



# THE WINDOW

## Getting Connected at GRU!

Thank you to the 47 people who turned in interest surveys during the June 12th Sunday service. By now you should have received a personal reply from Rev. Jess thanking you for expressing interest in a GRU activity or effort. If you didn't hear from Jess, perhaps yours was one of 3 completed surveys that did not include a name! Please note that unless you explicitly asked, your email address has not been added to our database or weekly announcement list. If you are not receiving weekly emails from the office, please contact [admin@grandriverunitarian.ca](mailto:admin@grandriverunitarian.ca) today to get connected. Surveys should be delivered to Rev. Jess through the church office.

### YES! I'd like to get connected at GRU.

Name:

Email or phone:

I'd be willing to be contacted about  
volunteering for:

I'd like to know more about:

- Meditation at GRU
- Men's Groups
- Book Groups
- Movie Groups
- Writing Groups
- Wellspring Spirit Arts
- Earth centered spirituality for women
- Building Your Own Theology classes
- Classes about Unitarian Universalism
- Newcomer orientation
- Choir

- Hearts & Hands (providing meals to friends in need)
- Hospitality crew (Sunday kitchen prep & clean up)
- Gardening at GRU
- Worship Artists (reading the welcome for a Sunday service)
- Community Builders Party Planning
- Host social gatherings for newcomers
- Facilitating Sunday Spirit Jam events for children
- Media assistance (helping w/ AV equipment or computers)
- Financial & Accounting expertise
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

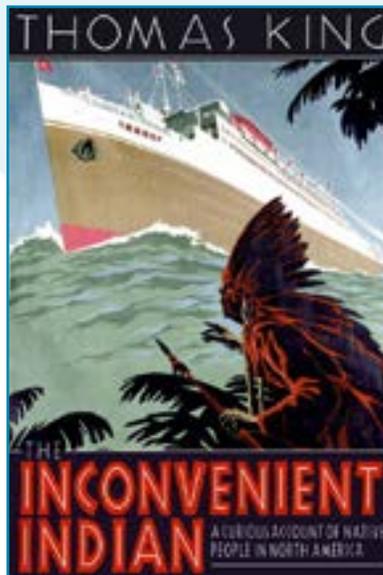
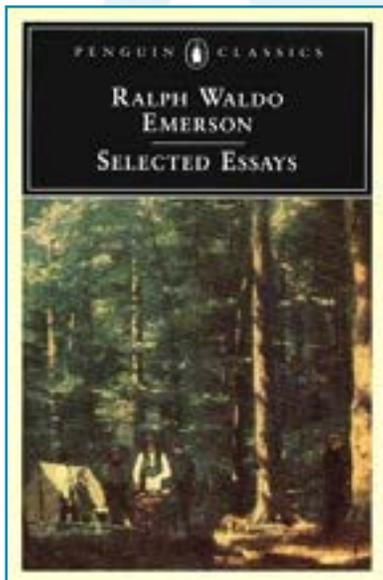
Our GRU office sends a weekly email of announcements. If you have not been receiving these, please provide your email address here to indicate permission to be added to our list:

# GRU Reads

If you are looking for some summer reading ideas, the following are the titles we'll be exploring in the next liturgical year:

- Wonder, by R. J Palacio
- Inconvenient Indian by Thomas King
- Selected Essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson

In addition to book study groups, GRU Reads activities will include TED Talk discussions, an interactive Wellspring activity, and Sunday morning services. If you are available and interested in hosting a book study group for one of these titles, please connect with Rev. Jess.



# UU Stitch Circle

The UU Stitch Circle meets on the third Saturday of the month, and is a chance for people to meet one another while working on their yarn-craft projects - such as knitting, crochet, embroidery, and other fabric arts. We're taking a break and not meeting in July, but will be making a trip to Paris, ON on August 20 for the Mary Maxim tent sale. If you are interested in joining us on the trip, please connect with Jessica Bayne.

## THE WINDOW

Summer 2016 Edition

Send articles, notices and comments to:  
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weekly in the announcements

Moved? New phone or email address?  
Please send updates to [admin@grandriverunitarian.ca](mailto:admin@grandriverunitarian.ca) or call 519-742-0432.

Welcome to the new editor of the Window, Petr Bakus! The next deadline will be announced in August, and articles can still be sent to [thewindow.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:thewindow.newsletter@gmail.com).

# A Board on the Waves

The last few months have been a bit of a blur for me. I spent several weeks in Texas during my father's illness and after his death. I am so thankful to the board for keeping things in order and for Colin Read, board vice-president, in particular, for stepping in for the April and May board meetings. Thank you also for the many thoughts and kind words I have gotten from my Unitarian family during this time.

Three major opportunities were on the Board's plate this quarter:

We were able to assist member Judith Koeller in hosting a We Believe Survivors event on May 6th. It was an evening of sharing spoken word, music, art, and a few laughs in support of survivors of sexual assault. Donations were collected and art was sold to benefit the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region. The Board is grateful that we were able to play a small part in bringing this event to fruition and are most appreciative of the time, effort, and love that Judith gave to it. This was a moment for us as a congregation to work for peace in the larger community.

The Board also reflected on the timing of the classroom renovations that were introduced in a Future Forum held on March 20th. The forum was well attended and the Board received positive feedback for the project. There was some hope that we could have the work done this summer, but after consideration, the Board decided to wait until next summer. Our refugee sponsorship is our primary task at this time. After such an overwhelming show of support for that endeavor, we did not want to add any financial stress to our generous members and friends. The renovation costs will be included in the 2017 budget and canvass, giving us all time to plan accordingly. The Board is indebted to Larry Maki for managing this project, and is thankful to the team (Anne Dahmer, Charlotte Innerd, Anders Stjarne, Julie Taylor, and input from former office administrator Catherine Lauber) who worked with Larry to identify the best plan.

At the request of the Canadian Unitarian Council's staff, the Board agreed to host this year's Central Region Fall Gathering. It will take place on October 29th and features Unitarian Universalist musician Matt Meyer. This effort is supported by the CUC with local logistics handled by our community. It promises to be a marvelous event. Watch for more details later in the year.

Our congregation has been busy living its goals of personal growth, supportive community, and meaningful action. It appears that the next liturgical year will be equally full.



Janis Collins, President, Board of Trustees

## Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee has been focusing on issues of homelessness, insecure housing, and mental health for the last few years. More recently we have seen how these issues are also linked to being sentenced to prison. Moreover, solitary confinement has been revealed to be in widespread use, and can cause and certainly exacerbate mental illness. While the UN has said that solitary confinement beyond 15 consecutive days is torture, and that it should never be used with juveniles or the mentally disabled, such practices are found across Canadian prisons. Time in solitary confinement is often much more than 30 days and there are many reports of 6 months to over a year. The BC Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society report that there are currently more than 1850 people in solitary confinement in federal and provincial prisons. The terrible effects of such confinement was highlighted in the Ashley Smith case quite a few years ago, and several provinces as well as the Federal government have pledged to review these practices and reduce the use of solitary confinement. However, little has been done. We have supported a letter-writing campaign to ministers in Federal and Ontario governments to urge quick action to address this grave injustice.

# Upcoming Classes with Rev. Jess

**Worship Artistry. Sunday, September 19th, noon - 1:15pm.** "Welcome to Grand River Unitarian Congregation. My name is \_\_\_\_\_!" If you've ever felt the urge to be one of our Sunday morning readers, helping Rev. Jess or a guest speaker present a service, please join us after the service for this short practicum. We will walk through a typical order of service, taking turns choosing and reading parts. Rev. Jess will answer questions about how Sunday services are planned and implemented. "Graduates" will be welcome to join our Worship Arts team, which is coordinated through email to support Sunday services as assistants, liturgists, and readers.

**Building Your Own Theology. Times and dates TBD w/ Rev. Jess.** As Unitarian Universalists, our theology is based on human experience; thus, our beliefs spring from our unique biographies. That is, the stories of our lives inform what it is we believe. In this six-week course, we will discern and articulate our personal belief systems. Learning to "speak your faith" is a profoundly liberating act of witness and empowerment. Come and enjoy the challenge of theological engagement with Rev. Jess and fellow explorers. Details, dates, and registration will be available in September.

## Rev. Fulgence in Canada

Many of you will have already heard about Rev. Fulgence. His story is an incredible one - building a congregation from nothing in one of the poorest countries in the world, wrongful imprisonment, and UUs from around the world banding together to get him released. He was then forced to flee Burundi, but the Canadian Unitarian Council was able to help him get to Canadian soil and support him in successfully claiming refugee status. Now, his journey continues, and Canadian UUs are invited to be a part of it!

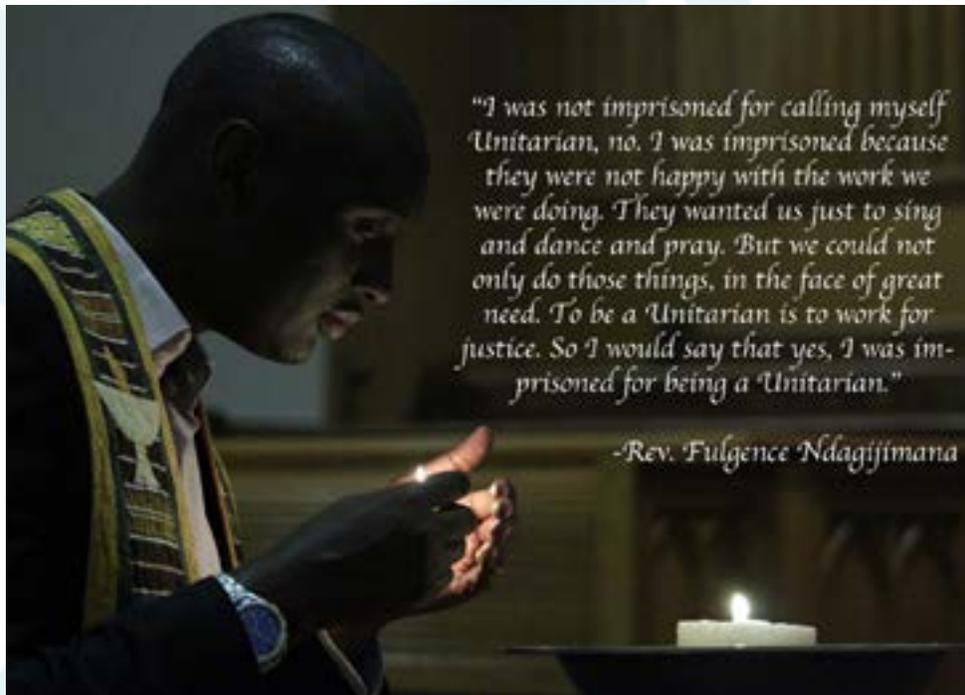
Rev Fulgence wants to continue to serve in his new culture - but North American credentialing works differently than Burundian

credentialing does. Rev Fulgence is already a Minister—with years of theological training as well as experience, but he needs to learn more about how North American congregations work, and pick up skills for this culture and language. It's been determined that the best way for this to happen is through a modified internship - something the Saskatoon congregation is enthusiastic about partnering with him to make happen. Initiated by the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and supported by the CUC, this is a unique initiative that supports both a refugee and a minister.

Funds are being collected online to support Rev. Fulgence continue his ministry retraining for North American ministry through the Canada Helps website until July 24th, 2016. Please visit the site below for more details:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/unitarian-congregation-of-saskatoon/revfulgence>

### 4 - The Window



# Summer Programming

What a fun year this has been in RE. Some of our kids learned about the Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist faiths, while others pondered ethical questions raised from *The Twilight Zone*. Our littlest ones got to try new songs and did lots of play, while our older ones learned lessons from the Harry Potter series. We all had a look at folk tales from around the world and tried our hand at a bit of theatre-craft. I learned so much from these kids and really have enjoyed sharing my time with them this year. They really are wonderful people, and I feel blessed to know them.

With summer looming, I get some time off and am bringing in an old friend to be with the kids while I'm away. His name is Kevin White, you can't miss him; he's very tall and smiley. Please make sure to introduce yourself when you pick up your kids. Kevin is a local actor, a librarian for the school board, and is one of those rare adults that still understands how to have kid-fun. He's a 6-foot-tall Peter Pan with a day job, essentially. I think the kids will love him!

Due to the fact that attendance varies wildly during the summer (some weeks we have 25 kids, other weeks we have 3) we operate as a one room school-house. This is a great opportunity for the kids to meet others not in their immediate class, so the focus is on connection and fun rather than learning Unitarian content. While I don't have a planned schedule for this summer yet, you can expect the kids to have Sundays where they play board games, make interesting crafts, create forts, do some "Minute to Win It" challenges, etc. The nursery will be running as usual.

Wishing you all a summer that is full of books and naps (if that's your thing), new adventures (if \*that's\* your thing), and beauty everywhere you go.



Julie Taylor, Director of Children's Religious Exploration

# Amnesty International Action

Grand River Unitarian's Amnesty International Action Circle has continued to meet monthly during the Spring, on the last Sunday of the month after the service, from noon to 1:00pm, in the GRU Board Room. Sometimes attendance is affected by other important meetings happening at the same time – it's a very lively congregation! – but when that happens there are opportunities and encouragement to write letters and take actions individually.

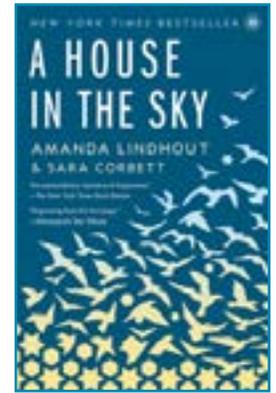
At our meetings, members sign letters and/or petitions relating to human rights in various parts of the world, and learn a little more about the focus of Amnesty International. Our focus is always on action towards ending specific human rights abuses, in Canada and elsewhere in the world. We usually choose to take action on one case involving Canada and one elsewhere, as well as signing a "Quick Action" petition or email. Another aspect of our meetings is raising our awareness of human rights concerns worldwide and of the work which Amnesty International is doing. We also make time each month to hear encouraging "Good News" about that work, and to discuss each other's special human rights concerns and related local activities.

For the past few months, Colin Read has chaired our meetings, while I remain as the designated contact person and "keeper of records". There's a welcome readiness of volunteers to take on these and other roles in the Action Circle, such as preparing and presenting background information about the cases on which we're focusing each month. If you're interested in human rights, you'd be most welcome to join us. Coming to a meeting does not commit you in any way – and if you can't attend meetings but share our interests, we'd be delighted to put you on our mailing list, with details of actions you can take on your own. Just let me know, at [utreadwell@gmail.com](mailto:utreadwell@gmail.com).

Warmly, Anne Treadwell

# Women's Book Group

Summer is a time of vacation, rest, renewal, and, of course delving into all manner of reading. Our September get-together at GRU will take place Monday, September 26th, at 1:30pm in the Boardroom. We will discuss the memoir that is this year's choice of One Book One Community, Waterloo Region, "A House in the Sky," by Amanda Lindhout. "It is an exquisitely written story of courage, resilience, and grace as a search for compassion in the face of unimaginable adversity." The greater part of our meeting will be taken up selecting our book choices for October through June. If any of you, amongst our larger Congregation, would like to recommend a "must read", in either fiction or non-fiction, please let us know. A happy summer to you all!



## Nonreligious Chaplain

Thanks to all who attended service on June 26 and spoke encouraging words to Keith Martin about his spiritual journey "From God to Goodness" and his nonreligious chaplaincy work at the Universities of Waterloo and Guelph. Keith's ministry to students and staff who are 'spiritual but not religious' (the 'nones') receives no remuneration from religious or spiritual establishments. He is dependent on donations from individuals for his weekly 3-day commitment during the fall and winter terms (to which he commutes from his home in Warton). If you would like to support Keith's ministry and receive a charitable tax receipt, contact Keith at [keith.martin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:keith.martin@uwaterloo.ca). If you would like to become a member of Keith's Nonreligious Chaplaincy Support Team please contact Iso McGregor at [isobelmccgregor@yahoo.com](mailto:isobelmccgregor@yahoo.com).

## Thanksgiving Food Drive

This October, our congregation will again be collecting food items for the Waterloo Region Food Bank's annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. This is a separate initiative from our ongoing food donations to our own Community Pantry located in the basement beside the elevator. For several weeks before Thanksgiving, there will be boxes at the front of the sanctuary where you can deposit your donations for the Food Bank.

I have heard from people that use the Food Bank that they would like the same types of items that you would buy for yourself, especially when they have children who are used to regular food until the parents run out of money before the end of the month. When families are given a food hamper, they do not get to choose the items, they can only take whatever they are given. If they or their children are unable or unwilling to eat certain items, they do not have the option to swap them out for other items.

Try to think outside the box when you are considering what to purchase. For example, for children's lunch boxes consider individual-portion sized servings of fruits, puddings made with milk, juice boxes, cheese and cracker combos, etc. For suppers, please consider a wide variety of canned vegetables, not just corn and green beans and a wide variety of fruits. Large containers of canned meats such as canned ham and corned beef and stew and chili are needed at supper-time. Also try to avoid products that contain wheat as a thickener, for example in a stew. This could make a perfectly good stew unusable to a family with members who have wheat intolerance or celiac disease.

Please consider boxes of cereal for breakfasts. Cereal is an expensive item for families. Pasta and bread made from wheat are relatively cheap for families to buy for themselves, so please consider giving Gluten-Free pastas and cereals, which are more expensive to purchase.

Lets try to outdo our previous contributions and aim for 500 pounds of food!

# 15 Habitat Volunteers Needed!

Grand River Unitarian Congregation members will be part of a team on August 26th at the Kehl Street location, building homes alongside people who will be moving into them. (Ask Wendy or Anthony Martin what having a Habitat home means for their family). At the time of printing, we don't know what the jobs will be, but you are certainly needed and lunch will be provided. There will be a sign up sheet and further instructions on the sign up table.

We will also be making lunch for the volunteers that day and three people will be needed to prepare it. For more information contact Janis Collins [jltcollins@yahoo.com](mailto:jltcollins@yahoo.com) or Mag Horman [mmhorman@sentex.net](mailto:mmhorman@sentex.net)

## Sunday Services - July 2016

### **July 3, 2016 - "Question Box Sermon: To Question, Truly, Is An Answer."**

Rev. Jess with Service Leader Russell Booth

In this annual interactive experiment, YOU pick the topics. Come with your questions for Rev. Jess and put our time-cherished Unitarian tradition of "freedom of the pulpit" and "freedom of the pew" into action.

### **July 10, 2016 - "Quilting as Religious Practice."**

Charlotte Innerd with service leader Jessica Bayne

Quilting is a meaningful activity that can be undertaken as a religious practice. Thinking of quilting as a metaphor can also give us new ways to think about our relationship as members of a religious community. *Charlotte Innerd is a lifelong Universalist Unitarian and quilter who has been attending GRU for the last 4 years.*

### **July 17, 2016 - "Take Care!?"**

Kathryn Young with Service Leader Margaret Insley

Do we *really* have time to do all the things we need to do to 'take care'?

*Kathryn Young (Kathy) has been a member of the Unitarian churches of Waterloo, Windsor, Brisbane Australia, and back to Grand River since the mid eighties. She signed the membership book the evening she joined the board. Lately she has been wondering why she signs her personal messages, 'take care'.*

### **July 24, 2016 - "Once Upon a Time..."**

Peggy Hagen

Fairy tales, more than any other literature, allow us to take meaning at whatever level we can manage: literal, allegorical, symbolic, or archetypal. Who *is* Rumpelstiltskin, really?

*Peggy graduated from U of W and Laurier in English, Psychology, Ritual Studies, Religion and Culture. She is interested in Jungian Psychology and Storytelling.*

### **July 31, 2016 - "UU Beans!"**

Jim Sannes and Ellen Papenburg with Service Leader Janis Collins

For the past few years we have not talked much about our Bean Project. However, it has moved on in Elora-Fergus with its own momentum. Come and hear how our locally grown dried beans have become one of the most commonly requested items at the food bank.

*Jim Sannes and Ellen Papenburg have been involved with UU social action projects including draft dodgers, Fair Play for Cuba, LGBTQ, and for the last 28 years BEANS!*

# Sunday Services - August 2016

## August 6, 2016 - "Spiritual Renegades."

Chris Moore with Service Leader Jane Bell

Have you ever stopped to consider how radical love, compassion, even kindness can appear in different contexts? Unitarian Universalism has a tradition of supporting social justice and social change. But from a moral or spiritual perspective. (I write this as news of the mass shooting in Orlando occupies the T.V. news stations everywhere). Now more than ever, the world needs people inspired by radical love and/or compassion to advocate acceptance and understanding of others; and to assert the inherent worth and dignity of every human being.

*Chris Moore is a UU seminarian at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary where he is studying Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy along side his Masters of Divinity. Most recently, he has served on the Spiritual Care Team for Dorothy Ley Hospice in Etobicoke as a part of his studies. He is currently a member of First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto.*

## August 14, 2016 - "Hozho."

Chris Moore with Service Leader Colin Read

The wisdom of North America's Aboriginal peoples has contributed to our spiritual understanding far more than it is often credited with. The Navajo word "hozho" is often translated as "beauty," but in fact it can be translated a number of ways, each of which conveys a surprisingly rich and oddly Unitarian perspective on life and spirituality.

## August 21, 2016 - "Preach It, Sister!"

Janis Collins with Service Leader Margaret Insley

Is there a way we can share our good news without (*gasp!*) proselytizing? What is our good news, anyway? And why would we want to share it?

*Janis Collins enjoys being a lay cheerleader for Unitarian Universalism. She looks forward to sharing why.*

## August 28, 2016 - "Reflections on Failure and Success OR What the Hell is it All About Anyway?"

Melissa Rockenfield with Service Leader Charlotte Innerd

*Melissa Rockenfield is a dual US-Canadian and a UU in both countries for 27 years.*

## September 4, 2016 - "Ubuntu."

Chris Moore with Service Leader Jay Moore

The Bantu peoples of central and south Africa use a word with no English approximate. It conveys a concept not readily understood by western minds. It is often translated by way of an expression: "I am because we are."

## September 11, 2016 - Water Communion and Ingathering Service



Join us for Worship Services Sunday mornings at 10:30 am. Our building is wheelchair accessible and childcare options are provided.  
299 Sydney Street South, Kitchener, Ontario  
By Bus: Route 8 from Charles Street Terminal or Fairview Park Mall and exit on Courtland Avenue at Sydney Street

