



## 2016 CUUWA Newsletter

### HOLIDAY GREETINGS from the CUUWA Council!

This is an opportunity for us to connect with you and let you know who we are and what we are doing.

### Upcoming AGMs

#### **2017 CUUWA Annual General Meeting**

(Sunday, May 28, 2017, times to be determined)

This meeting will be held by Zoom, a web platform that enables us to see and hear each other. We encourage members to gather in clusters to connect to others across Canada. Please keep a list of those attending and indicate the names of members at the beginning of the meeting. You may want to plan a potluck lunch or afternoon tea to follow the AGM.

#### **2018 CUUWA Tea and AGM**

Hamilton, Ontario, at the CUC Conference  
(May 18-20, 2018)

### Other Events of Interest

#### **Feb. 16-19, 2017**

All UU women are invited to the Third International Convocation of Unitarian\*Universalist Women and People of Progressive Faith, February 16-19, 2017, Asilomar, Pacific Grove, CA, USA. Although we cannot offer subsidies and no Council members are planning to attend, please offer our greetings and report back to us if you are able to go.

<https://www.intlwomensconvo.org/third-international-womens-convocation/>

#### **May 13, 2017, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm**

Voting Delegates and other members of CUC member congregations are invited to attend the CUC Annual General Meeting virtually or in person.

May 19-22, 2017

While there will not be a full CUC Conference this year, there will be an opportunity for youth and young adults to gather in Edmonton over the long weekend.

For more information on CanUuddle, go to <http://cuc.ca/event/canuuddle-xvii>.

Young Adults can learn more about their first full-weekend Justice Con at

<http://cuc.ca/event/justice-con-2017>.

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE DOING

Our Council and committees work hard on behalf of our members and other UU women across Canada on a range of feminist and gender issues. Our specific goals are to raise awareness about women's history, rituals, and perspectives, through training, communication, celebration and many resources.

### Current Council members:

Kathy Sage—Ministerial Liaison (non-voting position). Email: kathysage30@gmail.com

Betty Donaldson BC—1 year (final year on Council) Past-chair, Legacy Bursary. Email: edonalds@ucalgary.ca

Margaret Linton ON—1 year (final year on Council) Treasury and Membership. Email: margaretelinton@gmail.com

Caroline Jondahl QC—2nd year of 2 year term. Email: caroline.jondahl@gmail.com

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes and Anneke Elder-Gomes AC—2nd of 3-year term. Jo-Anne is the current chair. Email: eldergomes@yahoo.com

Jane Fox—Reproductive Rights Committee chair (non-voting position)

**Please Note:** We are looking for a Prairie / Western Representative to serve on the CUUWA Council. If you are a UU woman from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or Alberta, and are interested in finding out more about the CUUWA or this position, please contact Jo-Anne.

This year we have started to reinforce our educational efforts in different areas by forming and strengthening committees. Are you interested in contributing to our work in one of these areas? If so, please contact the chair (with a copy to Jo-Anne)

### Reproductive Justice

Message from Jane Fox, chair of the CUUWA Reproductive Rights Committee and the CUC Social Responsibility Monitoring Group on Reproductive Rights

I am new at chairing this committee and cannot report in 2016 on such a stunning success as was achieved in 2015 with the amended Abortion Rights Resolution which was presented by Betty Donaldson at the CUC AGM and was accepted by a majority of delegates. We continue to observe and possibly respond to each province's treatment of women's rights to safe and timely abortions.

I wish to address the issue of sexuality education as a form of reproductive justice. This spring of 2016, we successfully facilitated the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program to grades 4 to 6 students from our own congregation and from the Comox Valley community. We volunteered to field test a new curriculum. Sexuality education is about puberty, contraception, pregnancy and birth which are reproductive justice issues, but it also includes others so important to our girls and boys today. There were whole classes on body image and the media, on gender transitioning and fluidity, and most important on consent. It was exciting!

Consider a new understanding of gender rights for women who are biologically male. Or for males who are biologically female. These classes are introducing new ideas for the youth to consider and perhaps we can include a broader understanding within our own feminist thinking.

We create stronger women and men when we provide girls, boys, and their parents with honest and accurate sexuality information. We do this by facilitating Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes in as many Unitarian Universalist congregations as possible. I personally learn so much and have so much fun when I am facilitating OWL and I would encourage everyone to get classes going in your congregations.

This committee is a little thin of members at the moment and we welcome any woman who would like to participate, to contact me ([janefoxincomox@gmail.com](mailto:janefoxincomox@gmail.com)). Keeping in touch with the newly active CUC Monitoring Groups in 2017 and developing a way for Our Whole Lives (OWL) facilitators to network are two of our goals for the coming year. Watch our web page [www.facebook.com/CANUUWA](http://www.facebook.com/CANUUWA) for more information on ways to find trainers to train facilitators and for facilitators to connect.

### **Communications and Promotions** (no current chair)

Margaret Linton is responsible for the CUUWA (along with designer and trouble-shooter Ellen Papenburg) and Anneke Elder-Gomes is the lead for the Facebook page. We also have an underused google group and produce a newsletter twice a year. The Facebook page makes it easy to deliver up-to-date content and to share posts from like-minded organizations and individuals who, in turn, follow and post our information. Our website has valuable archives of information. Margaret is looking for someone she can mentor to learn how to manage the website. If you are that person, please contact Margaret directly at or me at [eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com).

### **Hamilton Organizing Committee** (more on our plans in our April newsletter)

### **Legacy Bursary Committee** (see Betty's message and upcoming campaign material)

### **Cluster / Chapter Committee** (no current chair)

We have over 40 members across Canada, but few opportunities to meet face-to-face and talk about our ideas and experiences. CUUWA members in BC have really appreciated their annual gatherings. Using the 2017 AGM as a starting point, we have invited each of our Council members and committee chairs will organize a small gathering in her city, town, or area. Going forward, we hope to hold local gatherings once or twice a year. Committees could be formed to work on an IWD service, information from the monitoring group could be shared, community members could be invited, or a women's tea could be organized. This should help us build awareness and membership among those who are interested in learning more about CUUWA's activities.

**International Women's Day** (Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes and Rev. Kathy Sage, co-chairs, Caroline Jondahl and Anneke Elder-Gomes)

**Women's Day 2017  
It's Simple: We Need Change Now**

The CUUWA invites all congregations across Canada to celebrate International Women's Day on one of the Sundays close to March 8, IWD. It is our goal to have IWD services in all congregations. We provide outlines for services and other resources for IWD on our website: <http://www.cuuwa.org/resourced/service-planning/> and on our Facebook page. For instance, there is a document on the website with complete services presented in 2016 at Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship (Spiritual Literacy), Unitarian Church of Edmonton (International Women's Day), Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton (Our Foremothers), and additional worship materials on the theme of Grandmothers.

This year, we will compile a set of service planning materials and share them with you by early February 2017. Our theme is **It's Simple: We Need Change Now**. Simplicity, because that is a theme several congregations will be exploring in March and because changes are obviously necessary. Change, because the 2017 IWD theme is #BeBoldForChange, and the CUC's 2016 Conference theme was "Bolder Ways of Being." Our service materials will provide various options for minister-led and lay-led congregations, recorded music or choices from the hymnals, and a homily as well as an interactive activity.

**CUUWA GREEN TEA: A HIGHLIGHT OF 2016**

On May 22, 2016, CUUWA held a Green Tea and its Annual General Meeting. During the Tea, Vancouver's very own "Raging Grannies" sang and Audrey Siegl, an outspoken, eloquent and engaged artist and member of the Musqueam Nation, spoke on "Carrying on the Work of my Ancestors. How to be Good Stewards of the Land." Audrey also did the Closing Ceremony of the Conference, where she gifted attendees with a song and her drumming. She said she was touched by the many efforts made at the Conference, including our Tea, towards healing and reconciliation in our relations with Aboriginal peoples, and was moved when many attendees spoke the original names of the peoples whose land they now live on. Listen to an interview with Audrey on Rabble at: <http://rabble.ca/podcasts/shows/msrepresent/2014/10/musqueam-leader-audrey-siegl-on-indigenous-matrilineal-society-wo>

Here is a song about the Famous Five women leaders from Alberta who petitioned for women to be legally considered “persons” eligible for appointment to the Senate. “Famous Five” was sung by the Raging Grannies at the Green Tea.

### FAMOUS FIVE

Tune: “Let The Sunshine In”

There was a time in Canada  
When persons all were men  
Women were possessions  
They had no standing then.  
They couldn't vote, own property  
Their lives were run by men  
Till five brave women thought they better  
Take this thing in hand.

#### Chorus:

Irene Parlby Henrietta Muir Edwards,  
Louise McKinney, Emily Murphy,  
Then, there was Nellie McClung...  
Names that should be sung.  
We owe our personhood to what  
These five have done.

In 1929, they went to England where they  
asked  
Privy Council to ensure  
That a law would soon be passed  
In legal language making women  
Persons with all rights.  
We have to say, my dears  
Theirs was the very best of fights.

What are we doing with the rights  
For which they fought and won?  
Are we voting? Holding office?  
What can we say we've done?  
We stand up strong and speak our minds  
When trouble's on the way.  
We'd like to think the work they did!  
Was not in vain today.

#### Chorus

Irene Parlby, Henrietta Muir Edwards  
Louise McKinney, Emily Murphy,  
And then there was Nellie McClung.  
Names that MUST be sung.  
We owe our personhood to what  
These five have done.



The Raging Grannies at our Green Tea at UBC. *Photo provided by Margaret Linton*

## HOLIDAY WISHES from the CUUWA

### From Betty Donaldson:

This holiday season I have joy in my heart so I radiate it to all of you as well. Jo-Anne has taken up the reins of CUUWA leadership with increasing confidence and creativity: That is a blessing for our organization and other UU women. The Legacy Bursary Committee is in place and we have had some donations but progress toward charitable status has been linked to CUC negotiations with the government and, thus, slow motion. Our cross-Canada committee needs strengthening so if you have an interest in this project, please contact me. Winter is a time of rest for Mother Earth, a gathering of energy for Spring generation. This winter, my hope is that you will create a restful space with another woman or girl to share insights about how being female influences your spiritual evolution. Blessed be.



### From Jo-Anne and Anneke Elder-Gomes:

During this holiday season, we send wishes for courage to create and sustain a peaceful and just world, in which people of all people may live, learn, and love their way to a place of understanding and compassion. We want to create a world in which a warm welcome and hospitality is offered to all, where all are welcome in our congregations, in our schools, in our workplaces, in our communities. May we all be filled with lovingkindness. May we all be well, and safe.

### From Jane Fox:

As a sister of two brothers, and the mother of four sons, I cherish my female connections. I always wanted a sister and at this stage of my life I have been blessed with three daughters-in-law, three granddaughters and one grandson, and many sisters of my heart. It is such a joy to me to have so much feminine energy in my life at last! For as we all know, feminine energy is powerful!

Blessings to you all, my CUUWA sisters!

### **From Caroline Jondahl:**

While I am blessed to live in wonder, awed by the magic of the aurora borealis painting the sky, calmed by the sounds of the wind and waters as their melodies accompany my walk, greeted by the trees - noble as they stand as sentinels...Nature in its glory. And people, whose deeds flow ceaselessly from their wellspring of goodness and wisdom, I am blessed by their presence in uncountable ways. But, I also feel the weight of our challenge to stand up to other forces and realities where lives are torn apart by unfathomable despotic acts in the pursuit of power and wealth wanting to surmount such inconsolable suffering and indignity.

There have been monumental shifts at home; most of live in relative comfort, now there must be comfort and justice for others. Humbly, yet hopeful and determined to reach out, together, to extend our love and caring. May our hearbeats drum with compassion that we, as well as others, feel restored.

Blessings to you all in the New Year, may we all feel the magic of love and friendship.

### **From Margaret Linton:**

Here it is December and thinking back to the CUUWA meeting in Vancouver. It was great fun to meet so many of you and put faces to names. Here is a photo from the meeting, where you can see (but, sadly, not hear) The Raging Grannies, our speaker, Audrey Siegl, and the Vancouver host organizer, Jennifer Podlecki. (Margaret's picture of the Raging Grannies can be seen above.)

My year has been closely intertwined with that of our new Syrian friends. Their good cheer is amazing considering all the obstacles of building a life in new culture and language. I am ever grateful for the predictable calm that is Canada.

My wish for us for the coming year:

May each of us bring happiness into another's life;  
may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;  
may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity. (Barbara Cheatham)

### **From Reverend Kathy Sage:**

My Season Wish is that as Unitarians and Universalists we deepen our understanding and lived application of our UU Principles and Sources. May our Sources enliven our direct experience, awaken our Prophetic words and deeds, broaden our wisdom, love more justly all neighbours, quicken our reasoning, and harmonize our consumption with nature's fragility.



## *O Holy Darkness, Loving Womb*

By Jann Aldredge-Clanton

This hymn text was written to accompany the tune St. Louis, commonly known as "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (#246 in Singing the Living Tradition).

About the author:

Rev. Dr. Jann Aldredge-Clanton is a feminist liberation theologian and a minister ordained in the Alliance of Baptists. Her blog, books, music, and more can be found on her website: [jannaldredgeclanton.com](http://jannaldredgeclanton.com)

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/music/o-holy-darkness-loving-womb>

O Holy Darkness, loving Womb, who nurtures and creates,  
sustain us through the longest night with dreams of open gates.

We move inside to mystery that in our center dwells,  
where streams of richest beauty flow from sacred, living wells.

Creative Darkness, closest friend, you whisper in the night;  
you calm our fears as unknown paths surprise us with new sight.

We marvel at your bounty, your gifts so full and free,  
unfolding as you waken us to new reality.

O Holy Night of deepest bliss, we celebrate your power;  
infuse us with your energy that brings our seeds to flower.  
The voice out of the darkness excites our warmest zeal  
to bring together dark and light, true holiness reveal.

O come to us Sophia, your image black and fair  
stirs us to end injustice and the wounds of Earth repair.  
The treasures of your darkness and riches of your grace  
inspire us to fulfill our call, our sacredness embrace.