

The Olinda Outpost

Monthly Newsletter of the [Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda](#)
2953 Olinda Side Road, Ruthven, Ontario, N0P 2G0
Toni Janik & Bobbye Baylis, Editors

**Sunday Services 10:30 am
January 2025**



Date	Speaker	Title	Musician(s)
Jan. 5	Rev. Julie Brock	<i>Our Deepest Callings</i>	Toni Janik
Jan. 12	Rev. Jim Hatt	<i>Epiphany...What's to be revealed!</i>	Lorie Lyons
Jan. 19	Rev. Jim Hatt	<i>What kind of society do we want in Canada in the coming years?</i>	Toni Janik
Jan. 26	Reilly Yeo	<i>Prophets of Love: Active Engagement in a Time of Polycrisis. (Virtual Sermon via Zoom)</i>	Meaning Making Project
Feb. 2	TBD	<i>TBD</i>	Baylis-Stone

January 12th



**Welcome Rev. Jim Hatt and Arleen
Soup Lunch
Immediately After the Service**

The Olinda church building is open for in-person services. Masks are available should you choose to wear one. The services will also continue to be broadcast via Zoom. On Saturday afternoons a link to the coming Sunday service is emailed to those interested. If you would like to be included, email Bobbye Baylis at bbaylis@cogeco.ca.

Report from the Board

Welcome 2025, a Year of Transition

Christmas season arrives with a couple of significant celestial events. Winter solstice, when the sun remains lowest in the sky and we in the northern hemisphere experience the least sunlight during the day, occurred at 4:21 am ET in the early morning of December 21. Winter solstice was no doubt behind many pagan celebrations at this time of year as people did what they could to encourage the sun to return to its former strength. Our daily sunlight will continue to gradually increase until summer solstice in June. However, it is working against another natural effect. As the Earth circles the sun during our autumn season, it also follows an elliptical orbit and moves further away, reaching its greatest distance from the sun at perihelion around 8:28 am EST on January 4, 2025. But that's a much smaller effect than what's caused by the tilt of the Earth's spin axis.

The 12 days of Christmas run from Christmas Day until Epiphany Eve, January 5. Epiphany is the Day when—according to the Christmas story--the three wise men or kings first see the Christ child, and some children still mark the day by leaving hay, carrots, and water to feed the kings' animals. The practice is encouraged by gifts that would often appear where children had left the food. Today, Epiphany is a traditional time for decorations to be removed from the Christmas tree.

This year, we can celebrate a different sort of epiphany in January as our newly appointed part-time interim minister, Rev. Jim Hatt will be revealed in person to the congregation and give us two Sunday services per month through June. Rev. Jim will give his first two sermons on January 12 and 19 live, but some later sermons will be by Zoom. All are scheduled to start at 10:30 am. He will also help provide pastoral care to his new "flock." In this Newsletter, he has sketched the story of his earlier association with our church and described how he became a minister of the United Church. We will celebrate his appointment with a soup lunch after his service on January 12. All are invited. Welcome Rev. Jim!

Our church lost a long-time core member when Eunice Buhne died peacefully on Winter Solstice this year. Her obituary at <https://www.simplechoicecremation.ca/obituaries/Eunice-Faith-Aileen-Buhne-Nee-Sillitoe?obId=34192128> summarizes much of her impressive life. A memorial service for her is being planned at UU Olinda at or just after the end of January. It will be led by former minister Rev. Conrad Dippel. Eunice was wife of Emil Buhne and mother to Neil, Kirk, and Cindy. She was head of the Physio Department at Met Hospital and was awarded the Order of Ontario for her leadership and important work in health care. Her son Neil was Regional Director of the UN Development Coordination Office for Asia-Pacific and has given several talks at our church about his experiences, most recently on November 10, 2024.

Our Ministerial Search Committee, under the leadership of Toni Janik, is still actively engaged in looking for a full-time minister to replace our much beloved Reverend Rodrigo Emilio Solano Quesnel, whose life was taken in a traffic accident in July 2023. There are some positive signs in the search but no appointment yet. Stay tuned!

Best wishes to all for a happy, healthy, and satisfying New Year!

Bill Baylis, President

Membership & Publicity

Our Deepest Sympathies to the family of Eunice Buhne who passed on Dec. 21 2024 with her husband Emil by her side. She was a long time member of our congregation and will be sorely missed. Memorial service information will be shared once details are confirmed.

Membership Committee is working on updating the Church Directory. Kindly check your listing and if you have had a change in mailing address, email address, phone number or other information, please share that information with Bobbye Baylis who works tirelessly to keep our directory current. If you would like your contact information to be included please connect with Bobbye or Toni.

If you would like to host a Dinner for 6, 8, or 10 in your home this winter please connect with Toni so we can advertise it in the newsletter. These are great social events with each guest bringing one dish—the host sets the theme or menu. Thanks to those who hosted dinners in the fall—everyone enjoyed the opportunity to share in the great food and conversation.

Considering Joining our church as a member? Connect with a member of our committee to have them answer any questions you may have and to receive a membership application.

Toni Janik
Membership & Publicity Chair

Come in From the Cold JOIN US FOR LUNCH IN THE COUNTY

Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 11:30 a.m.

Moonlight Restaurant

75 Talbot Street East, Leamington, Ont.

Please e-mail or call Trudy a week before if you plan to attend so she can reserve a table: Trudy 519-733-2706 or waret@mnsi.net

Important Dates

Committee meetings may either be in-person or via Zoom. Committee chairs need to notify their members how the meeting will be held when they send out meeting reminders.

Jan 9 10 am
Membership Committee Meeting

Jan. 9 7 pm
Board Meeting

Jan 12 Noon
(after Soup Lunch)
Sunday Services
Committee Meeting

Jan 15
Non-Financial Annual Reports due

Jan. 16 11:30 am
Lunch in the County

Jan. 19 Noon
Social Responsibility
Committee Meeting

Jan. 20
February Newsletter
Reports Due

Jan 23
Financial Annual Reports due

Introductory Message from Rev. Jim Hatt

Friends at Olinda Unitarian Universalist Church,

It is good to be working with friends from many years ago. Arleen and I attended your gathering place for several years in the 1980s and 1990s. We were searching for a home away from home at that time. We returned to our home church in Essex, the Essex United Church, after at that resting time.

Since our return there have been many changes in our life. I retired from teaching after 33 years and began to study for ministry. I graduated from the Centre for Christian Studies in 2015. I had begun serving in Essex in 2014 as a student minister. I was commissioned to diaconal ministry in the United Church of Canada in 2015. I retired from full time ministry in 2019. I turned 75 that summer. As you know I continue to serve as head chaplain at the United Church of Canada Downtown Mission from which I am stepping down in mid January.

Diaconal Ministry is a ministry of education, social justice and pastoral care. Those are all things dear to the hearts of Unitarian Universalists I believe. And so I hope that my ministry amongst you will be in support of who you are as a church family. My ministry has always been one of “presence”. I am here to listen and share.

May our time together be fruitful for us all.

Blessings

Rev. Jim

Caring Committee Report

For many, winter is a season of fun. There's Christmas, New Year's Eve, sledding, caroling, winter walks and more. For others, especially children, it's a magical time, a time of miracles, wise men and Santa Clause. But for most of us, it is a time of stillness, a quieter season when the cold air and biting wind make us appreciate the warmth of home. A time when we look back at the years that have passed and look forward to the years to come. May we welcome a new year that is filled with good health and many positive changes in the world.

The committee enjoyed a short Christmas visit with the home-bound congregants. We were saddened to have learned of the passing of Eunice Buhne on Dec. 21st. She was an active member of our church and will be deeply missed. Our condolences to Emil and family. Good to hear Helen Moore had another successful surgery. Special birthday wishes to Evelyn Dresser as she celebrates her 98th on Jan.10th. Enjoy your day!

A cheery winter hello to all congregants in retirement home and nursing homes and just at home, wishing them all well.

Remember as we all journey through another year, may everyone know you are not alone.

Submitted by Linda Upcott

Caring Committee Members

Carmen Smith

Linda Upcott

Mitten Tree Much Appreciated

On December 18th, I had the pleasure of delivering the items collected over the holidays for the Mitten Tree to the Angel Clothing Cupboard at St. John's Anglican Church in Leamington. There were many hats, scarves, socks and other items contributed by our congregation which were warmly appreciated by the volunteers at the clothing cupboard and by families in our community over the holiday season. An extra-special thanks to those who contributed much needed children's items.

Blessings to all those who added an item or two and know that your small gift made a difference to those less fortunate.

Happy New Year to All.

Carmen Smith

Nominating Committee Announcement

As your Nominating Committee, we are asking you to help us finalize our Board for 2025.

Some of our Nominees who are willing to continue their current duties, have served for five (5) consecutive years. Our By-Laws under Term of Office state "No person shall hold any given elected office for more than five consecutive years unless an extension is approved each year by ordinary resolution at the annual or other special meeting of members." Therefore, at the Annual General Meeting in March, we will be asking you to vote to allow the Directors nominated to continue their duties for an additional year past the five stipulated in this By-Law.

Cathy Dewhurst

Kathy Brennan

Carol Hylton

Welcome Rev. Jim Hatt

We welcome Rev. Jim Hatt to the UU Church of Olinda as our part-time interim minister for January—June. Many of us remember Rev. Jim from the years he and his wife Arleen were members of our congregation. He brings to us his warmth of ministry and his skills in pastoral care.

Phone Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 9 til noon, Sunday or by appointment
519-329-1976 Email: jmhatt1@outlook.com

In an emergency call or text anytime.

Home phone: Florida: 863-937-8040 Essex: 519-776-8924

Sabbath Day: Friday

Thoughts from Rev. Jim

As I was reading this week, I came across this article by a Unitarian Universalist lady, Michelle Richards, who spoke of having children and how they have dealt with their concern about not celebrating Christmas in a traditional societal way. I wanted to share her thoughts with you and have some discussion in one of my January messages. In my tradition there is so much emphasis on the virgin birth. I have questions about that to this day. So I completely understand the concern.

Michelle writes:

“I discovered that many of the rituals of the holiday originate from pagan traditions. Most crucially, at least for us, I unearthed the importance—indeed, the deep need—for many people to have rituals and traditions during this time of year. I thought of our family’s ancient ancestors who came from northern Europe, in regions where it might be dark for months at a time. For them, a celebration of the return of the light must have been sustaining.

“For my daughter, who questioned the lack of the tree and Christmas lights in our home, we found ways to celebrate the winter solstice solely by candlelight, a practice that eventually evolved into using no electricity (except for heat—we do, after all, live in northern Indiana). As my son came along and grew into an extension of his electronic devices, it became even more meaningful to have a night without electricity or electronics of any kind.

“We did decide to incorporate gift giving; we also adopted a ritual where each member of the family lights a candle and makes a wish for each of the others. As our children have grown, this ritual has taken on more meaning for our family. Some of us spend a lot of time crafting what we will say in the weeks leading up to the solstice.

“Because our family’s holiday is the night of the winter solstice, we didn’t put up a Christmas tree. When we visited our children’s grandparents’ homes, there were traditional Christmas things. The grandparents had special times and built memories with my children they wouldn’t have had, had we not changed our mind about the holiday season.

“As Unitarian Universalists, we could talk about the baby Jesus, and the important person he grew up to be. It has provided a way into conversation about how our faith believes that all babies are special and have the potential for greatness. Our extended families still have questions about our faith and beliefs. Over the years, though, we have come to be more accepted by our families—and accepting of traditions that are not our own. We are Unitarian Universalists who found a way to celebrate the winter holidays in ways that fit our family.”

And so as Arleen and I celebrate Christmas in our way in Florida we offer our wish... for hope, peace, joy and love for you and your families. That for us is what it is all about!

Blessings!

Rev. Jim

Treasurer's Report

Thanks for your monetary donations and gifts of service.

We have a new roof and replaced the solar panels so we are still looking for drips but none so far.

Donations can be made by:

1. etransfers to treasureruolinda@gmail.com or uolinda@gmail.com
2. cheque mailed to church or 290 Lester Drive, Essex, ON N8M 3G9
3. cheque or cash put in offering plate at front of church.

Another year is coming to an end. Thanks for being a part of it.

Best wishes for the New Year.

Helen Moore

Annual Report News

As we begin to prepare for the 2024 Annual Report, please note the following timelines:

- 1) Due date for Non-Financial Reports: January 15th**
- 2) Due date for Financial Reports: January 23rd**
- 3) Date for Annual Report Distribution to Congregants: February 16th**
- 4) Annual Congregational Meeting for Report Presentation: Sunday, March 9th**

Kindly observe the following in preparing and submitting your reports:

- 1) Please send copies to myself, Helen Moore and Bobbye Baylis
- 2) The report can be submitted in Word format or other program but please do not convert to PDF as we cannot edit.
- 3) The due date is really a last call. We hope you'll be able to submit your reports in a timely manner well before the deadline!

Many thanks for your support,

Carmen Smith, Secretary

Social Responsibility Committee Report

2024 was a year of changes. I guess that could be said of every year, but I think we cannot deny the speed at which things have happened. If we stop to reflect, perhaps we could find ourselves more worried than hopeful. We have daily news reporting on war, hatred, greed, political unrest, threats on democracy and increases in the cost of living not only here, but around the world. Sadly, this is not an exhaustive list.

In our church, many have energetically attempted to add some stability and direction while we are in search for another minister. Not an easy task and I offer my personal gratitude for the ongoing efforts of those congregants who added the extra "glue" to "hold our church together".

One of my personal goals this year was to remind us about the status of food banks and my offer to collect any donations to deliver to local food banks. We have taken items collected in the church and we have given cash donations so that culturally appropriate foods can be purchased. I want to thank our congregation for all those efforts and for keeping the thought of food and housing insecurity a priority in our thoughts and deeds.

We also took on the loving tasks of collecting mittens, scarves, hats and other necessary apparel, giving all to an agency for distribution to those in need. It is usual for the focus to be at Christmas, however maintaining our good work throughout the year is a little more challenging. I know we can do it!

Again, our generosity at Christmas shone brightly following our UU principles, and you rallied to another cause, giving two families a joyful holiday season. Superheroes John and Linda Upcott thoughtfully purchased and delivered the items for those families to the Children's Aid Society.

I offer my thanks and heartfelt appreciation for all our congregants who never cease to come together to stay the course: the course of standing for dignity, inclusion, acceptance, generosity and love, choosing to demonstrate their commitment every day of their lives.

Happy 2025. Let's keep up our fabulous work...together!

Warmly,
Sue Markham, Social Responsibility Committee.

With heartfelt sympathy we share that Judy Carter passed away in Leamington Hospital (Erie Shores Healthcare) on January 2, 2025.

The Memorial Service will be later in the spring.

Details will be shared with the congregation when they are available.

Her partner Anne Purtell would appreciate receiving notes and cards of sympathy.

Judy was a long-time member of the UU Church of Olinda enjoying services, fellowship, dinners for 8, and writing regular articles in the newsletter.

She will be truly missed.

New Year's Message from Rev. Jim

I read an interesting story today as I pondered this new year of 2025. Please let me share it with you.

“Suddenly from behind me a hand appeared and swooped my phone out of my grasp. The hand belonged to a teenager on an electric bike. In seconds, as I began to perceive what had happened, my assailant sped far away from me. I soon saw my predicament: the thief had my whole digital identity, plus my credit cards and driver’s license. I pathetically roared my horror and outrage.

“But then two extraordinary things happened. As I uselessly made middle-aged plodding chase, a woman 50 yards away, who’d somehow seen the incident, faced the thief’s bike, made herself wide like a star, stood in his way and shouted, “Stop it and drop it!” I was so dazed I scarcely realized what was happening. But when I turned around, a small boy was running toward me with my phone. I received it dumbfounded and dazed, like an audience taking back the ace of spades during a card trick. I thanked the boy, shaking his palm with my still-trembling hand. Only then did I realize that the cyclist had dropped the phone just as the woman had told him to. I looked around to thank her, but she was gone. The whole event took 20 seconds.

“All four characters have wider significance. In the face of a global crisis like COVID, we depend on those who, like the courageous woman, go to strenuous lengths in sometimes daunting and demanding circumstances to give people what they desperately need. Just as vital are those who are like the little boy, who bring the fruits of others’ labor to those in need of it.

“Subtly, this 20-second episode for this lady, gives us a picture of this world and how life unfolds serendipitously, how forces like the woman, at great risk saves our life; or like the young boy, gently offers us the incredible gift of restoration; or like the lady of the event, has been willfully robbed of something—human companionship and belonging on the earth—something it feels impossible to live without.

“Her 20-second microdrama showed her life’s fragility and apparent randomness, but also life’s choice: choice to despoil and destroy or to restore and repair. At such moments we stand in life’s way and ponder the many ways we can respond.”

As I begin my time as your pastor at Olinda UU church, I hope that we can stop and think what will our choices be. May we all be challenged!

And so as we go into 2025, let us consider our part in Creation and how we will respond: will we despoil and destroy or will we help restore and repair. We are thankful that we are granted the freedom of choice extended to each of us and that it is **our** choice and decision how to respond this coming year.

Blessings!!

Rev. Jim Hatt [Interim Pastor]