

Our Newsletter

UU&U

Vol 63, No. 2
October 2026



Universalist Unitarian
Community of Halifax
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Wed-Thu-Fri
10 am – 3 pm

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Co-Presidents

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Sunday services
start at 10:30 am

All are welcome

Childcare available

Universalist Unitarian Community of Halifax

October 2026

Welcome to our Sunday Services

Join us in our Sunday services as we explore what it means to live our deepest values out loud. We extend a special welcome to visitors and hope you will come again. The Zoom link is the same every week, and can be found on our home page at uuch.ca under Virtual – Zoom. If needed, the meeting ID is 666 004 431, password 010670.

Oct 4 Rev. Ben Robins' Installation

On this joyous occasion we install Ben as our Settled Minister, and we consider how to enrich the soil of broader community. We debut our new choir, and welcome special guests including ministers visiting from across the country.

Stay for a celebratory lunch. **Speaker: Rev. Carly Murlor**

Oct 11 Thanking the Web of Life

On Thanksgiving weekend, we especially give thanks to the interdependent web of life of which we are a part. After the story for all ages, we will have a song for all ages, *We Give Thanks*, led by Vanessa. **The Reconciliation and Dismantling Racism Committee**

Oct 18 UN Sunday: Hope for an International Order

Our 6th principle is "The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all." On United Nations Sunday we imagine, wonder and hope, even amidst the international challenges of today. Guest musicians, the local group SuryaChandra will provide devotional chanting. **Ben Robins with Andrew Aulenback and Casey Stainsby**

Oct 25 Honouring Our Ancestors

In both a physical and spiritual sense we exist because of those who have gone before us. At this time of year it is good to remember our ancestors; the ones whose DNA lives in us, and those whose legacies give us life even if we are not directly related. We will hear from several community members about ancestors who are important to them, and reflect on how we might become good ancestors in turn. **Casey Stainsby with James Morris and the Afterchoir**

Please stay after the service for our Semi-annual General Meeting. Bring a lunch!

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.



October 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MI'KMAW HISTORY MONTH				1 Treaty Day	2	3 10 – 11:30 am Brunch 4-6 pm CUC Mixer (see below)
				8 4:30 pm Worship Committee	9	10 10 – 11:30 am Brunch
4 10:30 am Rev Ben's Installation as Settled Minister	5	6	7	15	16	17 10 – 11:30 am Brunch 
11 10:30 service	12 3 pm Thanksgiving Dinner 	13 3:30 am Caring Committee Meeting	14 6:30 pm Board meeting	22	23	24 10 – 11:30 am Brunch
18 10:30 service	19	20	21 7 pm Climate Crisis Team meeting	29 7:30-9 pm Spooky Night	30	31 10-11:30 Brunch 
25 10:30 Service Casey Stainsby Followed by the SAGM	26 Newsletter Deadline 6 pm Climate Action Meeting	27	28			

**Invitation from Joint CUC Staff and Board – and the UUA International Office
to a CUC Mixer at UUCH
Saturday October 3rd, 4–6 pm**

You are warmly invited to an informal gathering with members of the CUC Staff, Board, and the UUA International Office.

Take advantage of this great opportunity to meet, ask questions, and engage in conversation with this eclectic mix of leaders gathered for Rev. Ben's installation.

We are excited to meet with you. Beverages and light refreshments will be served. All are welcome. We are ...

- Rev. Rosemary Morrison, Congregational Life Lead for the CUC
- Rev Debra Faulk, CUC Board of Trustees Co-President
- Tessa Walsh, CUC BoT Treasurer
- Rev Morgan McLean, UUA Global Connections and Emerging Communities

Rev. Ben Robins' Installation

Here is your formal invitation to Ben's formal installation as our Settled Minister on Sunday, October 4th. Please respond by Monday, September 28th.

Invitation to an Installation Ceremony

Please join the Universalist Unitarian
Community of Halifax
for the installation of Rev. Ben Robins, B.Sc., M.Div.
as our Settled Minister.

Sunday, October 4, 2026, 10:30 am
at 5500 Inglis Street, Halifax, NS B3J 1J8

The ceremony will be followed by a luncheon.

RSVP by September 28 by using this link:

<https://forms.gle/urjKVNAJRNkiCk439>

Thank you.



Minister's Note

At the beginning of several recent Sunday services, I've played with how we describe ourselves. On September 20th I said "We are a community learning how to open our hearts, more and more and more. Learning how to keep our hearts open, amidst it all. Learning how to live with an open heart. What do our open hearts call us to do?"

That is a meaningful, even majestic, way to live, and I'm grateful to be learning it from you and with you. Let's look at it piece by piece.

"We are a community learning how to open our hearts, more and more and more." Perhaps you've had the experience of a first love, or holding a baby (or puppy) for the first time, or another way that love caught you by surprise, and you realized that you have a capacity to love that is greater than you knew – like a two-dimensional picture popping into 3D. We are opening our hearts into more and more dimensions, willing to be caught by surprise at how this changes us and our understanding of Being.

"Learning how to keep our hearts open, amidst it all." A friend who lets you down, or a traffic jam, or cross-border threat, can close the heart a bit. The clouds roll in. But we're learning how to keep our hearts open, even when there is an instinct to run, or shut down, or put on a fawning mask. We're learning to not save our open hearts for a rainy day. We're learning to love in whatever world we find ourselves in.

"Learning how to live with an open heart. What do our open hearts call us to do?" Perhaps you had a phase of thinking that all we have to do as a city or country or world is love each other, and share, and poverty will disappear and we'll all hold hands and sing kumbaya. And then you tried it on a small scale (perhaps moving in with a best friend or lover) and realized that there is more to life than good intentions. Loving the world (or just another person, or just yourself) is a craft. When do you love someone by giving giving giving? When do you love someone by creating a chore chart to keep things fair? When do you love someone by celebrating difference, and when do you love them by expecting agreement? Learning what to do with our open hearts is a craft, and we practice the craft.

We are partly a community that opens our hearts, and learns how to love, simply by sharing life. And we are partly a workshop, or dojo, or seminar, intentionally practicing the craft of love.

May your heart open more and more and more, catching you by surprise. May it stay open, or reopen again and again, in these times. And may you practice the craft of love, such that your impact on the world is beyond your **widest** dreams.

Love,
Ben

October Programming

Pick-up Choir – Oct 4th at 9:45 am

Join Vanessa Lindsay-Botten for open-hearted singing in preparation for Ben's installation service happening today! All are welcome!

Sensory Walk from Point Pleasant Upper Parking Lot – Sunday Oct 11th, 12 noon

Leave UUCH together at 11:50, or meet us at the UPPER parking lot at noon. The sensory walk might include smells, sounds, textures and more. Every time of year can bring wondrous connection to the natural world.

Thanksgiving Potluck – Monday Oct 12th, 3 pm

Join us for this joyous annual occasion – a highlight of the year. See more on other pages.

Pick-up Choir – Oct 18th after the service,

Join Vanessa Lindsay-Botten for open-hearted singing in preparation for the Nov 1 service. All are welcome!

Humanist Meeting – Oct 18th at 12 noon.

The topic: A review of humanism for those who may not be familiar with it, and a discussion on future topics and direction. All are welcome. Led by Paul Galbraith

No program scheduled for Sunday Oct 25th

Space is reserved for the Semi-annual General Meeting following the service. Bring a

Pick-up Choir – Sunday Oct 18th after the service

Join Vanessa Lindsay-Botten for open-hearted singing in preparation for the Nov 1 service. All are welcome!

Spooky Poetry Night – Thurs Oct 29th, 7:30-9pm

Just before Halloween, we'll gather for hot chocolate and then read soulful poems under the stars. Bring a spooky poem, story or song.

Pick-up Choir – Sun Nov 1, 9:45 before the service

Join Vanessa Lindsay-Botten for open-hearted singing in preparation for today's service. All are welcome!

Dinners for Eight

Summer is over (sniff) and September was very busy with our Ingathering, preparations for Ben's installation, our fall retreat and so on.

Even October is looking busy with Ben's installation on the 4th, and our traditional Thanksgiving potluck dinner on the 12th.

So we're thinking that November will be soon enough to schedule some dinners & get-togethers.

The Blueberry Picking and Potluck in late August was pretty much a full day's outing enjoyed by all and a great example of the fellowship we can enjoy when we are together.

November-December: If anyone has dinner suggestions to make now for later in the fall, I would love to hear from you.

Remember that this can be a dinner (or lunch or wine & cheese) for 4 or 6 or 8 or more. If there's room at your table, we will come!

Email marilyneshinyei@gmail.com

NOTICE

Semi-annual General Meeting October 25 following the service



The meeting will conduct the following business:

- Business arising from the minutes of the May 31 2026 Annual General Meeting.
- Receive and approve reports from various officers and committees.
- Adoption of a budget for the 2027 calendar year.
- Other business as may be raised before or at the meeting.

Please send your committee reports to Karen Woolhouse by mid-October.

Members-only vote on motions but non-members are most welcome to attend.

Bring a brown bag lunch.

I'll be off to the OR – Ben

I have personal health news to share. This past summer I was diagnosed with acromegaly. It explains some long term health issues I've had, such as a chronic headache, loss of fine motor control (in addition to my essential tremor), and possibly my foot and joint issues. I'm hopeful that surgery will resolve some of my symptoms and reduce the risk of complications. The surgery could happen in mid-October; November is also possible.

The surgery goes up the sinuses to remove a benign growth from the pituitary gland. It sounds intense but is actually low-risk. After surgery I'll be off for 6 weeks while my sinuses recover and my hormones re-regulate.

I'm grateful to the board for being so supportive through this time. Thank you to our intern minister Casey Stainsby for doing extra Sunday service leadership while I'm off, and to the Worship Team for stepping up as well. Add in our thriving kids program (Emily with Sabine's support) and music program (Vanessa with Tristan's support) and we're in good hands.

I'll only get my surgery date about a week in advance, so we are planning October as if I will be here, with a plan to pivot once I have a date.

When you have a health issue, there is the question of how much information to share and with who. Some choose to share broadly (such as in Joys & Sorrows), while some prefer to tell only a few people or simply hold it in their own heart. My choice is to share enough that you understand what's going on, and to be open to receiving caring words from you, while asking you to trust that I am well cared-for in my personal life and that I'm not letting my condition take up more space in my psyche than it needs to. In particular, on Oct 4th my focus will be on celebrating with you my installation as your settled minister.

My life fell apart in my early twenties, with the onset of a variety of symptoms that seemed unrelated. I feel grief and compassion for that young man, relief that now it all makes sense – and hope for my future and for our future, as we pour open-minded, open-hearted love into the world.

From the Caring Committee

Scott Wood, who is approaching 90 years of age, is dealing with some symptoms that his doctors are trying to diagnose. They are resulting in him having to slow down a bit! Scott wonders, "Maybe it is just normal age related issues!"

One of our UUCH newcomers, **Karam Alnomairi** died tragically on September 11 at the age of 26. He and his sister Ilham arrived in Halifax in September 2023 and stayed initially with Molly Hurd and Lars Osberg, who were part of their sponsorship group. As one friend said, "Karam was a kind and gentle soul. He had an incredible sense of style, a beautiful creative mind and a presence that people remembered. He was a poet, a writer, an activist and a friend to many." Source: btchmedia.substack

What we do: The Caring Committee offers help to individuals in our UU community where our support might be helpful. Let us know if you or someone you know in our community could make



a couple of meals or provide 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 celebrations 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 homebound. Let us know your interest. Ben at minister@uuch.ca

Geoff, Shripad, Haydon & Ben

A Directory Update from James Morris

I am winding up my law practice to retire, and switching from my work email to my new personal email address:

james.morris1956@gmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator needed for the Annual UUCH Thanksgiving Dinner Monday, October 12th

Good news! Pam Griffin-Hody has offered to help coordinate the Thanksgiving dinner as long as a second coordinator will quickly come forward and work hand in hand with her. **We are looking for that second person.**

If you are new among us, you would be in good hands with Pam as she has been with us for years, has attended most dinners, and has a keen instinct for knowing what to do in most situations.

Also, experienced members provide much help and support, volunteers come forward, and members & friends bring the food (cooked, and lots of it). Generous souls have never failed to donate two cooked turkeys—and we, in fact, have two turkeys already promised!

Conveniently, last year's dinner notice on the next page provides most of the clues to as to what's required.

To volunteer to work with Pam (and work hard for one afternoon) please contact her as soon as possible and she will get the word out that the dinner is a go! Then we have to move quickly and get the sign-up sheet filled up! The time is short before the 12th.

Your commitment will be SO appreciated, especially by the folks who live at great distances from their families. The fellowship means a great deal to them.

Etta Hamm

**Contact Pam at
pam_griffin-hody@carleton.ca**

Birding Books You Asked For

A number of you expressed interest in receiving a list of some of the birding books Avarad recommended in our second presentation on birds this past August. Here are three we especially enjoy:

- David Sibley's *What It's Like to Be a Bird* is a charming compendium of bird facts, insights, and trivia.
- *The Urban Birder*, by Britain's David Lindo, is a captivating memoir; Lindo has many endearing stories of birding escapades, near-misses, and scrapes.
- Novelist Amy Tan is a committed birder, and her book *The Backyard Bird Chronicles*, describes how birding helped her overcome despair about the state of the world.

These are not field guides but captivating, well-written stories of personal encounters with birds that may inspire you to enter the golden age of birding and become a birder yourself.

Martha Wilson



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A Potluck
Monday, October 12th at 3 pm

This joyous annual potluck dinner is open to anyone who wants to celebrate the feast of Thanksgiving with a gathering of friends and good food.

There will be a sign-up sheet for food & volunteer contributions and the number in your party. You can also email Pam Griffin-Hody.

Here are some suggestions:

- Turkey: We need 2, fully cooked (two are promised!)
- Potatoes: Mashed, roasted, baked, scalloped or whatever
- Vegetables: Carrots, turnip, peas, sprouts, broccoli...
- Gravy
- Salads
- Casseroles, vegetarian or meat
- Vegetarian side dishes
- Rolls and butter
- Condiments: Pickles, cranberry sauce
- Desserts: Pie, cake, pudding, ice cream, fruit, etc.
- Fruit juices

Make sure food is fully cooked and still warm if possible when you arrive. We have limited stove/oven space.

Don't cook? Consider butter, rolls, juice, cranberry sauce, pickles, pies, etc.

We'll also need volunteers for set up, clean up, and dishes, dishes, dishes.

All are welcome, with or without a food contribution. Just let us know you're coming to help us well prepare.

Bring a take-out container in case of leftovers!

We hope to see you here!

The sign-up sheet is in the works.

From the Climate Action Team



On Sept 3rd, 2026, the Environment & Climate Change Department of the Government of Canada released its second comprehensive report on the effects of climate change on Canada. The projections in this report detail what our country will look like in 20 years, in 50 and 100 years under the current global climate policies, or with net-zero emissions as soon as possible, or if there are no climate policies at all.

Apparently this scientific document did receive considerable press at the time (Labour Day weekend), but few people I know saw it at all. We need to ensure that decision-makers at all levels recognize what it says and what the future holds for us. Environmental groups are therefore asking people to please write or talk to their MP about the importance of the findings of this study on life in Canada – now and in the future.

Below is the link to the website for the whole report, and then some highlights. You may want to include some of this information when you contact your MP. Our elected officials hear that their constituents are most concerned now about the economy and our sovereignty, but they also need to realize that protecting our environment and strengthening our climate measures are critical to our economy, and a major concern for most Canadians. Creating renewable, safe, and sustainable energy sources is the answer to creating jobs and keeping all of us healthy. If we shirk our responsibility to our future now, life on Earth will keep getting more and more difficult for all creatures, as described in this report.

[Canada's Changing Climate Report 2026 – Canada.ca](#) Some highlights from Chapter 3:

Canada's near-term future climate

In the near term, Canada will continue warming at close to twice the global rate. On average over this 20-year period, Canada is projected to be 2.7°C warmer and receive 7% more precipitation.

Trends already observed, towards more frequent hot extremes, earlier peak streamflow, warmer and more acidic waters around the coasts, and increasing area burned by wildfire, are projected to continue. The duration of snow, sea ice, and lake ice cover will shorten with every increment of global warming.

Canada's long-term future climate under current global climate policies

Climate change in Canada will intensify through the century if emissions continue on a path approximately consistent with current global climate policies. In 2081–2100, average warming across Canada relative to 1850–1900 is projected to reach 5.0°C, and precipitation is projected to increase by 13%. Glaciers in western Canada are projected to lose more than 75% of their mass.

Canada's long-term future climate in a net-zero world

Most aspects of Canada's climate will stabilize in the second half of this century if global CO₂ emissions immediately start to decline and reach net zero in the 2070s. Canadian temperatures are projected to ... reach 3.5°C above 1850–1900 average temperatures. However, because of slow response times, sea level in most coastal areas is projected to continue to rise, glaciers to continue to melt, and permafrost to continue to thaw through the century, even after surface temperatures stabilize.

Please let your MPs know you are very concerned about the projections in this report and the urgent need, for the sake of all life on earth, to steer our country away from the use of fossil fuels.

Go to this website to find your MP:

[Find Members of Parliament - Members of Parliament - House of Commons of Canada](#)

Submitted by the Climate Action Team
Written mostly by Terry Choyce
and Margaret Galbraith

Kvetching from the Kitchen

It's hard to believe that it is 10 years since the kitchen was completely gutted and redone, thanks to the generosity of the late Cynthia Davies. (See plaque on wall.)

It was definitely time for a little refreshing and we have just redone all the labels which were getting quite scruffy.



Please note that everything is labelled. No need to stand in the middle of the room and ask "Where is such and such?" Just read the labels. And when you are putting things away, remember, everything has its

place. Again, read the labels. Example, no glasses on the mug trays. Glasses have their own cupboard.

From time to time we purchase dishes to keep our inventory at 60 of everything. That has also just happened.

And on that note, a reminder as always, do not bring things from home that you no longer want or need. Thanks anyway but we don't want them either – and don't have the space for them.



Parking at UUCH

Recently, there have been some parking issues on Sundays so it's time to talk about how to use our small parking driveway to best utilize the spots and ensure that those who need it most can park there.

First, the spots are prioritized by collective courtesy, for those who need it most; those with mobility issues (with or without a permit; some people drive people) or families with more children than hands.

When you arrive, drive to the back of the driveway, turn around and park along the fence facing Inglis Street – the first car in should park as close to the sidewalk, the second behind, etc. Only the last car in should take the end spot closest to the backyard. The very **very** last person can then double-park by the stairs/garbage bins.

If you are late, and you don't have a need, and there's a free spot, do take it!

Note that there is one accessible street parking spot around the corner on South Bland Street for those who have the blue permit showing in their car's windshield.

For cyclists: Did you know there is a bike rack at the end of the minister's driveway (the small driveway on the east side of 5500)? Two cyclists recently were not aware of this.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit articles for the November newsletter is Monday, October 26th.



Early and/or on-time submissions are helpful.

Please send your contributions to Etta:
braeside@eastlink.ca

UUCH Board of Directors

June 2026 to May 2027

Officers

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

Members at Large

Paul Galbraith Scott Wood

Board meetings resume in September.

Fellowship Outing



On August 6, a group of UUCHers attended a performance of *RENT* at Neptune, organized by Shripad Pendse.

Over the past few years, a few of these have been organized, both movies and theatre, and as someone who is usually solo; it's much more fun to attend with others and chat about the performance during the intermission and after. Often, these excursions are followed by shared refreshments although this time, since it was an evening performance and some of the attendees live in the far-off realm of Off-Peninsula, we dispersed following the show. Next time a matinee?

I enjoyed the show. It made me feel the variety of human emotions felt by the characters. And it made me think about the provoking issues; that although this is very much a period and place piece being New York City in 1989, the issues are still very much part of our lives here nearly 40 years later, such as homelessness, urban gentrification, addiction, and identity. The message from the song "Seasons of Love" is that you measure time in the small things like cups of coffee or sunsets and the most important measurement is that of love. As Roger and Mimi sing earlier on, "There's only now, there's only here. Give into love, or live in fear".

Anyone can organize one of these fellowship excursions – what are we going to see next?

Pam Griffin-Hody

Happy Halloween

