept in touch with people more, or less?

What other coping strategies have you found important?

I will tell you about my journey and perceptions, and you can tell me yours. Whatever your story – Welcome back to the UCN!

- Penny Blake

UCN Hybrid Services

The UCN will be returning to in-person services this fall, on September 19. Of course all the required Covid protocols will be followed.

The setup for services will be a bit different, however. We will be using a hybrid service model, where you can join us either in person or on Zoom.

We will have a camera and a computer set up at the UCN, and will run a Zoom meeting from there. We'll use the existing projector and screen to show the Zoom attendees to the people at the UCN, and sound from the Zoom attendees will issue from the speakers at the UCN. A video camera will be used to show the proceedings in the building to participants on Zoom, and they will also receive sound from the in-person meeting. This means that Zoom participants will be able to participate in discussions, Joys and Concerns, etc. That's the main difference between a hybrid service and the streaming services that many churches use, where online viewers can see and hear the service but can't participate.

We encourage you to attend in person, if possible, to have the full UCN experience, hopefully including coffee hour. However, if you are out of town, ill, are as yet unvaccinated, have been in contact with someone with Covid, or are just being cautious about in-person contacts, please join us on Zoom.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you, whether in person or via Zoom.

- Roy Blake

Have You Heard?

Underneath the ripples lies a life that sings!
Have you heard the water - it rings?

Spoken language is not the only
Means of communication for the lonely;
Have you heard the water talk?

Chuckling, rumbling, giggling, grumbling...

Telling a tale of happiness in its sharing,
In its sadness, and in its caring;
Have you heard the water rock?

Refining, sifting, taking and leaving
To each and all who stop along the way;
Have you heard what the water has to
say?

If you stop and listen long,
You will hear the water
As life - existing close to us, so near.

Celinda J. Rice

From: Tea and Bannock Stories

- First Nations Community of Poetic
Voices.



PUB NITE

UCN is looking for a facilitator for our monthly Pub Nites.

Matt Virro has reliably led our Pub Nites for three years, providing an opportunity to examine a wide breadth of issues in keeping with our Unitarian principles. Now it is time for a member of our congregation to fill Matt's shoes in leading and organizing what has become a traditional monthly gathering. Please contact a member of the UCN Board if you are interested.

Thank you Matt for your commitment. You made us think and have fun at the same time.

- LesLee Turmel



Deadline for October newsletter: Sept. 22.

Send articles to LesLee Turmel at larganturmel@gmail.com