

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
December 2025**



Date	Speaker	Title	Musician(s)
Dec. 7	Rev. Paul Langston-Daley	<i>The Porcupine and the Raccoon - There is a difference between being kind and being nice. Today we explore these differences through the lens of story, psychology, and the aspiration of transformation.</i>	Scott Bley
Dec. 14	Rev. Paul Langston-Daley	<i>Loving the Hell Out of the World: Universalist theology - This congregation has its roots in the rural Universalist movement; a movement that rejected Calvinism and the notion that some people are better than others. Calvinism was the theology of the day, reinforcing the hierarchy. Today we explore the radical notion of the Universalists, their embrace of equity and the (still) radical notion that all are saved.</i>	Toni Janik
Dec. 21	Rev. Paul Langston-Daley	<i>A New Dawn - The darkness has increased over the past few months, dimming the light and some spirits. But our ancestors knew something of season and celebrations and they welcomed the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, with bonfires and dancing. Today we embrace the dark, knowing it is, as all things are, temporary. We pause in the dark... holding it close for just a moment then letting it go as we experience the coming of the light and the days growing longer.</i>	Lorie Lyons
Dec. 24 5 PM	Rev. Paul Langston-Daley	<i>Christmas Arrives - A time for joy, gratitude, and celebration.</i>	Bill Baylis, Scott Bley
Dec. 25		<i>No Service</i>	
Dec. 28		<i>No Service</i>	
Jan. 4	Rev. Paul Langston-Daley	<i>Resistance and Resilience - Being part of a religious community means more than just caring for one another. It means embracing our values in the public square; living our values out loud. That doesn't always mean grabbing a bull horn and standing on street corner, but it does mean living in such a way that our values drive our decisions, not expedience.</i>	Lorie Lyons

Report from the Board

We are now assembling our final issue of **The Olinda Outpost**, of 2025! This has been a year of change, and it is by change that we know our church is alive and evolving! (Rev. Paul even says weekly at the close of his sermon, as I remember it, "God is change.") The history of our church is not lost, but it continues to grow and evolve. It's a fascinating story we can be proud of, and we continue to learn more details.

Last month, we held Startup workshops chaired in person by Rev. Nicoline Guerrier, the Congregational Life Lead for Central and Eastern Regions of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), and a follow-up and summary of those sessions is scheduled by Zoom at 7 pm on Thursday, November 20, following the Lunch in the County gathering at 11:30 am at the Michigan Diner in Essex. Thanks to arrangements with our snow-clearing neighbour, a Christmas tree should spring up in our sanctuary during the first week of December, just in time for our Christmas potluck on December 7, when we can help decorate the tree and perhaps sing a Unitarian Christmas carol or two, such as *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* by UU minister Edmund Hamilton Sears and *Jingle Bells* by Unitarian organist James Pierpoint! The tradition of the Christmas tree was brought to America from Germany by Unitarian minister and church designer Charles Follen.

We can also sing the Advent carol *Let Christmas Come*, by Unitarian Minister Dr. John Hanly Morgan (1918-2018), who served as minister in Flint, Michigan; as well as in South Bend, Indiana; and in Charlotte, NC; before moving to Canada and serving as minister in the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, ON, from 1960-1973.

But Christmas is more than decorations and song. It is also stories and traditions. For example about when Old Ebenezer Scrooge's heart opens up to compassion and joy. Charles Dickens published *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, and Christmas has never been the same since. Prior to Dickens story, the celebration of Christmas had died down somewhat. There were family gatherings, but with little special meaning, nothing exceptional. Dickens changed that. Charles Dickens was a Unitarian. In Dickens' tale, Scrooge confronts his past, when as a young man, his need for money -- that is, we suppose, his need for security or status -- caused him to lose his fiancée, Belle. He is shown the present reality of joy in gatherings of families, whether they are poor like Bob Cratchit's or relatively well off like Scrooge's nephew Fred. Then he is brought to an awareness of his own impending death. It's not that Scrooge had explicitly believed himself immortal. It's just that he had pushed the fact that life is temporary out of his mind. In pushing away death, he had pushed away life, for the two are inseparably linked.

Dickens' novella received immediate popular and critical acclaim, and almost as immediately shifted the way that Victorians celebrated Christmas. Over the next years, Dickens received hundreds of letters from complete strangers "writing all manner of letters about how the *Carol* is read aloud there, and kept on a little shelf all by itself." *A Christmas Carol* was regarded as a new gospel. Critics noted that the book was, in their experience, unique in that it actually made readers behave better. (Continued on Page 7.)

Minister's Report

I was delighted by our first snowfall in early November. I can't remember the last time I've seen snow in November. I enjoy living in places where the seasons are crisp and clear, where the cycles of the Earth are obvious.

Having lived in California where the temperature is mild 95% of the time, it was hard to get a sense of time passing and it was surprising to me that the desert had more recognizable seasons. In the desert, in the spring (usually February), the cactuses would begin to bloom, filling the monotone landscape with colour and shape. There was a definite sense of a changing of the seasons.

Here in this part of the world the changing of the seasons feels crisp and clearly defined as the days grow shorter and the temperature drops. This feels familiar to me and I recognize this as a time to move inward.

This is the time of Advent and the anticipation of the winter solstice. A time of waiting. A time for inward reflection and contemplation. A period of not knowing and also knowing that waiting is OK.

There is a kind of discipline as we take this time to intentionally turn our attention inward to reflect on how to be the best people we can be, both together as a community and as individuals.

I invite each of you to consider what it means to live in this community. What do you need to feel safe here? to bring your questions and concerns? to face conflict with confidence and compassion? What do you need to envision a future together that none of us could ever envision alone?

In the coming year, I'll be working with the Committee on Shared Ministry to invite you all to participate in the creation of a covenant to help guide us as we move forward together. The world has grown increasingly complex. Anxiety and tension feels like the norm.

Here, we seek to create the beloved community; a place that offers joy and celebration. A community that embraces and supports healthy relationships and the vulnerability and compassion required to maintain them.

In this time of Advent, let us reflect as we imagine a future together.

Shanti, Paul

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.

Nov. 25 7 pm
Social Responsibility
Committee Meeting

Nov. 30 Noon
Annual Congregational
Meeting on the Budget

Dec. 11 7 pm
Board Meeting

Dec. 12 11:30 am
Lunch in the County
Roma Club

Dec. 14 12 noon
Sunday Services Meeting

Dec. 29
January Newsletter
Reports Due

January 8 10 am
Membership Committee
Meeting

Note from the Treasurer

As you may read elsewhere in this newsletter, the October 25 Fundraiser for The Bridge raised \$5,050 of which \$3,000 came from Peachland Rebekah Lodge where Elaine and Richard Stevenson are leaders.

Thanks for your donations for Children's Aid Society Christmas Families. Other giving opportunities in December are the Mitten Tree and Food Bank collections.

The 2026 Budget and an explanation of the changes since December 1, 2024 on the reverse were distributed at church, by email or regular mail. If you have a question, ask me. We vote on the budget on Sunday, November 30 after the church service. Please vote. You can vote by attending in person, online or by sending me an email if you cannot attend in person or online.

Thanks for your continuing donations and gifts of service. Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

You may donate by:

1. e-transfers to treasureruuolinda@gmail.com or uuolinda@gmail.com
2. cheque mailed to the church or 290 Lester Drive, Essex, ON N8M 3G9
3. cheque or cash put in offering plate at church.

Helen Moore, Treasurer

Congregational Meeting

November 30, immediately following the service
Please attend—we need a quorum

Motion 1 - To approve the 2026 Annual Budget

Motion 2 - Sound system request, requested by Rev. Paul: "That not more than \$5000 be used from special funds for an upgrade to our video and audio systems in the sanctuary."

This should allow us to improve the sound and video quality on zoom and improve audio in the sanctuary and eliminate the issues we're having each week with zoom sound.

The Olinda church building is open for in-person services. The services are also 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.

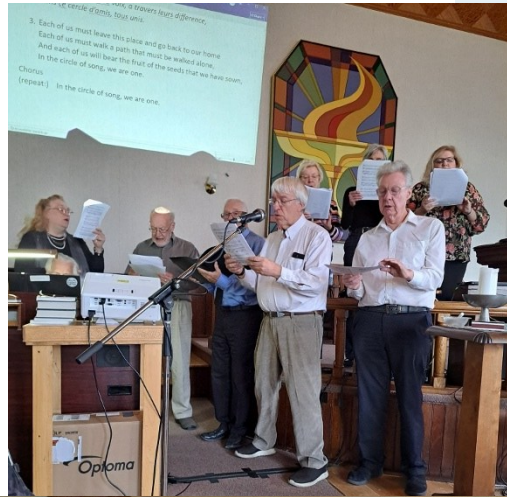
Fundraising for The Bridge—October 25

Our UU Olinda Church hosted a musical fundraiser for the Bridge which supports local youth on October 25. The main act was “Guys Who Like to Sing,” followed by a duet by Violinist Ray Stone and Cellist Bob Koenig, and a musical interlude by the Church Choir singing “Circle of Song.” Free-will donations raised \$2050 and an additional \$3000 was presented to the bridge representative Hannah Matis by Elaine and Richard Stevenson of the Peachland Rebekah Lodge.

Thanks to all who participated, attended and donated to this very worthy cause.



PEACHLAND REBEKAH
LODGE NO. 45



Membership Committee Report

Once again this year we will be decorating a Mitten Tree with your donations of Hats, Scarves, Mittens, Gloves and Socks. All donations will be given to the Angels Clothing Cupboard—where last year they were received with heartfelt thanks. There will be a box at the front of the church from the first Sunday of November until the third Sunday of December for the Mitten Tree donations.

We had a delightful lunch at the Essex Michigan Diner on Nov 20th with 16 congregants Signing up to partake in the enjoyable social gathering. Hope you'll join us on Friday Dec. 12th at the Roma Club in Leamington at 11:30. we will be enjoying their Friday Buffet that includes fish and one other protein along side their great buffet. Contact Toni to reserve your spot. All are welcome. It's a great opportunity to socialize together.

If you'd like to host a Dinner for Eight this fall or early winter please contact Toni to help advertise the event in our newsletter. These are great events to get to know each other better and have fun.

If you've been thinking of joining the church as a member, contact Rev. Paul or Toni to complete the membership form. If you have questions, please ask; we are happy to be of service. In early January we will be reviewing our emergency Contact Form and asking everyone to update theirs. This information will only be used by Rev. Paul in case of an emergency.

Toni Janik

Membership and Publicity Chair

JOIN US FOR OUR LUNCH IN THE COUNTY

Friday, December 12, 2025

Roma Club

at 11:30 A.M.

19 Seacliff Dr East , Leamington

Please call or e-mail me to let me know so I can confirm the count with them. Thank you.

Toni Janik at 519-966-6434 or djanik1@cogeco.ca

Caring Committee Report

December's wintery frost reminds us of the warmth of the holidays and the joy of being together. This holiday season is the perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek ways to make life better for those around us.

Many thanks to all for reaching out to shut-ins and our fellow congregants near and far either by e-mail or personal phone conversations.

The caring committee is expecting to spread some Christmas Cheer to those who are unable to attend our church services.

May every day fill your days with hope, love, sunshine, and energy. Remember, kindness is like snow, it beautifies everything it covers.

Wishing all a Merry Christmas, from our house to yours.

Submitted by: Linda Upcott

Caring Committee Members

Carmen Smith

Linda Upcott

Thank You!

Joyse Gilbert wishes to thank the congregation for all the calls, visits, cards and gifts of food during her recuperation. It is truly wonderful to be a part of such a caring community. She sends much love to all.

(Continued from Page 2) *A Christmas Carol* remains the most widely read-aloud book. It is still theatrically performed in various venues around the country every year. It has been made into numerous movie versions. Other popular Christmas tales such as *It's a Wonderful Life* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* are but re-workings of Charles Dickens' Unitarian gospel. According to historian Ronald Hutton, "the current state of observance of Christmas is largely the result of a mid-Victorian revival of the holiday spearheaded by *A Christmas Carol*." The Christmas social gospel of generosity, gratitude, and the joy of family gathering is fundamentally Unitarian.

Bill Baylis, President



November is Women Abuse Prevention Month.

Victims of the Montreal Massacre



The École Polytechnique massacre, also known as the Montreal massacre, was a mass shooting that occurred on December 6, 1989, at the École Polytechnique de Montréal. Fourteen women were murdered in the anti-feminist attack; another ten women and four men were injured. Among those who survived the attack was eventual gun control advocate and now politician Nathalie Provost, a Liberal MP, gun control advocate, and engineer who has served as a member of Parliament (MP) for Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville since 2025.

Armed with a legally obtained Ruger Mini-14, and a hunting knife, 25-year-old Marc Lépine began his rampage at a mechanical engineering class at the École Polytechnique. He separated the male and female students, ordering the men to leave, then shooting all nine women in the room, killing six. Women were targeted while he moved through corridors on multiple floors of the building, then the cafeteria, and another classroom. After wounding more students and killing eight more women, he ended his own life.

The gunman had said he was against feminism; hence the massacre is now widely regarded as an act of misogynist terrorism and representative of wider societal violence against women. Since 1991, the massacre is commemorated annually in Canada as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. In the wake of the massacre, a White Ribbon Campaign was launched in 1991 by a group of men in London, Ontario, for the purpose of raising awareness about the prevalence of male violence against women. The ribbon symbolized "the idea of men giving up their arms".

Politicians in the House of Commons responded by passing more stringent gun control laws, and officials took other actions to end violence against women. The massacre also led to policy changes in emergency services protocols to shootings; for instance, that police would intervene immediately to try to reduce casualties. These changes were credited with later minimizing casualties during incidents of shooting in Montreal and elsewhere. This was the deadliest mass shooting in Canada until attacks in Nova Scotia more than 30 years later, which resulted in twenty-two deaths. (Continued on next page.)

November is Women Abuse Prevention Month. (Cont'd)

In response to the killings, a House of Commons Sub-Committee on the Status of Women was created. It released a report "The War against Women" in June 1991 and as a result the federal government established the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women in August 1991 that issued a final report in June 1993, *Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence – Achieving Equality*. Unfortunately, with over 400 recommendations, it was decided that this report was too diffuse to be actionable to make any impact.

Commemoration

Since 1991, the anniversary of the massacre has been designated the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, intended as a call to action against discrimination of women.

On the 25th anniversary, at the summit of Mount Royal, fourteen light beams representing the 14 victims shone from Mount Royal. That commemorative ceremony continues since its beginning in 2014. At 5:10 p.m., the time when the attack began, the name of each victim is read, and a light beam is projected upward into the sky. This event is attended by citizens, families of victims, local and national leaders.

Events are held across the country each year on December 6 in memory of the slain women and numerous memorials have been built.

About the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (16 Days) is an annual international campaign, occurring from November 25 to December 10. This campaign began in 1991 to call out and speak up against gender-based violence (GBV), and to renew our country's commitment to ending violence against women, girls, indigenous and 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

Why it matters?

GBV continues to affect women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ communities at alarming rates. Every 48 hours in Canada, a woman or girl is killed in an act of gender-based violence. In 2024, 240 women and girls were murdered, primarily by men, a 54% increase over pre-COVID rates. We also cannot forget the disproportionate violence and murder of Indigenous girls and women: another horrifying statistic in the capture of these numbers.

Victims and survivors of GBV often face lasting personal, social, and economic impacts with consequences that can echo across generations.

GBV carries a high economic cost, with Canadian governments spending billions annually on healthcare, justice, and social services to respond to it.

Things that Matter!

- Kick-off the 16 Days **by wearing purple** on November 25, for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
- Honour the victims of the Polytechnique Montréal tragedy **by wearing a white ribbon** on December 6.
- Read the full text or simplified version of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.

A Merry Unitarian Christmas!

To a surprising extent, Unitarians have played major roles in making this season into the festival we now celebrate. Christmas, of course, refers to the mass of Christ, the celebration of the birth of a Palestinian prophet named Yeshua, or Jesus. But historians have no idea what time of year Yeshua was born. The early Christian church celebrated his birthday in April at first (recognizing the rebirth of nature in the spring), and then in June for a while, close to summer solstice, before finally settling on a strategy of co-opting popular pagan yule and winter-solstice celebrations. The first Christmas in December wasn't celebrated until around 380 CE as an adaption of Winter Solstice events to welcome the return of the sun together with decorations of evergreens to praise continuing life in mid-winter. Christmas now means we put a tree indoors, and we decorate it. This was a practice in Germany, brought to North America by immigrants, especially in 1832 by Unitarian **Charles Follen** (1796-1840), who moved to Pennsylvania to avoid persecution, founded a church, and became a Harvard Professor. "Follen has left us a legacy of social action based on freedom" said Lucinda Duncan, minister of the Follen Community Church of East Lexington, Mass. that Follen founded in 1839.

In the last 200 years, Christmas has been further transformed -- and Unitarians have been at the forefront in much of the development. Many churches now begin their celebrations several weeks before Christmas by lighting an Advent wreath, often starting by singing the Unitarian Advent song (SLT#224) **Let Christmas Come**, by Unitarian Minister **Dr. John Hanly Morgan (1918-2018)**. Morgan served as minister in Michigan; Indiana; and North Carolina before moving to Canada as minister in the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, ON from 1960-1973. He was also Vice-president of the (U. N.) World Peace Council and president of the Canadian Peace Congress. A verse of **#225 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel** is also commonly sung here. However, beyond monophonic chants, there is little written evidence of Christmas music before the 14th century. The music staff was introduced in stages starting in the late 7th c and took its modern form only in the 16th c.

Christmas now also means dashing through the snow in a one-horse open sleighs. It means bells that jingle, and laughing, all the way. That's the song "Jingle Bells," known initially as "The One Horse Open Sleigh" written by James Pierpont in 1857, probably the most popular of all Christmas songs, even if written more for Thanksgiving celebrations. James Lord Pierpont was the organist and music director at the Unitarian Congregation in Savannah, Georgia, and his brother, John Pierpont, Jr. (1819-79), was a minister there. Other Unitarian Christmas songs include "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" by the popular American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82), written upon learning of the serious injury of his son in a Civil War battle, "Watchman Tell Us of the Night," by John Bowring, and "Do You Hear What I Hear?" by Noel Regney. Longfellow, Bowring, and Regney were all Unitarians. Additionally, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," is by UU minister Edmund Hamilton Sears. Christmas is more than decorations and songs. It is also stories and traditions as told for example in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Since its publication in 1843, Christmas has never been the same. Prior to Dickens story, the celebration of Christmas had died down. There were family gatherings, but nothing exceptional. Dickens changed that. His novella received immediate popular and critical acclaim, and shifted the way that Victorians celebrated Christmas. Dickens was a Unitarian. From Christmas trees to jingling bells, the Scrooge story, and the message of peace on earth, Unitarians have helped make Christmas the loving celebration it is today.

Bill Baylis