



Universalist Unitarian
Community of Halifax

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January 2026

Universalist Unitarian
Community of Halifax
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902-429-5500
Wed-Thur-Fri
10 am - 3 pm

Pam Berman
Kim Turner
Co-Board Presidents

Etta Hamm
Newsletter Editor

Sunday services
start at 10:30 am

All are welcome

Childcare available



Welcome to our January Services

Join us in this first Sunday service of the New Year – 2026! We extend a special welcome to visitors and hope you will come again.

The Zoom link is the same every week; it can be found under Virtual - Zoom on our home page at uuch.ca. If needed: User ID 666 004 431, password 010670.

Jan 4 – Tomorrow Can Be Brighter than Today

Unitarianism and Universalism were born out of a hopeful, optimistic culture which foresaw an end to slavery and an expansion of voting rights. Today it's not so clear what progress awaits. And yet a voice whispers: Tomorrow can be brighter than today. In our well ceremony we will choose what to let go of and what to bring into the new year.

Ben Robins with Andrew Aulenback

Jan 11 – Where Everybody Knows Your Name

Some of us are lonely, never having had (or no longer having) the experience of walking into a room where everybody knows your name and is delighted that you are there. We begin a 3-week series on belonging by honouring the tragic happenstance of not having other hearts open to you, and we consider what to do about it. Stay after the service for a discussion of what makes you feel like you belong. **Ben Robins with Amy Moonshadow**

Jan 18 – Someone to Crowd You with Love

Our generous hearts can love all of humanity, but there are only so many people we can let into our day-to-day lives. In this 2nd of a 3-week series on belonging, we honour both our personal boundaries and what makes us let people in. **Ben Robins with Laura Bain**

Jan 25 – You Can Please Some of the People Some of the Time

Community living involves a give and take, as we make room for our own and each other's quirks, needs and longings. In the finale of a 3-week series on belonging, we ask: How much can we realistically expect to belong, and how ambitious are you in helping others belong? **Ben Robins; music by the Afterchoir**

Our mission is to provide a community that nurtures personal and spiritual growth, practices inclusiveness, celebrates diversity and affirms individual and collective commitment to community service and social justice.

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 11 am New Year's Day brunch & games	2 5 pm Worship Team meeting	3 10 – 11:30 am Brunch 
4 10:30 service Tomorrow Can Be a Brighter Day	5	6	7	8	9	10 10 – 11:30 am Brunch
11 10:30 service Where Everybody Knows Your Name	12	13 11:30 am Caring Committee Meeting	14 6:30 pm Board meeting	15	16	17 10 – 11:30 am Brunch 
18 10:30 service Someone to Crowd You with Love	19	20	21 7 pm Climate Crisis Team meeting	22	23	24 10 – 11:30 am Brunch
25 10:30 Service You Can Please Some of the People Some of the Time	26	27 Newsletter Deadline 	28	29	30	31 10-11:30 Brunch 

New Year's Day Brunch – Thursday, January 1st -- 11 am at the church



We're bringing back this popular UUCH tradition of our New Year's Day brunch for members and friends – a pay-what-you-can event.

Menu: Pancakes, Ham, Fruit -- Coffee, Tea & Orange Juice – Sweets. If you have Christmas sweets you would love to see the last of, please bring them!

Games: In past years we have played games after the brunch. I can bring SkipBo and Clue. Please bring your games if you would like to stay and play.

Set-up & Clean-up: Would be great if a few people could arrive by **10 or 10:30 am** to set up tables, etc., and others to stay after to help with clean-up.

Marilyn Shinyei

January Programming

What Makes You Belong? – Sun Jan 4, 12 pm



In the first of a 3-part discussion series on belonging, we consider what experiences, behaviours and group norms make you feel like

you can be yourself, not only welcomed but embraced. What makes you show up as you?

UU Principles Reflection Circle - Tue Jan 6, 7-8:30 pm

This series runs January to April, 1st and 2nd Tuesdays, on Zoom. In each session, we explore one of our 8 principles: What the principle means to you; how it has shown up in your life; how you might live it more fully; how it enhances or challenges your other deeply held beliefs.

The series is a reflection circle, in which we help each other to tune into our own inner teachers. It is not a space for advising, correcting, steering or testing each other. Come as a fellow traveler as we weave our learning journeys together. You are encouraged to attend most or all sessions. Drop-ins are also welcome. Email Ben to receive reflection questions in advance of each session, minister@uuch.ca The Zoom link will be on the event calendar at uuch.ca

What Helps Others Belong? -- Sun Jan 11, 12 pm

In the second of a 3-part discussion series on belonging, we consider what helps you to be more aware of other people's quirks, needs and longings, so that they might more fully belong.

UU Principles Reflection Circle -- Tues Jan 13, 7 pm

See Jan 6 for the description.

Youth Group Sledding & Hot Chocolate – Fri Jan 16, 7 pm.

The youth group meets monthly on the 3rd Friday. Email Ben for the location, minister@uuch.ca We provide a space where youth can build meaningful relationships and grow into themselves in a community that nurtures good values.

How Much Can We Belong? -- Sun Jan 18, 12 pm

In the finale of a 3-part discussion series on belonging, we consider how high to raise our aspirations about how fully we can each belong and how much we can help each other belong.

Writing as Spiritual Practice

Thurs Jan 22, 6:30-8:30 pm This will be a practice of open-heartedness, curiosity, reflection, and expression through writing. We will focus on spiritual engagement, not writing critique or technical skills. Facilitated by Joe Britto.



Ecstatic Dance – Fri Jan 23, 7-9 pm



The dance will be based on our experiences with The Move Collective in Toronto, who write "We hold the strong intention to honour movement and dance as an essential and powerful expression of self and connection to others." Dance in bare feet with clothing that allows for ease of movement. Facilitated by Ben Robins & Tanya Kowalenko.

Humanist Group – Sun Jan 25, 12 pm

Join our humanists for thought-provoking discussions chosen by the group. This time it's on freedoms lost. In generations past and even today, religious groups have dictated what their members may or may not wear. Now there is also a Quebec secularist law. What is your background? What do you think?

Spirit Circle – Sun Jan 25, 4-5 pm

A more informal service inviting openness, peace, reflection and connection to something larger.

Spaghetti Dinner Saturday, February 28th



Join us for a community meal with heartwarming food, music and more.

Save the date !!!

From the Caring Committee



If you haven't heard, we have the sad news that **Cynthia Marshall** died on November 24th. Cynthia was a longtime friend of the congregation. She loved horses, caring for the environment and gathering with friends. Donations can be made to the Ecology Action Centre. Her celebration of life is Sunday January 25th 2 pm at Bethany United Church. www.arbormemorial.ca

Colin Kerr is glad to be back at home as he completes his recovery after a fall. Doctor's orders to stay mobile have supported his getting out and about, and he appreciates the help he has gotten from friends and the community.

The **Blue Christmas** service on Dec 14th was once again a time to support those of us whose grief, loss or other feelings at this time of year are felt more keenly due to the surrounding joy. We spoke the names of those we have lost who are in our hearts. Someone expressed thanks that UUCH is a place where we can fall apart when that is what we need to do.

What we do: The Caring Committee offers help to individuals in our UU community in circumstances where our support might be helpful. Let us know if you, or someone you know in our community, could use a drive to medical or other appointments, home or hospital visits, grocery shopping, or other needs that arise. We also arrange for the receptions following celebration of life services at UUCH.

Can you help? If you could occasionally meet a need, it would be a big help - perhaps phoning to check in on someone who is ill or home-bound. Let us know your interest by emailing Ben at minister@uuch.ca.

We very much appreciate the help and support those in our community give to other UUCH members and friends.

**From the Caring Committee:
Geoff, Shripad and Ben**

Call Vote for Rev. Ben Robins

March 1, 2026

The Board welcomes members and friends of UUCH to a meeting after the service on March 1st, to discuss calling Ben as our settled minister. The meeting will be followed by a vote of members.



Rev. Ben Robins

Ben is currently on a year-to-year contract that is already agreed to continue next year. Calling a minister is a congregational expression of a deeper connection.

Pam Berman
UUCH Board Co-President

Welcome Back, Rev. Norm Horofker

It is customary for a retired minister to step back from a congregation while the new minister settles in. Norm and I discussed it in the fall and agreed that the timing was right for him to come back.

At the first Sunday service after Norm returns from holiday travels (January 18th or thereabouts), we will have a ritual to welcome him back.



Rev. Norm Horofker

I very much appreciate having Norm in the community. We have known each other for years, including a stint together on the UU Ministers of Canada executive and early-morning singing circles at ministers' gatherings.

Ben Robins



From the Climate Crisis Team

COP30 2025: Some Good News

Here we are in a new year, and we all need to hear good news, things that have been happening that perhaps didn't get the headlines. I did talk in my acknowledgment a few weeks ago about some of the positive outcomes from the COP30 conference that had concluded the week before – a conference that disappointed a great many people because, again, there was no agreement to reduce the use of fossil fuels. But let's review the positive outcomes from that amazing conference, with 56,000 delegates on the edge of the Amazon deep in Brazil. A number of very significant agreements were reached. Here again, is a summary.

Billions of dollars in funding was committed for protection of forests in the Amazon and the Congo Basin, and to secure land-rights for Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant groups.

The Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation gained new members, and the United Nations Environment Program and partners launched a global food waste initiative.

The Gates Foundation announced over a billion dollars to support climate adaptation for farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia.

Several different initiatives for reducing methane were set up and funded.

And Brazil, the host country, committed to bring all of its 5.7 million square kilometers of national waters under sustainable management by 2030.

And there are more. All very commendable, and full of hope, in spite of the overall cloud of the frustration of the influence of the fossil fuel nations and lobbyists.

What gives me even more hope though, is that several countries, led by Colombia and the Netherlands, and supported by Brazil, are planning their own conference in April to work on the real question yet to be seriously tackled by these COPs: How does the world actually move away from oil, coal and gas? Or, in formal terms, “transition to a fossil fuel-free economy in a just, orderly, and equitable manner”, which is the road map promoted by Brazil to pursue beyond the framework of the COP meetings. Perhaps this is how the world will move forward.

If you want more about moving forward, try Bill McKibben's latest book *Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization* – a great read as we turn towards the light again.

Best wishes for us all in 2026!

Margaret Galbraith
for the Climate Crisis Team

Are you interested in becoming a member?



If you are considering becoming a member of UUCH, please get in touch with Ben at minister@uuch.ca for a conversation about what membership means. We are scheduling our next new member ceremony.

Membership can signify a deeper connection to, and greater sense of shared responsibility for UUCH. It grants you a vote at our annual and semi-annual general meetings, and comes with an expectation that you will pledge (an amount that makes sense for you). Often the new member ceremony is about recognizing a relationship that already exists.

UUCH Board of Directors June 2025 – May 2026

Officers

Co-Presidents	Pam Berman Kim Turner
Vice-president	Vacant
Past President	Pam Griffin-Hody
Treasurer	Molly Hurd
Secretary	Karen Woolhouse

Members at Large

Paul Galbraith Scott Wood

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submissions for the February newsletter is

Tuesday, January 27th.

Please send your items to Etta at

braeside@eastlink.ca

