



# The Flaming Chalice

April 2020

**Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia & Port Huron**  
Lochiel Kiwanis Centre, 180 College Ave. N. Sarnia, Ontario

... an inspiring alternative for spiritual explorers

## No Sunday Services in April Due to COVID-19

### An Update From Your Program Team

*“There is a time to fish and a time to mend nets”* (Newfoundland proverb)

We have cancelled our planned Sunday services for April and the event at the library theatre on April 4 that we were co-sponsoring with the Book Keeper (book launch for Anne Bokma’s book *My Year of Living Spiritually*).

Public Health sources are informing the public that we should be prepared for a possible prolonged period of “physical distancing” and to stay home as much as possible. In all likelihood we may not be able to resume Sunday services (or other Fellowship activities) until the Fall.

Many larger congregations, however, are offering “on-line” Sunday services. If you are so inclined you can find a congregation on-line and log on at the appropriate time. (Some links are given on page eight.)

Alternatively, many congregations also post their services on their websites in their “service archives” and you can listen to these audio recordings at your leisure. Listed below are some possible sites to check out. So make yourself comfortable in front of your screen, listen and enjoy a favourite beverage. Unlike an actual service when you are physically present, you are in complete control and can mute the service leader at any point!

Yes, a little bit of humour will be an essential quality to nurture as we all get through these challenging times. If you agree, you may also want to check out the “Unitarian Universalist Hysterical Society Coffee Hour” on Facebook – a place for UU’s to enjoy a smile or a laugh by sharing humorous “posts”.

Let’s try to keep in touch by whatever safe options are available to us. We are all in this together and we all will get through this.

Stay safe and well! *Allan McKeown* (Program Chair)



*“Anybody can create community with people who believe just like they do.”*

*The true test of community rests in the ability to create it with people who disagree with us.”*

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## UU Links & Resources

Dear UU friends,

How quickly things are evolving! I've been observing with wonder and appreciation the many ways in which people have been responding with generosity and compassion to the Covid-19 situation, and coming up with creative alternatives to in-person gatherings.

The abundance of information, and questions, can be overwhelming. Some of the questions surfacing are focused on how we, as a faith community, can maintain our connections and support for each other when we are unable to be together physically. CUC staff has collected some resources for congregations; on the CUC website in the News section, a page is dedicated to [Covid-19 information](#).

This page features a [Resources for Congregations During Covid-19](#) folder, where we gather and curate resources and information for easier access. This is a work in progress, as we keep adding information. Within this folder, you will find:

[Virtual Meeting Options and Resources](#): information on Zoom (including a primer for participants) and how-to videos on live streaming

[Things To Do With Kids](#), including a 12-lesson emergency religious exploration program

Information for [youth and young adults](#)

[National and International Resources](#) for covid-19 updates

And we would like your help in keeping some information current. What is your congregation doing about services and gathering alternatives? Is your congregation organizing online connecting events?

The [Calendar of Online Gatherings](#) holds information about congregations' online gatherings that are open to UUs across the country

The [Congregation's Status](#) spreadsheet is information about your congregation's decisions about gatherings during this time.

We ask that your congregation's leaders contribute updates to these two resources so that we may all stay informed.

This time of physical distancing is a good time to catch up on reading all those marvelous books that are out there. Share your favourite reads for [children](#), [youth](#), [young adults](#) and [adults](#)!

To add other resources and information to the folder, please email [congregationalife@cuc.ca](mailto:congregationalife@cuc.ca).

Stay safe. Stay well.

*Vyda Ng*, Executive Director

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## President's Message—by Annette Verhagen

### Should radical inclusion include viruses?

April's theme is "radical inclusion" and here we all are, separated from each other by a coronavirus. A biologist, Lewis Thomas describes how our human bodies are "shared, rented and occupied" by countless other tiny organisms, "without whom we couldn't move a muscle, drum a finger, or think a thought". Our body is a community, trillions of non-human cells in our body. He says there are no solitary beings, the whole planet is one giant, living, breathing cell, with all its working parts in symbiosis.

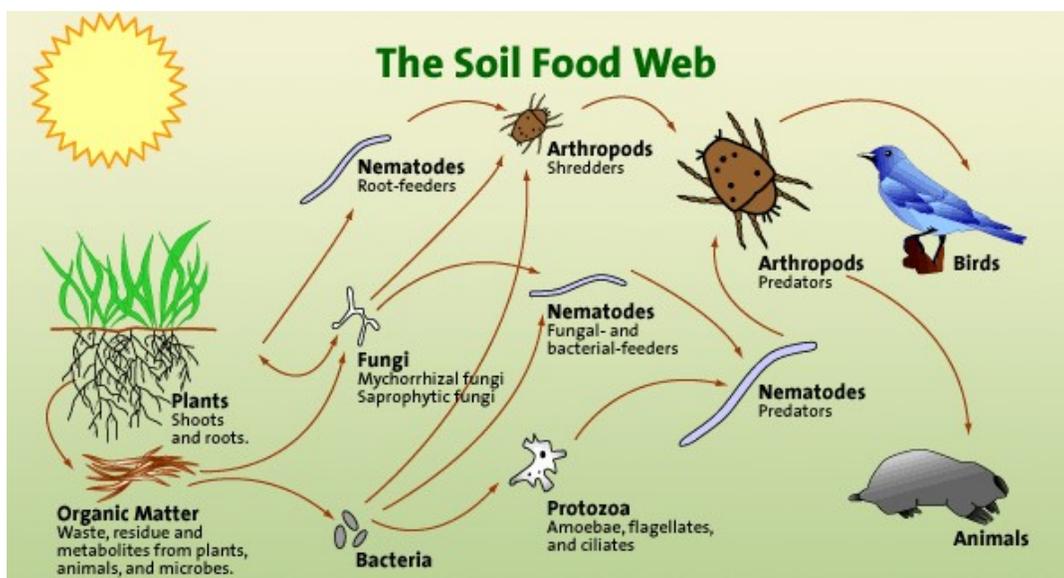
Revolutionary new discoveries in molecular biology reveal a new view of the cell, and the body, that defines biological systems in terms of their networked relationships, and "open access" ability to share and receive genetic information. This includes viruses and bacteria. The community of organisms in our digestive tract is now thought to be much more complex and connected to our health than ever before.

When I was studying agriculture at the University of Guelph, the professors talked about weeds and the herbicides developed to kill them. I was starting to question this approach to agriculture and started to go on organic farm tours in Ontario.

The farmers would ask why they have weeds and link it to the conditions of the soil. Was there an imbalance in the soil? Were certain weeds there to correct the imbalance? Dandelions help break up compacted soil and bring vital nutrients from the deeper layers to the surface with their taproots. Pigweed takes advantage of excess nitrogen in the soil.

The organic farmer wanted to increase the health of the soil and correct imbalances. They recognized the weeds as sentinels of imbalance in their fields. They could follow up with soil testing to find the imbalances or use various techniques to feed the soil with compost, green manures or other inputs.

I learned about a soil microbiologist Elaine Ingham who studied the biodiversity of the soil, which she called the "soil food web". The amount of diversity and complexity of organisms in the soil is amazing! Pesticides are harmful to the soil food web and research shows that organic farming systems have more diversity and complexity of organisms in the soil than conventional farming systems.



Biodiversity is the key to health. Even though organic farmers did not have the science to back them up 25 years ago, they had the intuition to know that a healthy soil means healthy crops, healthy livestock, and healthy humans. They still had to take care of weeds without herbicides, when needed, but they also looked to biodiversity in the soil and find a balance living with weeds and creating a healthy environment for other organisms.

I know that this complex web of bacteria, viruses, and fungi we have in our bodies follows a similar model as the soil food web. If we destroy this biodiversity and overload it with toxins, processed food, (as well as the pesticides on the food), then there will be an imbalance and pathogens can move in and take advantage of the imbalance. Other factors come into play of course but this microbiome in our bodies needs to be taken care of.

Thich Nhat Hanh came up with the word of “interbeing” that describes our deep interconnection with everything else. Everything relies on everything else to manifest. Our shift in perception has already begun for a healthy foundation to truly reflect our seventh principle.



**7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.**

Viruses are part of the web of life and we evolved with them. There are viruses that cause disease and our perspective is shifting now to focus on ways of creating health and a strong immune system that can address pathogenic bacteria and viruses. We now know that a diverse community of organisms in our body helps to create this strong immune system and create health.

As was previously sent out in an e-mail from the Executive Team, part of creating health is having a good support network. We as a fellowship want to reach out to let you know we are here for you if you need support. We have a list of volunteers to contact and I know there has already been connections and calls. This is the small but mighty Unitarian web and we all belong!

## Change Alone is Unchanging

By Heraklietos of Ephesos

Whosoever wishes to know about the world must learn about it in its particular details.

*Knowledge is not intelligence.*

In searching for the truth be ready for the unexpected

*Change alone is unchanging.*

The same road goes both up and down.

*The beginning of a circle is also its end*

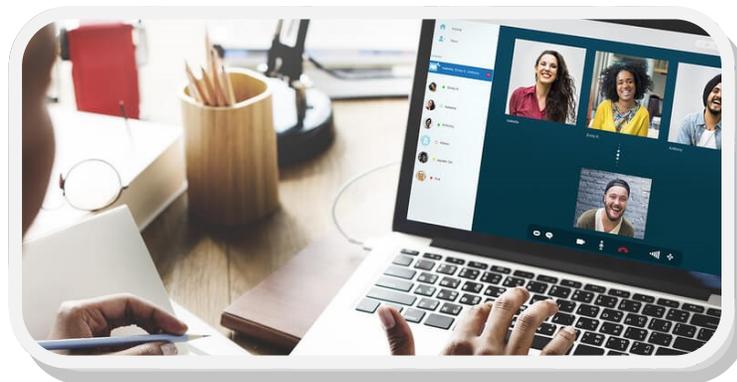
Not I, but the world says it: all is one.

*And yet everything comes in season.*



## Executive Notes From the President

The executive team met via video conferencing on March 19, 2020. We have been discussing how we can serve the fellowship during this time. We have been in contact with other congregations via the Canadian Unitarian Council's videoconferencing.



**We have decided to postpone our Annual General Meeting until June.** June is the fellowship's year end and the existing executive stays on until that time, but we would have had a transition meeting with the new executive in June. If we do not have an AGM in June, the executive members have agreed to stay on into the next fiscal until we can have the AGM. Thank you all!

*In Fellowship, Annette Verhagen*

## Message from the Executive Director of the Lochiel Kiwanis Centre

### Legacy of the Lochiel—Inspiring Hope for the Future

March 26, 2020 – 104 years after this place was built in 1916, here we are in 2020, working to inspire HOPE for the future in the face of COVID – 19, in a global society with instant information from virtually every corner of the globe at our fingertips, on our computer devices and before us 24/7. In the face of what's before and ahead of us, it's not a bad thing to look back and imagine the early days of this brand new school and the times in which it was built . . .

It was 1918 and this school in which I am sitting and writing today was but 2 years old. As Spanish Flu hit Canada and over the next 2 years to 1920, 55,000 people would die – most of them between the ages of 20 and 40. Compounded by 60,000 Canadians killed in service between 1914 and 1918, how did the school community of kids and teachers as part of the broader community of Sarnia as it existed in that time, stay optimistic and hopeful during 'inadequate quarantine' measures that was only marginally helping the march of this flu locally and around the world? Tucked into their homes with elders very close and children at their feet, how did Canadians keep going in that time? How did they find HOPE for a better day and a future that seemed unclear – as unclear perhaps as this time we're in? It's an interesting question. Past the questions and answers of the day back then, what did people of that time learn? What were the lasting lessons and outcomes of that time that can guide and inspire us today?



Well, in 1919 when this school had turned just 3 years old, the Federal Department of Health was created in Canada - humble beginning of a public health system to serve Canadians into the future. That system is 101 years old today, doing what it was designed to do – be a vehicle for all levels of government to come together to guide Canadians through the COVID-19 pandemic, as it did not so long ago with H1N1 and SARS before that. Our Canadian public health system is amongst the best in the world – in part because of global access to information, best practices instantly available to it and scientists, along with health care professionals working tirelessly around the clock, not just here but around the world to come up with treatments and eventually a vaccine to protect us all into the future.

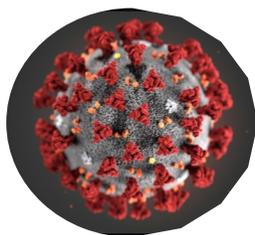
We need to trust our health care system and its many voices. We need to heed the advice to stay inside, minimize our trips out for food and other necessities, relentlessly wash our hands and maintain social distance. Our schools are closed, our workplaces have been shuttered and global economies are resting. As families did a hundred years ago, we are tucking in with those we love, caring for ourselves and each other and working hard between our heads and our hearts to process events of this time - as we do our bit to STIR HOPE for a better day.

Here at my desk in this 104 year school I can walk across the hall to read the Kiwanis Code of Ethics, Ideals and Application and remind myself of 35 years of Kiwanis in this building and its many good works in the community. I can walk downstairs and reflect on the hundreds of families and kids touched positively every day by the Family Drop In Centre and the Boys & Girls Club. I am missing the kids and older students of St.

Cecilia's Conservatory of Music in the hall outside my office and the hundreds of kids and families going through here every day to programs of Great Lakes Dance Academy, both programs providing endless music and joy as the inspirational background of my working life in this facility. I miss the adult learners and family literacy participants of OLL and the volunteers of SODA who need and use this place in different ways. I wonder how you are all doing and hope you're all OK.

And with these stories that link our past with events of today, may we all rest, reflect and inspire HOPE for the future, as we care for our families, friends and neighbours, - knowing that the sun will shine again and when we throw the doors of this facility open, we'll all return a little wiser and more resilient, with gratitude for people around the world and all that each person did on the way through this to make our world a better place.

*Beu MacDougall*



### **Pandemic**

**What if you thought of it  
as the Jews consider the Sabbath-  
the most sacred of times?**

**Cease from travel.**

**Cease from buying and selling.**

**Give up, just for now,  
on trying to make the world  
different than it is.**

**Sing. Pray. Touch only those  
to whom you commit your life.**

**Center down.**

**And when your body has become still,  
reach out with your heart.**

**Know that we are connected  
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.  
(You could hardly deny it now.)**

**Know that our lives  
are in one another's hands.**

**(Surely, that has come clear.)**

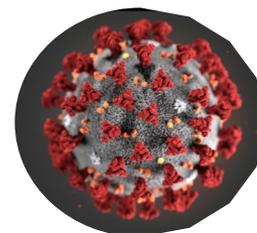
**Do not reach out your hands.**

**Reach out your heart.**

**Reach out your words.**

**Reach out all the tendrils  
of compassion that move, invisibly,  
where we cannot touch.**

**Promise this world your love--  
for better or for worse,  
in sickness and in health,  
so long as we all shall live.**



## April's Theme—Radical Inclusion

Please click on the link below to access the theme package so graciously shared by the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto.

<http://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/media/2019/themes/New-Horizons-2020-02-Radical-Inclusion.pdf>



### Links to Larger Canadian UU Churches Who Are Streaming Sunday Services

<http://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/>

<https://vancouverunitarians.ca/>

<https://victoriaunitarian.ca/>

<https://www.uce.ca/sunday-services-online/> (Edmonton)

<https://uuch.ca/> (Halifax)

### Other UU links:

CUC eNews <http://cuc.ca/cuc-ews/>

Unitarian Universalist Associations latest **UUWorld** <http://www.uuworld.org/>

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