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January: Awakening Wonder

In the Spirit | January 2026

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*see [our activities](#) on our website
for info about future activities this week and beyond*

Our Mission

Choosing our own paths, we come together to grow in spirit;
to honour and celebrate our connection to each other and the natural world;
to listen with humility to the wisdom of each person's experience;
to work together for justice, and co-create a diverse and thriving community,
where all feel respected, cared for, and held in love.

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Services in January

Sunday, January 4, 10:30 am

Spirituality Goes Underground

Jesse Invik, Homilist

John Hopewell, Worship Associate

Starting this month's theme of wonder, Jesse Invik will bring us to a place of wonder for him and give us a glimpse of spirituality in a world most of us seldom have the opportunity to visit: the great underground world of caves on Vancouver Island. Vancouver Island is home to more caves than the rest of Canada combined, and it is in these caves where Jesse feels most at home, and closest to a feeling of spirituality. Using pictures, poetry and descriptions of his own experiences, Jesse will attempt to transport us to this weird and wonderful world where time stands still.



Sunday, January 11, 10:30 am

Wonder Over Cynicism

Rev Shana, Homilist

Johnathan Savard, Worship Associate

As we move deeper into the new year and our theme of awakening wonder, this morning we'll explore how much cynicism and criticism get in the way. It is hard to marvel at the beauty of the natural world or the blessings of our lives when we lead with jaded hearts and "seen-it-all" cynicism. How can we create openings in our lives and ourselves for awe and wonder to enter? How can we truly appreciate what is all around us?

(Bare Bones Band)

Sunday, January 18, 10:30 am

Longing

Rev Melora, Homilist

David Tietz, Worship Associate

What do you long for? To what extent do you long for what others have (or seem to have)? What longing might underlie the new year's resolutions you made (or considered making) this year? What spiritual longings stir within you? How might your longings serve as guides toward greater fulfillment rather than unattainable sources of frustration and discouragement?

(Chalice Choir)

Sunday, January 25, 10:30 am

Questions More than Answers

Rev Shana, Homilist

Mollie Twidale, Worship Associate



We modern humans are often most focused on facts and data and information. Without in any way disputing the importance of the ways we come to know, I sometimes think we give the value of questions short shrift. How many times have you come to a significant revelation when you were asked an open-ended, meaningful question? What are the questions that the new year is asking you or asking of you? We'll turn to Zora Neale Hurston and Rilke for wisdom.

"Share the Plate" in January: GVAT

Our UU Community has been an active member of Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT) since



2018. GVAT is an organization of organizations working for the common good. In January every year since we joined, your GVAT Core Team has told you what GVAT has done, and is doing, and why we happily support it. Each Sunday in January they will share brief summaries of why and how our UU Community became a very active member of GVAT, and why we should continue to fully support it and its work.

As one of the most active members of GVAT our UU Community has always raised the money through January's *Share the Plate* to pay our membership fee of \$1,800/ year.

See the article below in this newsletter for recent GVAT news.

Please support our membership in this worthy organization in the way as you always have.

Marion Pape and Philip Symons, UUCV members on the GVAT Core Team

Thank You: Share the Plate for Greater Victoria Social Gathering Place Society

Thanks to your very generous donations during the month of November, a total of **\$1,053.12** was collected from the Share the Plate receipts for the Greater Victoria Social Gathering Place.



The Greater Victoria Social Gathering Place Society is dedicated to advancing recovery and wellness for individuals facing mental health challenges. This is achieved by organizing low-barrier, community-based events. The Society believes that everyone deserves the chance to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life, and is dedicated to providing support throughout each person's journey toward mental wellness and recovery.

The Society's mission centers on creating a welcoming and inclusive space where people can connect with others, develop supportive peer relationships, and participate in meaningful activities that nurture healing and personal growth.

January Heart & Hand Award - Ian Warrender

As Suzanne Beauchamp writes: Ian is involved in many aspects of our Community. He serves as Worship Associate with articulate and often humorous presentations. He is involved with the music of the church particularly sharing his guitar music with us. Ian is active in our Neighborhood Group and is always the first to volunteer when work needs to be done. He will be the chalice lighter on January 18.



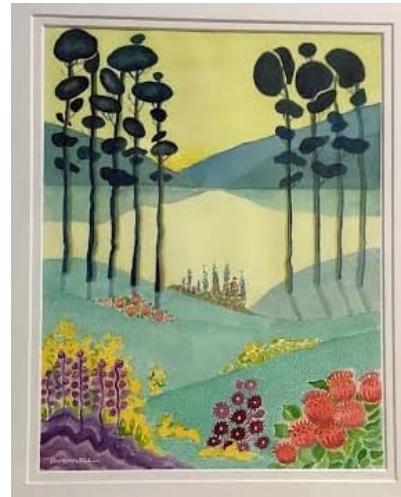
Artist of the Month for January: Anne Swannell*

"Imaginary Gardens"

Artist Bio: I had been drawing since I was old enough to hold a pencil. Then, when I was four, my uncle gave me a wonder-filled paint box; Oh! The names of the colours... rose madder, vermillion, yellow ochre, sepia, emerald, and not just blue, but Prussian blue, cobalt and indigo! I couldn't wait to try them out, and today, colour is still my greatest joy.

Since then, I have worked in most mediums: from pastels to pen-and-ink, from acrylics-on-canvas to recycled styrofoam, from watercolour to collage. Many of my mosaic flower panels can be seen on porches and patios in Victoria, in Britain, and even in Australia.

Nature and flowers have been an ongoing theme, as is true of this show, except that these are not realistic scenes, but landscapes from my imagination. They are happy pictures, the sort of thing you might put in a child's room or a playschool wall; a light-hearted distraction, perhaps, from all the unhappy, disturbing stuff we hear about and see on our screens!



I hope you enjoy these gentle pictures from my mind's eye.

**This show is a Fund Raiser for MEDICINS SANS FRONTIERES (DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS). The artist will donate the price of each painting sold (minus the framing cost) to this, her favourite charity. OR it can be arranged so YOU get the tax credit. Talk to Anne for details: anneswannell@shaw.ca*

UUCV Annual Budget Info Session for Members Sunday, Jan. 11 (after service)

INFO SESSION To inform the congregation and to answer any questions members may have, a preliminary information session will be held on **January 11**, 2026 after the Sunday service. The

2026 Budget material will have been distributed by then. This session will provide **information on both the Board approved 2026 Budget, and the preliminary results for 2025.**

Annual Members Budget Meeting Sunday, Jan. 25 (after service)

BUDGET MEETING The annual members Budget Meeting to approve the 2026 Budget will be held on January 25, after the Sunday service.

Bruce Nicol (on behalf of UUCV's Finance Committee)

Family Programs: Connecting the Dots From Fall 2025

Certain quiet moments in my university education stand out clearly – I guess you could call them *ahas!* or “teachable” moments. I remember one class at the very end of semester, when a particularly gifted Sociology Prof gathered up the seemingly disparate, often bewildering concepts and information – and connected the dots. Suddenly, it all fell into place: the larger themes, the Big Picture – I got it.



It's a good practice, this connecting of the dots. I need to take more time in life to step back, to make space for that Bigger

Picture. As the song says: Take a moment, take a breath, take time to admire this path that we've created together.

It's Dec 22 today, and I'm looking at the activities tidily summarized on our UUCV “Worship calendar” - that logistical master excel document that provides an easy snapshot of our congregational life. The “Family Programs” column sparks some fond memories...

September...

The *Flash Mob for the ABC Fundraising campaign.*

Intergenerational, colourful, a celebration. Kids learning about fundraising (!), practicing dance moves, seeing adults HAVE FUN. A little one who felt scared in front of the audience, who took time to look out at the sea of loving and smiling faces, and relaxed into the moment - beautiful.

A *Children's Choir song - Hands United in Peace.* UU Children and Youth singing alongside the Chalice Choir, a new connection and collaboration.



Our Community "Photo Booths" for *Breeze*, our UUCV directory. It was informal, it was busy, it featured youth photographers, and we captured many smiling faces in a short amount of time. As one congregant said to me "This is happy pandemonium! We need more happy pandemonium!"

October...

Apple picking, apple pressing. A fall activity that connects us to the land that we are so lucky to inhabit. An activity that connects us to the abundance of those two gorgeous apple trees. My memory of this day is the brief burst of apple picking from the young ones (including some near-Isaac-Newton-worthy apple-falling moments), followed up with the careful and thorough harvest from some farm-savvy visitors staying with our caretakers. (And – the cider will be ready in early April!)

The Samhein Ancestor's Pageant, and our *Shrine for Ancestors and Beloveds*. Bringing the memories of our beloved and our beloved UUers to life, and marvelling at the thespian chops of our fellow congregants.

November...

The Charlie Brown Christmas Spirited Jazz Concert. A wonderful mix of earnest signing and playful cheekiness. UU Youth, we see you and appreciate you.

The David Hatfield visit: Men's Gathering, and a workshop on *Rites of Passage*. Individuals coming together to grow, to learn, to be vulnerable with one another. And the sound of hearty, wonderful laughter right before lunch at the men's gathering. Those things stand out.

December...

Winter Quiet Solstice: the bright, bubbling social space of the Lion Hall, and the quiet, simple, abundant sacredness of the Sanctuary. The darkness and the glow of that spiral.

And each month, *Messy Church*: poems in the dark, sock badminton in the gym, great food, building family and youth friendships.



And the multitude of quiet moments and gestures that get woven in through the season, by the community: a congregant reading aloud a beloved children's story (to the delight of the audience), a family who picks a bouquet of fresh flowers each week ... a community member who contributes an idea or texts along an idea to add one more touch to an event.

The Big Picture that stands out to me, is a congregational life that is meaningful and vibrant and multi-faceted and alive. A place that creates meaning in big and small ways. A space that ebbs and flows with many connections. A place where we weave mystery and beauty. I see it, and I am grateful for it. Thank you for what you bring to it.

And, gratitude to the weekly staff and volunteers in the Family Programs, for being the container

and the glue: Leanne, Ben, Bridget and Elio.

Welcome to a New Year.

As our Reverends say,

Blessed be

Jen Rashleigh, Co-Director, Family Programs

Out in Victoria

Are you interested in a volunteer role that's not a lot of work, but is a lot of fun? We're looking for someone to coordinate our congregation's participation in the 2026 Victoria Pride Parade.

Although months away, soon it will be time to submit our application.

Jen Rashleigh will continue to serve as staff liaison and support this work – it's just nice to expand our circle. Please contact Jen jen.rashleigh@victoriaunitarian.ca if you're interested.

Responsibilities include:

- submitting our application to the Pride Parade Organizers (by mid-February)
- sharing the Pride Parade info with our UUCV community, through In the Spirit and the e-weekly (and maybe a podium announcement)
- signing people up as flag carriers (by using an existing on-line form and a clipboard one Sunday)
- day-of-parade logistics – Sunday, July 12

(This year Pride won't be a programming focus for Family Programs as in recent years. Instead of holding a Uniquely U or Pride Camp at UUCV this year, we are planning Coming of Age / Rites of Passage activities off-site during the first week of July.) But the amazing tall puppet that our youth made for [the 2025 Pride Parade](#) is still available – as well as the LONG rainbow flag, UUCV banner, etc.)

Jen Rashleigh, Co-Director, Family Programs, and Deb Lilly, volunteer.

Join the Coffee Team!

Do you enjoy a cup of coffee or tea after Sunday Services?

Do you wonder how that hospitality happens?

Why not join the coffee team and find out!

There are a number of tasks that would benefit from your helping out!



Start early and help with set-up, or come later and help with clean-up, or show up to assist before and after the Sunday Service.

If you're available once every couple of months, or more often, get in touch.

Training provided by the friendly coffee team members.

Contact to come aboard: kathyvinton2@gmail.com

Support Sunday Hospitality with Your Groceries!



Do you enjoy the Sunday Morning Hospitality experience following worship? Would you be willing to save and donate your Country Grocer receipts to help meet the costs associated with this community-building event? It's easy!!

Save your receipts from any Country Grocer location (plus those of your friends and extended family, too!) and deposit them in the Country Grocer shopping bag hanging in the Lion Hall beside the bulletin board. Christine Peterson -- your dedicated Hospitality Hostess -- tallies the receipts, and when we reach \$1000, we're eligible for a \$10 gift card -- huzzah!

Thank you for your support! Country Grocer is family-owned and operated, celebrating over four decades of serving communities on Vancouver Island and Saltspring Island with a deep commitment to Island farmers, growers and producers.

Madelaine Clarke - UUCV member, volunteer & and farmhouse resident

Celebrating the Quiet Helpers Among Us

As a congregation, we are blessed with so many people who help make our community vibrant, inclusive, and deeply caring. Some of these contributions are easy to see; others happen quietly, behind the scenes, in ways that may seem small—but make a real difference.

This year, we hope to shine a brighter light on those quiet acts of service.

In the past, we have recognized one “Honoured Volunteer” each month (except during July and August). But we know there are many more people whose kindness and dedication often go unnoticed. To help us broaden this recognition, we invite you to look around, take note, and share with us the names of individuals—members or not—who help our community flourish.

If you nominate someone, we will ask you to provide a brief paragraph explaining what inspired you to put their name forward. Your reflections will help us tell their story and express our gratitude in a meaningful way.

We are also beginning to plan a Volunteer Appreciation Tea for April, open to anyone who would like to attend. More details will follow as plans come together.

We simply ask: who has touched your life, or the life of our church, through their quiet generosity? Please let us know. Your nominations will help us celebrate the many hands and hearts that strengthen our community.

Please send nominations to Rosemary Harrison rosehar3260@gmail.com or Niki Mullen churchoffice@victoriaunitarian.ca.

Experimental Yard Waste Policy

Part of the UUCV Gardens and Ground Team's mandate is to manage the property "consistent with sustainable environmental practices." As a result, our approach to managing yard waste generated throughout the year has changed. We no longer conduct an annual burn, which means we need to find another way to deal with yearly accumulations.

At our recent meeting, the Team discussed the possibility of composting and concluded that we do not have the knowledge or the time to compost sustainably. Composting requires the construction of composting and storage facilities, layering and turning, distribution of composted materials, monitoring, and community education. If done improperly, waste becomes anaerobic and releases methane gas.

The Team developed the following experimental strategy to deal with the current two-year accumulation of material at the north end of the parking lot.

1. First, we will contract with Gesslein Excavating and Hauling to take the accumulated material to MacNutt Enterprises for composting.
2. Second, we have contracted with Community Composting (<http://www.communitycomposting.ca/>) for six months to supply two large bins, which will be emptied every month.

At the end of that period, we will evaluate the extent to which the bins meet our needs.

The bins currently sit at the north end of the parking lot. The list of what is acceptable is printed on the top of the bins – please pay attention to these lists! Brad and I don't want the extra job of having to sort through deposits! Note that we want to use these bins for yard waste only, even though the bins can accommodate some food waste. Also note that weeds and invasive species are acceptable, but root balls and large branches are not. If you are generating a large amount of (for example) invasive species, please arrange to haul materials to the landfill. The bins cannot accommodate them.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Evelyn Peters (Evelyn.Joy.Peters@Outlook.com).



GVAT: Shelter Success in Sidney!



Greater Victoria Working Together (GVAT), along with St. Andrew's Church in Sidney, BC, and Homes for Living, mounted an action this fall in response to the failure of Sidney Town Council to support a much-needed emergency weather shelter for 10-20 unhoused residents.

Sidney had considered opening an emergency weather shelter in Wakefield Manor, a senior's independent living centre owned by BC Housing. It would have been the town's first shelter of any kind. But the proposal sparked a disinformation campaign with claims that such a shelter would result in an encampment like the one on Pandora Avenue in Victoria. A petition was circulated, and some residents of Wakefield Manor and the neighbourhood lobbied against the shelter. Council rejected the Wakefield Manor staff proposal at the September 8th Council meeting.

In response, GVAT, together with Sidney's St. Andrew's Church, and Homes for Living began working to ensure that council looked again at the need for a shelter. The approach, spearheaded by GVAT organizer Izzy Adachi, was two-fold: (1) ask that council continue its search for a suitable location and (2) challenge council to experience what they'd legislated by sleeping outside for one night, together with concerned citizens and community organizations.

A motion before the council meeting on December 1st called for a renewed search for a location for the emergency shelter. To a standing-room-only meeting, Wally du Temple from our UU Community opened the session by reminding council of the generosity that Sidney has shown to strangers in the past, using the example of a heat wave in the summer of 1958. He was followed by many impassioned speakers, all in support of council resuming their search. In an interesting twist, after listening to several appeals for an emergency weather shelter from our group, two members of the public, speaking before council on unrelated topics, pivoted from their prepared talking points to speak in support of an emergency weather shelter. Council voted unanimously in favour.

On December 6th, Unitarians, GVAT members, community organizations and others came together at St. Andrew's Anglican Church for a potluck dinner to celebrate the progress our communities have made towards an extreme weather shelter and to discuss our next steps. In addition, a fundraiser was held to support the Backpack Project, a group that fills backpacks with daily supplies necessary to survive on the street. The group currently needs gently used or new backpacks.

Participants at the potluck commented that the entire process leading up to the December 1st council meeting displayed masterful organization, including the development of relationships with council members and other allies in the community. The organizing continues, to ensure that Sidney's unhoused have a safe place to sleep during extreme weather.

Sidney Town Council will receive a staff report at their January 12th Council Meeting with potential solutions for Sidney's unhoused in extreme weather. Your UU GVAT Core Team will once again join with others to ensure Sidney opens an extreme weather shelter. UU's, especially those in the Sidney area, are encouraged to join us.

For more information contact Marion Pape ([778-676-0336](tel:778-676-0336)), marionpape@shaw.ca, or Jean Gerster ([778-300-9925](tel:778-300-9925)), jeangerster@gmail.com



UU GVAT core team members outside Sidney Town Hall December 1st (left to right) Zhu-Liang Sim, Jean Gerster, Lynn Beak, Marion Pape, Jim Jordan (back). Not pictured, Philip Symons. GVAT organizer Izzy Adachi (far right).

Submitted by Marion Pape and Jean Gerster, members of the UU GVAT team.

Green Corner: Clean Tech in China vs. the Rest of the World

In this Green Corner article, we compare the recent rapid growth of renewable energy and clean technologies in China versus the rest of the world. There is a growing divide between developing countries turning to Clean Tech and Western countries being slow to adapt. The contrast between

countries embracing clean technologies and countries still dependent on producing and burning fossil fuels is becoming wider. Countries like Canada and the U.S. (now the world's largest oil producer), could be left behind in the race for the energy sources of the future.

The accelerated adoption of clean technologies – particularly solar and wind power, as well as electric vehicles – has challenged long-held assumptions about how central fossil fuels are to modern industrial development, as well as which countries would lead the world in the climate fight. “We’re having a kind of a politics whereby petro states are resisting change and new emerging electro states like China are pushing it forward.” [An analysis](#) by global think tank [Ember](#) of China’s energy transition shows the country has reached a critical point where it can supply the whole world’s needs for clean energy, not just its own. The country’s solar manufacturing capacity is 65 per cent higher than what’s required globally with respect to the International Energy Agency’s [net-zero roadmap](#). That means that China has the capacity to manufacture and supply enough solar panels for the world to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.



Two-thirds of emerging countries have now overtaken the U.S. in terms of the proportion of solar energy in their total power generation, according to Ember. That includes places like South Africa, Vietnam, Pakistan, Chile and many more. A research manager at Ember said the old assumption that rich countries would adopt clean energies first and then support developing countries to do the same “is being flipped upside down.” The Global South is much further ahead than rich Western nations in the energy transition, primarily because they need cheap energy and are much better positioned for it. About 80 per cent of the world’s population lives in the so-called Sun Belt, with ample access to solar energy. “The geography of new energy is in emerging markets’ favour. Clean power surpassed 40% of global electricity generation in 2024, driven by record growth in

renewables, especially solar.

Jim Jordan, a member of UUCV's Environmental and Climate Action Committee.

Indigenous Matters: First Nations Art

Native “art” is a spiritual expression of cultural sovereignty. First Nations have always created “art” across Turtle Island using materials that were close at hand. Their inspiration comes from spiritual teachings, legends, the natural world, daily lives, communities and global concerns.

Despite colonial disruptions to their societies and cultures, First Nations continue to carry and share the knowledge that has been passed down through generations. New ways of making “art” and continuing distinct cultures were developed when practices such as dancing and tattooing were outlawed in the mid-19th century. The tourist market was also a valid space for artists to show their creations. Out of these innovative practices, new forms have emerged that are now considered hallmarks of First Nations art. These include beadwork, weavings, carving and jewelry-making, to name a few.

It took a long time for the “traditional” Western art world to recognize the artistry... The National Gallery of Canada acquired its first work of Indigenous art in 1927 – an argillite carving of a model totem pole by an unnamed Haida artist

When the First Peoples Gallery (within the Royal BC Museum and Archives in Victoria) opened in 1977, First Nations works were usually classed as anthropological artifacts or examples of material culture rather than as art. Although First Nations languages do not have words for “art” in the sense of works intended only for decoration, this exhibit uses the term in recognition of the exceptional aesthetic qualities and superb workmanship of Northwest Coast carving of the past and today.

<https://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/exhibitions/first-peoples-gallery>

<https://www.gallery.ca/collection/collecting-areas/indigenous-ways-and-decolonization/indigenous-art>

The Vatican has recently returned dozens of Inuit, First Nation and Metis artifacts to Canada to be returned to their original communities. The spiritual reverence and commitment of the people is so reflective of the caring.

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/video/news/62-indigenous-artifacts-returned-to-canada-after-100-years-in-vatican/vi-AA1RRpxa?cvid=6935b2f9e5cf4700bb1089721c12fc&ocid=hpm&sn>

HAIDA MODERN: The Art & Activism of Robert Davidson a film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCZoBbwe5w0>

Zoie Gardner Overseas Fund: Application Deadline April 30, 2026 ... Help Spread the Word!

The Zoie Gardner Overseas Fund (ZGOF) is a fund of the Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria (UUCV), supporting the education of girls and young women in low-income countries. There are spring and fall application intakes, with deadlines April 30 and September 30. The UUCV Community over the next few months, is again invited to direct suitable charities toward the [ZGOF webpage](#) for criteria, application process and questions.

Maximum contribution for first-time grants is \$25,000. The fund will likely be fully depleted in four to six years. Education is broadly defined to include a range of empowerment activities in addition to schooling, but must be for girls and young women. A list of projects funded in 2025, in Africa, Asia and Central America, is on [ZGOF webpage](#).

For further information, please send questions through the info portal on the ZGOF web page, or email zgof@victoriaunitarian.ca. Thanks for your help!

The ZGOF Committee consists of: Lynn Beak (Chair), Karen Furnes (Secretary), Evan Guengerich, Frances Hancock, Remi Odense, Laura Porcher, Kristina Stevens and John Worton. We thank Remi Odense for having served as ZGOF Chair 2024-25.



Call for Volunteers! ... letter exchange with schoolgirls in Kenya and Tanzania. ZGOF is seeking UUCV or affiliated volunteers to write personal letters of encouragement to schoolgirls in Kenya and Tanzania. We are sponsoring 15 girls in Kenya and 15 in Tanzania over the next 4 years or so, through Canadian Harambee Education Society (CHES). The girls send us photos, letters and report cards. Could you write 2-3 short response letters a year? To 1-5 girls? Please contact Laura Porcher, ZGOF-CHES Liaison, 250-208-1248 or laura.porcher@shaw.ca Thanks!

Laura Porcher, ZGOF-CHES Liaison

MEANING MAKING: JANUARY

Awakening Wonder

Worship Theme for January: The Practice of Awakening Wonder

“Meaning Making” is a collective of UU ministers in Canada that creates a packet of materials around a different theme every month for UUs across Canada, including our congregation. For the full packet (packed with quotations, spiritual practices, and many other resources to explore the theme), email rev.melora@victoriaunitarian.ca.

The UU Meaning Making Theme for January is **The Practice of Awakening Wonder**.

“We need mystery. Creator in her wisdom knew this. Mystery fills us with awe and wonder. They are the foundations of humility, and humility is the foundation of all learning. So we do not seek to unravel this. We honour it by letting it be that way forever.”

- Richard Wagamese, “Indian Horse,” Wabaseemoong Independent Nations

“... Isn't it splendid to think of all the things there are to find out about? It just makes me feel glad to be alive--it's such an interesting world. It wouldn't be half so interesting if we knew all about everything, would it? There'd be no scope for imagination then, would there?”

- Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

Reflection Questions

- How can mystery and wonder renew our spirits?
- What types of experiences cause you to stop and say “wow”?
- Are there particular places where you are more likely to experience wonder?
- Is wonder a conscious presence in your life?
- How are you inviting (or how could you invite) wonder into your life right now?
- Who or what has helped you turn to wonder?
- How has wonder been an opportunity to imagine and explore possibilities?
- Have you ever had a negative reaction to an experience of wonder – your own or someone else's?
- How does wonder relate to your spiritual or religious understanding?
- How might wonder be cultivated as a spiritual practice?
- What is (or what might be) the value of wonder from a spiritual perspective?
- How do you embody wonder? Or, how does it feel in the body when you witness something that brings forth a sense of wonder?

- When do you find it challenging to let go of expectations or judgements? What helps you do this?
- What value do you place on time spent experiencing wonder? How does this show up in your life?
- How has your relationship with wonder changed over time and through different life stages?
- How do “wonder-full” and “wonderful” show up in your life? Are they the same or different?

Spiritual Practices

Postures of Wonder

Sometimes our bodies take particular postures or shapes because they express our thoughts or emotions – but it is also true that taking a posture that normally expresses a particular emotion can encourage a particular emotion. Remember a time when you felt wonder. Where did you feel it in your body? What shape or posture did your body take. Try to act out the remembered experience. What did your shoulders do? What did your arms do? Notice how you feel when you take those shapes now?

In *Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide*, dancer Andrea Olsen reminds us that body shapes and movements have a history, connecting us to the world around us. What is the history of your body's relationship with wonder?

An "Awe" Walk

“Young children are in an almost constant state of awe since everything is so new to them. During your walk, try to approach what you see with fresh eyes, imagining that you’re seeing it for the first time. Take a moment in each walk to take in the vastness of things, for example in looking at a panoramic view or up close at the detail of a leaf or flower. Go somewhere new. Each week, try to choose a new location. You’re more likely to feel awe in a novel environment where the sights and sounds are unexpected and unfamiliar to you. That said, some places never seem to get old, so there’s nothing wrong with revisiting your favorite spots if you find that they consistently fill you with awe.”

Dacher Keltner, in *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*.

Wonder Photography

The more we train our eye to see wonder, the more wonder we will find. Turn your smartphone into a tool for spiritual awareness. The next time you go for a walk, set your intention to notice wonder. Each time something stands out to you, pause and take a picture of it. At the end of the walk review your photos. This exercise works well with a friend or group – keep silent during the walk and then share your photos and observations at the end.

If you enjoy this exercise, you might consider one of the many photo journal apps for smartphones, such as “Day One” which invites you to choose one photo to upload each day.

Packet. Meaning Making Packets are created by a team of Canadian UU ministers: Arran Morton, Fiona Heath, Karen Fraser Gitlitz, & Lynn Harrison, with administrative support from Crystal Ironside
www.MeaningMakingProject.com

CONGREGATIONAL EVENTS

UU Walking Group: Mondays at 1 pm

Mondays at 1:00 pm

As we look forward to the 2026 New Year we welcome you to the UU walking group on Mondays at 1 pm. We enjoy getting to meet old and new friends, explore many areas of Victoria and beyond, and the benefits of light exercise. Each person is asked to volunteer and lead a 1 to 1 1/2 hr walk followed by a coffee break. To receive weekly e-mails about the location of these walks please contact Chris Cook 49chrisc@comcast.net



Short Walks/Long Coffee in January

Short Walks for people with mobility challenges will continue in January. It is 15 minutes out and 15 minutes back - then off to the final and best part, coffee.

All the walks start at 1:30 on Wednesdays.

Here is the schedule for **January**:

January 7

Peter Pollen Park. Please meet at 636 Montreal St. 2 hour street parking. Coffee to follow at Laurel Point Hotel.



January 14

Gorge Pavilion. Ample parking. Coffee after at Esquimalt Roasting Company.

January 21

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary parking lot. Coffee to follow at the Root Cellar.

January 28

Beacon Hill Park. Parking at Children's Playground or on Cook Street. Coffee to follow at the Moka House on Cook Street.

Image: The Short Walks group on the Songhees Walkway, Wednesday Dec. 3.

Questions? Phone or text Anne Vaaso: 250-884-5472 (her email is not working), or contact Lynn Hunter: lynnhunter2828@gmail.com

Anxiety & Depression Support Circle

We are a confidential peer-led support group. These Zoom and In-Person meetings are a mix of structured sharing and informal conversation, to provide a safe space, as well as foster warmth and humour wherever they can be found, during our 90 minutes together.

Contact Pat at kinradep@gmail.com or Lies at eweijjs@ryerson.ca for more information.

Pub Night: Monday, Jan. 5 at 7 pm

Monday, Jan. 5, 7 pm
LURE Restaurant and Bar
100 Harbour Rd.
Delta Ocean Pointe Hotel

Close to bus routes, with plenty of parking on Tyee and in the underground parking (for which you will receive an exit code on your bill). Pub night is a relaxed evening of lively conversation and getting to know each other. Some eat dinner, others just enjoy a beverage. We have reserved tables against the interior wall in the bar area.



Pub Night is held on the First Monday of every month. If you have questions, please contact John Hopewell: hopewell@telus.net

Everyone Welcome to the Friday Song Circle 2026



Nancy Dobbs, Jewel Spooner and Bernhard Spalteholz are excited to share our SONG in the Sanctuary & on Zoom. Our Song Circles take place on Fridays, they are informal, relaxed, with a campfire vibe ... we sing songs of peace and joy; familiar, new, folk, and world songs; lighthearted; chants ... lyrics are provided.

JANUARY: Fridays Jan. 16, 30

FEBRUARY: Fridays Feb. 13, 27

MARCH: Friday Mar. 13

LOCATION: In the UUCV Sanctuary and on Zoom

TIMES for all sessions: 2:00-3:30 pm (feel free to come late or leave early if that is what works best for you.)

Contact Bernhard at singforjoy135@gmail.com for more info or to join by Zoom.

Messy Church: Friday, Jan. 9



What is Messy Church? This is a relaxed, come-as-you-are, jovial get-together for youth, their families, and middle-years adults in the UUCV community. A chance to eat together, play together, and deepen friendships. We decide on a different menu and activity each month. Do you know someone who needs a bit of Messy Church in their life? Perhaps someone from within UUCV, or

from your wider friend circle? Please consider extending a welcome to them.

Contact [Jen Rashleigh](#) if you would like to be on the regular email list for this monthly event.

UU Men's Lunch: Thursday, Jan. 15, noon

The UU Men's Lunch is held on the **3rd Thursday** of each month at noon in the **4 Mile Pub restaurant**.

Anyone wishing to join us for food and lively conversation contact John Stewart at stewartvaasjo@outlook.com or 250-884-3148.

Spirited Jazz in the Sanctuary: Sunday, Jan. 25, 7:15 pm



"Babylon Must Fall"... intriguing! curious? So are we ... David Vest, a UUCV member, is a six-time winner of the national Maple Blues Award for piano player of the year. His band features Tom Bowler (guitar and vocals), bassist Ryan Tandy and Damian Graham (drums). David Vest and his band will play music written, recorded, or inspired by the late Jimmy Cliff, who was best known for his version of "I Can See Clearly Now." Some of the songs will have a Reggae feel, others will be adapted in new directions. Learn more at [David's Website](#) .

Hosted by our Reverend of Jazz, Shana Lynngood. Everyone is welcome. Admission by donation ensures that top quality musicianship lives on the Spirited Jazz stage.

UU Lunch: Tuesday, Jan. 27, noon

Tuesday, January 27, 12:00 noon
Derby Restaurant at the Cedar Hill Golf Course
1400 Derby Rd, Saanich

All UUs and friends in Victoria are welcome, for lunch and conversation on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The restaurant is centrally located and accessible, with a reasonably priced menu.



Please reserve a seat by email to uu.lunch.victoria@gmail.com.

It's a small restaurant. Please make your reservation as early as possible, so that Pat can advise them of our numbers 3-4 days in advance, and they can plan adequate staff on hand to serve our meals in a timely way.

Any questions? Email Pat McMahon at the same email address: uu.lunch.victoria@gmail.com.

Meal Train for Bobbee & Sam - Help Needed

UUCV Members **Bobbee Engel** and **Sam Wilmott** would really appreciate a weekly meal via a meal train, as Sam was recently diagnosed with ALS and is rapidly declining. Bobbee has back pain and they're finding it difficult to cope with meal preparation as they are inundated with appointments, caregivers, and the like.



They live in Fairfield, so Oak Bay, Fairfield, James Bay and Grand Central are closest to them, but they'd be thrilled with a weekly meal from anyone to break the monotony of other meal delivery services! If you can contribute - even once - please use this link to arrange it:

mealtrain.com/yy1d5l

Meal Train organized by Louise de Ligt

Our Caring Corner



In our Caring Corner, we list those in our community who welcome us to share in their joy, or to offer them our support as they cope with a loss, illness, or other life challenge. We ensure that each individual is comfortable with having their name uplifted before doing so. Please consider this an opportunity to reach out to others.

Warm wishes to UUCV Member, **Mollie Twidale**, who will be having cataract surgery on her left

eye on Jan 27. May the procedure be swift and smooth, and may crystal clear vision result!

We congratulate **Molly and Jamie Twidale** on 18,250 days of love and laughter, otherwise known as 50 years of marital bliss. Their golden wedding anniversary is on January 7! With gratitude for their inspiration, we wish them many more years together.

Each of our 12 Neighbourhood Groups has its own Care & Concern Contact position.

The Core Care & Concern Team is made up of 4 liaisons who connect with the C&C contacts and meet once/month: [Maggie Nixon](#) (Nearby, Far Out, Royal Oak West), [Stephanie Ippen](#) (Gordon Head, Cadboro Bay, Royal Oak East), [Mary-Ellen Nicol](#) (Grand Central, Oak Bay, Fairfield), [OPEN](#) (Western, Esquimalt, James Bay), [Rev. Melora](#)

January Birthdays

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>
Jackie Bennett	Jan. 1	Bruce Nicol	Jan. 21
Jany Li	Jan. 1	Nelly Van Leeuwen	Jan. 21
Patty Disbrow	Jan. 2	Shelagh McCormick	Jan. 23
Betty Sherwood	Jan. 3	Ruth Miller	Jan. 23
Christine Johnston	Jan. 8	Ruth Chudley	Jan. 24
Philip Symons	Jan. 9	Sylvia Krogh	Jan. 24
Sebastian Serling	Jan. 14	Lou Lentz	Jan. 24
Ellen Carey	Jan. 17	Cavina Thokme	Jan. 25
Meredith James	Jan. 18	Remi Odense	Jan. 26
Lynn Beak	Jan. 20	Becky Denlinger	Jan. 28
Lynn Hunter	Jan. 20	Mike Graham	Jan. 29

Missing? Wrong? Please send any additions or corrections for birthday info to communications@victoriaunitarian.ca or [correct the info in your Breeze directory database record](#). Know that we only celebrate these birthdays with permission of those that belong to the congregation. If we got it wrong, we are sorry! Please let us know so that we can fix it going forward.

Board Members On Duty

Jan. 04 - Katherine Maas
Jan. 11 - Liz Graham
Jan. 18 - Lynne Bonner
Jan. 25 - Peter Hancock

2026 CUC Congregational Conversations



Winter & Spring 2026 Conversations

Beginning in January, UUs will **gather on Thursdays and Saturdays** (Each session is 90 minutes and offered twice – choose the date that supports your flow) 10am PT

Each conversation is both a learning moment and a spiritual practice – an act of tending the communal soil we share.

- **Thurs Jan 22 & Sat Jan 24: 2026 Fresh Start**

A new year invites us into clarity, intention, and renewal.

What are you longing to grow – within yourself, within your congregation, within the world we are building together?

This session offers guided reflection and collective discernment as we set heartfelt intentions for the year.

Your presence is an offering to your community's future.

- **Thurs Feb 19 & Sat Feb 21: Ministry Updates 2026**

Ministry – professional and lay – is at the heart of congregational life. Whether your community has a minister, is in search, or is reimagining how ministry can look, this conversation supports you in navigating the evolving landscape.

We'll explore emerging models, best practices, and questions many congregations are holding right now.

Special guest on Feb 19 only: Christine Purcell, UUA Congregational Transitions Director, joining us to share insights and answer questions.

This is a chance to understand not just structures, but deeper callings: How do we sustain spiritual leadership that nourishes the whole?

- **Thurs Mar 19 & Sat Mar 21** (Topic coming soon)

- [Thurs Apr 16](#) & [Sat Apr 18](#) (Topic coming soon)

Why Your Participation Matters

When you show up to these conversations, you...

- Nourish your own spiritual grounding as a leader
- Strengthen the resilience and imagination of your congregation
- Contribute to the collective wisdom of Unitarian Universalism in Canada
- Help shape the future of how we live our faith – together

RAMP! A New Intergenerational Adventure in UU Leadership & Community-Building

In 2026, the CUC is launching something bold, hopeful, and deeply rooted in our values: RAMP! – the Reciprocal Annual Mentorship Program.

This new four-month pilot program brings together UUs of all ages to imagine, learn, and lead side by side in a time when our communities are evolving and in need of fresh possibilities.

RAMP! is built on a simple but powerful belief:
when generations learn from one another, communities flourish.



Over the course of the program, emerging and established leaders will be paired in mentorship teams, exploring themes that speak directly to the heart of UU community life today:

- Who are we, and what do our communities need now?
- How do we sustain ourselves with justice and abundance, not scarcity?
- How do we navigate conflict with courage and compassion?
- How do we make decisions and lead in ways that honor our interdependence?

Each month includes a closed mentorship session and public events –workshops, Congregational Conversations, and Dismantling Barriers sessions— all aligned around a shared theme. We are hoping to see this form a vibrant, interconnected learning ecosystem where participants and the wider UU community grow together.

All public workshops are open to everyone, and each will offer practical tools, inspiration, and spiritual grounding for UU life in a changing world.

Who is RAMP! for?

Youth and young adults, elders, congregational innovators, social justice organizers, lay leaders, and anyone who feels called to shape the future of UU communities with intention, courage, and creativity.

When?

March 17 – June 30, 2026, with sessions on Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons.

If you feel even a spark of curiosity, we hope you'll follow it.

RAMP! is a chance to learn, to imagine boldly, to deepen your leadership, and to participate in a

national experiment in intergenerational, justice-centered, regenerative community-building.

Learn more or apply today

[Join the public workshops even if you're not applying.](#)

Let's RAMP! up our collective wisdom, and step into 2026 with connection, courage, and hope.

FUTURE, the zine for Canadian Unitarian Youth

Issue 4 of the online magazine by UU youth, for youth is out now! Packed with creativity, insights, and voices from our youth community, FUTURE is a space for expression, ideas, and connection

<https://cuc.ca/youth-young-adults/youth/ezine/>

SAVE THE DATE - CanUUdle XXVI Youth

Vancouver, BC – May 15 to 18, 2026

CanUUdle, the national annual conference for Canadian Unitarian Universalist Youth, is **taking place in Vancouver next May!**

CanUUdle is the annual conference ("con") for Canadian Unitarian Universalist youth ages 14-19 and their adult advisors (ages 25+). Registration and more information about the CanUUdle XXVI will be forthcoming in the new year. For now, youth groups and youth advisors should think about fundraising initiatives to offset travel costs to Vancouver!

ADS

Inclusion of ads does not constitute an endorsement

Is it time to tackle those overflowing spaces - kitchen cupboards, drawers or closets of any kind - to sort, toss, donate and label to reclaim your space - even having a few laughs along the way?

Whether you are prepping to move, clearing out for the new year or simply tired of the accumulation, I will bring the calm, the bins, the energy and the magic to a fresh start - even removing the items for donation to the charity of choice.

For decluttering without judgement, call **Jan Thomson: 250-516-1462**





Astrid Firley-Eaton

Design

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colour consultation

250-384-3405
afe.design@firley.ca

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 Victoria BC, V9E2G1
 (250) 592-4411
admin@islandmontessori.com



Half-day
spots still
available
for
2024/2025



UUCV Contact Info

Bradley Clarke

Caretaker

available by appointment

(no Monday availability)

bradley@victoriaunitarian.ca

778-967-5341 (cell)

UUCV Office Open:

9:30am-2pm Tuesday

11am-1pm Wednesday

11am-1pm Sunday (except long
weekends)

PROMO SUBMISSIONS

we send an email each Friday at noon(ish)

IN THE SPIRIT monthly email goes out on the last Friday each month (no separate e-weekly those weeks). Submit by 15th of the month whenever possible to ease workload for our volunteers.

E-WEEKLY email goes out in the remaining Fridays of the month. Deadline for the e-weekly is NOON on

Email staff at addresses listed below or **call 250-744-2665** and leave a voice message; your call will be returned by the next work day.

Niki Mullin

Office Administrator

Sun, Mon & Wed 8am-3pm except stat holiday long weekends
IN PERSON Sun & Wed 11am - 1pm
churchoffice@victoriaunitarian.ca

Erin Carson DeWolfe

Communications Coordinator

Tue, Thu & Fri: 9:30am - 2pm
(available for calls during above hours)
IN PERSON Tue 9:30am - 2pm
communications@victoriaunitarian.ca
778-557-3492 (cell)

Family Programs

Co-Director, Leanne Hopkins, with focus on children under 10, in collaboration with our Childminders.
(leanne.hopkins@victoriaunitarian.ca)

Co-Director, Jen Rashleigh, with focus on Youth programs, for children ages 10 and up.

(Jen.rashleigh@victoriaunitarian.ca)

Music Program

Christine Tabor

Director of Music

christine.taber@victoriaunitarian.ca

Co-Ministers

the preceding Tuesday.

Send all promo submissions to promo@victoriaunitarian.ca.

See the [promo guidelines](#) for submission guidelines, repetition limits and more details.

In the Spirit is produced by volunteer: Lies Weijs. E-weekly produced by Communications Coordinator Erin Carson DeWolfe (with volunteer relief coverage). Many thanks to Karen Furnes & Deb Lilly for being our proofreaders.

CONTACTS & LINKS

- [Website](#)
- [Event calendar](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria
5575 West Saanich Road
Victoria, BC V9E 2G1

ONLINE REQUISITION & REIMBURSEMENT FORM

For UU Community leaders needing to submit receipts for reimbursement for UU Community expenses, [here is the link to the online form](#).

Rev. Melora Lynngood
rev.melora@victoriaunitarian.ca
Text/call 250-891-6330

Rev. Shana Lynngood
rev.shana@victoriaunitarian.ca
Text/call 250-891-6331

Monday is their day off - available for pastoral emergencies

[Schedule details \(& which minister does what\)](#)

Minister Emerita
Rev. Jane Bramadat

Lay Chaplains
laychaplains@victoriaunitarian.ca
Jenny Heston: 250-509-1240
Barbara Boyle: 250-381-0264
Oceanna Hall: 250-886-1077

ARCHIVED MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

Read or download
[In the Spirit Monthly Newsletter](#)

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