

# First Glance

*January 2021*

(613) 232-1016      [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)  
[www.firstunitedchurchottawa.org](http://www.firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

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## **Being Gentle and Present to Self, Family and One Another During the Covid Winter of 2021**

We recognize the challenges of living through this difficult winter of 2021. Being overwhelmed is both appropriate and expected.

As a faith community, we follow public health guidelines to ensure physical health as well as ensure our health care system does not become overwhelmed. While vaccines exist, the impact is still months away, and thus the importance of sustaining ourselves spiritually and emotionally through these winter months.

As a faith community, we encourage one another to be gentle to self, family and each another. This is a time to reduce expectations as we are careful to nurture energy levels. Church Council encourages all to reach out for caring and pastoral support through one another or by contacting the church office/Brian so that connections, personal and collective, can be arranged through the myriad of supports within First United.

Remember it is enough to ensure one's own well-being as well as the well-being of family members and friends closest to you. For those who are able, offering wider supports is welcomed as long as we are careful to ensure self-care in order to sustain our energy through this long season.

## **On-line Sunday Services and on-line Children/Youth Programming**

First United gathers on-line to celebrate our faith at 11:15 a.m. each Sunday. We share a video of the service later in the afternoon or next day. The link to the Zoom service is sent out by email on Saturday and posted on the website. We also circulate an Order of Service with reflections, readings, and words to the hymns. If you would like to added to the e-mail list, please send a request to [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

Nikki Nel continues to provide on-line Children's programming. From 10:15 to 11:00 a.m., she offers a class for younger children (ages 5 to 10) and beginning at 12:15 p.m. for older children (ages 9 to 13). Please contact Nikki Nel at [nikkinelteacher@gmail.com](mailto:nikkinelteacher@gmail.com) for the Zoom link and the package of crafts and lessons that will be delivered to your home. Leaders of Rite 13 and J2A continue with on-line programming as well.

## **Healing Pathway Spiritual Care Package (available on the First United website)**

The Healing Pathway ministry at First United has prepared a spiritual care package. While we may not be able to meet face to face, we can connect heart to heart and be proactive in nurturing our spirits and connecting with the Divine through meditation, prayer, long walks, and reaching out safely to one another and to those who are vulnerable and isolated. **Distance Healing Pathway sessions** are available by contacting [healingpathway2010@gmail.com](mailto:healingpathway2010@gmail.com)

## **Mental Health Strategies for the Winter of Covid-19 (available on the First United website)**

The "Let's Talk About Mental Health" group has developed resources to support mental health through the winter of Covid-19. Please reach out for pastoral support when you need. The **Let's Talk About Mental Health** Zoom discussion is led by Jessica Ward-King and Zachary Houle and will meet on Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and February 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. To register contact [j.ward-king@hotmail.com](mailto:j.ward-king@hotmail.com)

## **Small Groups Offered by First United**

*(as always if you have a small group you wish to initiate, let us know and we will announce it)*

### **Gathering to Sing on-line:**

Marg will lead a gathering where we can sing together on Thursday January 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

### **Nurturing Self-Care through Energy/Spirit Practices**

Sharon Moon will be leading a short on-line Zoom session to teach and demonstrate accessible self-care techniques that anyone can do. More details will be circulated about this gathering in the next few days.

**Monday Evening On-line Christian Meditation**, occurs at 5:30 every Monday evening on Zoom and is led by Joyce Hardman, Cathy Nobleman, and Liz Tyrwhitt. This gathering is connected with the World Community for Christian Meditation based on the leadership of Laurence Freeman. Contact Joyce at [jhardman@rogers.com](mailto:jhardman@rogers.com) to register and get more resources on Christian Meditation.

### **Guided Meditation in the Sanctuary (Wednesday at 5:00 and 7:00 beginning January 27<sup>th</sup> if allowable)**

Brian will be leading a 40 minute in-person guided meditation or other spiritual practice for six persons at a time. Physical distancing, masking, and other Covid-19 protocols will be in place. If you are interested in attending, please register with [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org) or with Brian to get more information.

### **A stitch in time (in-person gathering on Saturday's at 1:00 – presently suspended for now):**

Have you been knitting or sewing in pandemic days? Have you been musing about metaphors and the symbolic nature of these activities? If you crave a chance to get together both physically present while safely distanced, you might be interested in joining with up to 6 people to share and show. If you are interested, please contact Jane Sly at [janeelizsly@gmail.com](mailto:janeelizsly@gmail.com)

### **Monday Morning Living into Right Relations on-line Book Club:**

For years, a book club has met to read and discuss living into right relations with the First Peoples of Canada. On Mondays, from 9:30 - 11:30 am, the group is reading "Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Issues". The group welcomes new members. To get the Zoom connection or more information, contact Cindy at [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

### **Jigsaw Exchange:**

Nobody's coming over for supper. Might as well put that dining table to good use. How? Jigsaw puzzles! How about a First United Jigsaw Exchange? Do you have some jigsaws occupying space in a cupboard or closet that you are done with? (and are complete - no frustrating missing pieces). Would you like some new jigsaws to occupy your time during the pandemic? Contact Jane Sly at [janeelizsly@gmail.com](mailto:janeelizsly@gmail.com) or call (613) 222-0832.

### **Looking Ahead to our Annual Congregational Meeting:**

Church Council is planning a Zoom Annual Meeting to be held in early March. The date and details will be shared with you. In the meantime, look for an **on-line survey** that will engage all of us in providing input, feedback, and identifying priorities as 2021 unfolds.

## **Our Commitment to be an Anti-Racist Church**

Recognizing the energy still necessary to realize racial justice and equality in Canada, First United along with The United Church of Canada is presently and intentionally naming our ongoing commitment to be an anti-racist church. The importance of this intention is highlighted as racial inequities are exposed since communities of colour have disproportionately been impacted of Covid-19. We have also witnessed the racial injustices lifted up by Black Lives Matter and Indigenous groups throughout 2020.

We invite you to participate in one of two on-line book studies:

### **White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin Diangelo**

Dorothy Naylor and Pat Mayberry are leading a discussion of Robin Diangelo's provocative and important book in this time of racial reckoning needed for a transformative spirit-life in our world. This six-week study will start the week of January 18<sup>th</sup> and based on interest, we will determine how many groups we have (groups likely meeting on Wednesday, either in the day or the evening). Access is by zoom. To register or get more information, please contact Cindy Cherry, our office administrator, at [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

### **My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakim**

This book by Resmaa Manakem, a black American author recommended by Diangelo, invites participants to engage with a call to action that is not only in the head but the body. This body-centred reflective work engages inter-generational trauma for persons of all races. It is recommended, for white folk, to have read White Fragility (or a similar book) as a precursor to this study. This study will start the week of January 18<sup>th</sup> and based on interest, we will determine how many groups we have. There will be one group meeting on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Access is by zoom. To register or get more information, please contact Cindy Cherry, our office administrator, at [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

## **A Retreat to Support Our Commitment to Ecological Justice and Spiritual Nurture**

First United is supporting, promoting and facilitating an on-line February afternoon retreat (Brian is attending)

Date: Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (includes movement and body breaks)

Registration: Limited space, please register with Cindy at [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

Cost: A free-will offering to allay costs of the retreat will be accepted at registration

### **For The Love of Creation: Finding Our Way Together**

#### **A Transformative Process for Difficult Times**

There are so many hard things happening now, and it normal to feel anxiety, fear, sorrow, anger or despair. It can be tempting to distract or numb ourselves or bury our emotions. By joining with others, sharing our stories and opening to the pain about what's happening, we can:

- feel more alive and better able to cope and focus our energy on what's most important;
- free ourselves from the illusion of separation and experience the truth that we are not alone;
- gain insight into new and ancient ways of living in community with justice and compassion;
- discover the life-giving benefits for our health, other beings and the greater body of earth.

This workshop is an Introduction to The Work that Reconnects, pioneered by Joanna Macy. It offers a series of practices to help us align with the self-healing powers of the web of life and compost grief, fear and anger into qualities that allow us to respond to the challenges of these times with care and integrity.

Facilitators: Robin Macdonald (@heartlandgriefintogrowth) brings extensive experience facilitating community grief care, restorative justice, yoga & group processes. Andrea Prazmowski has decades of facilitation experience with collaborative environmental initiatives, faith formation, gatherings in sacred space, as well as Healing Pathway and as a Forest Therapy Guide. They are both based in the National Capital Region.

## Financial Report from Church Council

### Thank you for ongoing support to First United and the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church

As a faith community, we express our gratitude to one another for your on-going financial support of our congregational life and the generosity realized through our connections with one another as well as with our community.

The Church Council is delighted to report that, while we were below our targets for congregational giving, additional memorial, special donations, and government rebates as well as some reductions in expenses due to Covid-19 has resulted in a surplus of about \$9,000.

<u>To December 31</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
General	203,231	201,802	208,500	(6,698)
Advent	20,945	22,335	22,500	( 165)
Mission & Service	37,184	35,385	35,000	385

In addition, First United congregants and Metropole residents gave (in addition to food donations)  
\$15,735 to the Westboro Food Bank.

First United Congregants and our Rite 13 fund-raising event gave  
\$4,964 to the Multi-Faith Housing Initiative and Veteran's House.

Through First United and associated community groups  
\$76,249 was raised for the support of refugees

Congregants also gave  
\$6,850 for COVID-19 relief

The Church Council will present Reviewed Financial Statements at the Annual meeting as well as the budget for 2021.

### 2020 Tax Receipts

2020 tax receipts are presently being readied and you can expect to receive the receipts in the last week of January or the first week of February.

### There are Four Ways to Donate During Covid -19

1. **First Things First** is the monthly Pre-Authorized Remittance, and Cindy, our church administrator can facilitate registration or changes. Simply contact Cindy at [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org) and she will facilitate.
2. **E-transfers** are now possible. Please send e-transfers to [treasurer@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:treasurer@firstunitedchurchottawa.org) which automatically deposits donations directly into the account of First United. These donations are managed by our Donations coordinator, Dale Walker, and Cindy, our church Administrator to ensure that donations are recorded for an income tax receipt. Remember to indicate what the donation is designated for (i.e. General Fund, Mission & Service, Westboro Food Bank, etc).
3. **Cheques** can be mailed to the church, 347 Richmond Road, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 0E7. The mail is checked regularly and a deposit made on a regular basis. Again, indicate any designation for the donation and the donation will be recorded for an income tax receipt.
4. **Website.** You can donate through the website using a credit card. Please note that there are additional administrative costs in this method of giving so, if possible, we recommend using one of the above methods. Once again, Dale and Cindy manage these donations and ensure that tax-receipts are issued.