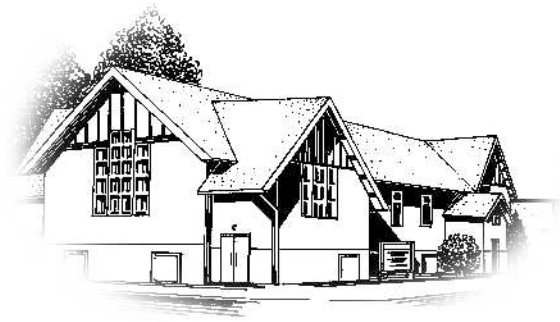


# Nine Unitarian Decades



1911



2003

A Pictorial Timeline of Unitarianism in Calgary  
2nd Edition

History and Archives Committee  
Unitarian Church of Calgary

Nine Unitarian Decades: A Pictorial Timeline of Unitarianism in Calgary.  
First edition, 1999.  
Second edition, 2003.

Prepared by the History and Archives Committee  
of the Unitarian Church of Calgary, June 2003:  
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Edited and produced by Pat and John Martin.

If you have articles, stories, or picture that you feel should be included in a future edition of this booklet, please talk to one of the members of the History and Archives Committee.

Warning: This booklet has been printed using water-soluble inks. Drops and spilled liquids will cause the inks to run!

**1907**

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association (BFUA) and the American Unitarian Association (AUA) sent Reverend Frank Wright Pratt of Massachusetts as Field Secretary to Western Canada.



**July 23, 1909**

The *Calgary Herald* announced three Unitarian services to be held the next day at the Arcade Theatre on 8th Avenue. Topics were:

- Unitarian Christianity Explored,
- Jesus and His Religion, and
- The Bible in the Light of Modern Scholarship.

*1900*

## January 1914

Leif Huseby arrived from New Jersey in November of 1913, to become minister the next year. He was minister for only six months, moving on to become an oil broker in Turner Valley. Bob Edwards' *Eye Opener* featured a cartoon congregation singing, "Praise



God from Whom OIL blessings flow; Praise Him OIL creatures here below."

## January 1916

William Irvine, former Presbyterian minister tried for heresy in Ontario but acquitted, was installed as minister. Irvine's political and social interests led him to write a political column in *The Albertan*; organize well-attended Sunday afternoon "People's Forums"; establish his own newspaper, *The Nutcracker*; and help form the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA). Irvine



resigned in 1919, to be eventually elected to Parliament.

# 1910

## 1910

By 1910 only one service a month was being held, meeting at the Empire Theatre. Attendance averaged about 150 per service. Monthly afternoon forums attracted 400–500 people, addressing political and social issues and later including a religious dimension. However, membership dwindled to about 75 at Pratt's departure in 1913.



## December 10, 1911

After meetings were held at the Globe Theatre for most of 1911, Unity Hall, at 917 – 14th Avenue SW (now the Full Gospel Church) was dedicated. The wood-frame structure of "simple Greek design" cost \$7,000, with title held by the American Unitarian Association (AUA).

## Last Service Held

### 1921

Following Irvine's departure in 1919, Church services continued as lay-led meetings. Participation declined, however, and the last service of the Unitarian Church of Calgary was held in 1921. Although the Women's Alliance continued to meet in Unity Hall for three or four years under Mrs. J. F. Charlton as president, the congregation eventually became inactive and remained so for over two decades.

# 1920

### 1921

The last Church service was held in Unity Hall in 1921. The American Unitarian Association (AUA), who held title to Unity Hall, then rented it to various groups.

**There is no record of any activities of the  
Unitarian Church of Calgary in these decades.**

*1930–1940*

**1946**

The American Unitarian Association (AUA), who held title to Unity Hall, had difficulty selling it because it leaned at an 80° angle and the dirt floor in the basement was constantly flooded. A buyer was finally found in 1946.

**July 14, 1956**

Unitarian minister Reverend Charles W. Eddis of Edmonton addressed a small group at the Palliser Hotel.

## Fellowship Established

**January 1957**

Following adoption of a constitution the previous month, 25 members formed a fellowship and elected officers. After initially meeting in the Manning-Egleston Lumber Company offices on 8th Avenue, the congregation moved to the conservatory of Mount Royal College on 7th Avenue SW.

## Women's Alliance

**1957**

The Women's Alliance formed again to get to know each other, to foster Unitarianism, and to strengthen the group. The Alliance's \$100 donation initiated a Building Fund.

## Quest Published

**1958**

The *Quest* newsletter began publishing two issues a month.

# 1950

**December 16, 1951**

A group met at the old YWCA to initiate a fellowship. Meetings continued for about a year, and then waned.



**1958**

After outgrowing the Mount Royal Conservatory, meetings were held at the Labour Temple at 11th Avenue and 2nd Street SE.

**1959**

The fellowship moved again, now meeting at the Star Temple at 10413 13th Avenue SE. Membership numbered 83, with 134 children in the Church School.

**September 1961**

Dwight Brown became our first full-time minister, leading morning and evening services which frequently featured a discussion period after the sermon.



**Fall 1964**

Violet Kochendoerfer, first woman to graduate from Starr King Ministry, served as our minister for three years.



**September 1968**

Jerome Howell became our first minister at our present location.



*1960*



**Early 1960s**

Our congregation returned to the Mount Royal College conservatory, with the Church School using the first two floors of the Kerby Building across the street.

**May 11, 1961**

The American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America merged to become the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations of North America (UUA).

**Spring 1968**

Mount Royal College could no longer accommodate our growing congregation, and we met briefly at the Oddfellows Temple at 517 Centre Street S.



**September 1968**

We moved to our current location, formerly Crescent Heights United Church. Services were held in what is now Wickenden Hall while the Church School met downstairs.



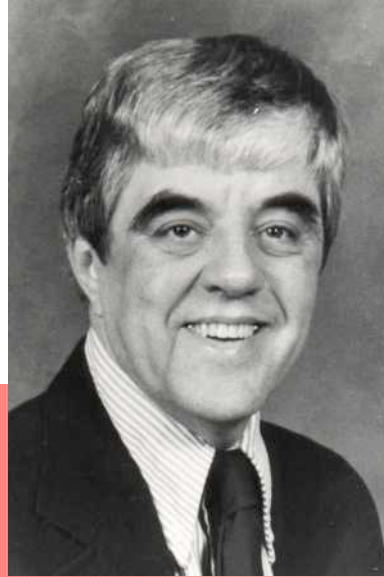
## Lay-Led Congregation

**1972**

Jerome Howell resigned as minister in the fall of 1971. From 1972 to 1979 the Church operated without a minister. It was a lay-led group with appointed chaplains to minister rites of passage. The congregation numbered about 120 members in 1979.

**September 12, 1979**

Jack C. Loadman, previously Unitarian minister in Weymouth, Massachusetts, was installed at the Unitarian Church of Calgary on September 12, 1979. Apart from his concern for religious and social service areas, Loadman took an active



interest in theatre and the arts. The congregation named him *minister emeritus* upon his retirement in 1991.

# 1970

**1979**

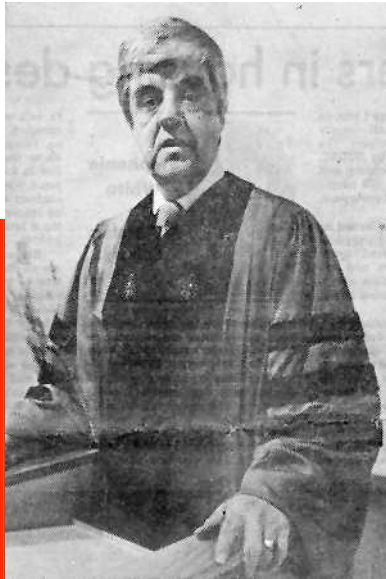
Anthony Mardiros writes *William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical*, an authoritative biography.

**1979**

Mary and Des Smyth begin selling Christmas cakes baked at the Church as a fundraiser, and continued for 12 years. In the busiest years over 600 cakes were sold, and it became a year-round project as supplies were sought at the best price. Mary baked the light fruit cakes, while Isobel Grayston baked the dark ones. They were both helped by a small group of dedicated volunteers.

**June 14, 1980**

Jack Loadman's outspoken views attracted much media attention. This *Calgary Herald* photo accompanied a story stating, "Unitarians are free to worship their own or no god at all. Unitarians pass judgment on their own individual actions and morality."



# 1980

**November 1981**

Rev. Eugene Pickett, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, visited Calgary in 1981 and 1984. In interviews he commented on the dramatic growth of the Calgary congregation in the last few years.



**November 29-30, 1986**

The congregation celebrated the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Unitarian Fellowship in Calgary. Dr. Phillip Hewett from Vancouver was guest speaker.



**May 18-21, 1984**

The Unitarian Church of Calgary hosted the 23rd Annual Conference of the Canadian Unitarian Council, in Banff. Roy Bonisteel was considered a dramatic and unusual choice for a theme speaker at the conference.



**October 1986**

From left: William McKee and Douglas Cass of the Glenbow Museum, and Ruth Barker, Helen Green, and Helen Backhouse oversaw the transfer of historical documents of the Church to Glenbow Archives.



**May 27, 1989**

Ruth Barker was the recipient of the first William Irvine Award for Extraordinary Service, given by the Church at a special dinner.

### **Fall 1991**

Lisa Presley led the Church as interim minister for two years after Jack Loadman's retirement in the summer of 1991.



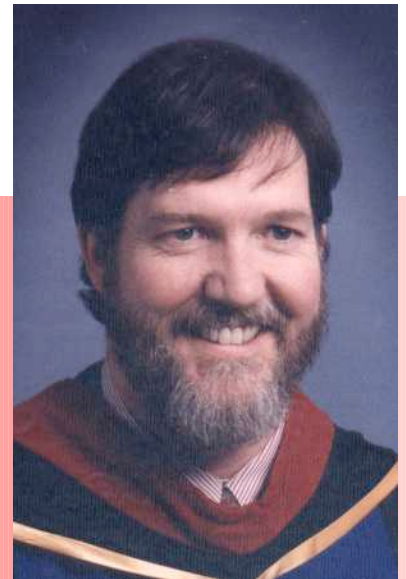
### **1993**

Josiah Bartlett also led the Church as interim minister.



### **1994**

Roderick M. Brown, previously Unitarian minister in Pensacola, Florida, was installed as full-time minister of the Church. Rod frequently referred to himself as a “mystical, humanist, transcendentalist sort of guy.”



# 1990

### **June 1992**

The Western Canada District hosted the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Calgary, with over 2,200 members attending from around the globe.

### **December 1, 1993**

Mauricio Romero accepted sanctuary in the Church. Mauricio had fled El Salvador to Canada, and feared imprisonment or death if he was forced to return. He stayed in the Church until receiving permission to remain in Canada in May 1994.

### **May 1996**

The Church joined the CUC/UUA Partner Church Program, and shared information with and provided friendship and support to the 3rd Unitarian Church of Cluj (Kolozsvár), Romania, through 2001.

### **October 10-13, 1997**

The Church hosted the Annual Conference of the Western Canada District of the UUA. A highlight was the musical comedy, *Are You My Mother?*, by Calgary Unitarian Jennie Paine.

## August 2002

Dana Worsnop served her first professional ministry as interim minister in Calgary, after Rod Brown returned to teaching in 2001. During the interim year, Dana reinvigorated and challenged the Church with moving sermons and thoughtful services (even including pets). Membership grew by 15% and the Church took on several new projects,



including one of Dana's favourites, the "Green Sanctuary" program.

## August 2003

Meg Roberts, previously Unitarian minister in Edmonton and Montréal, was called as minister of the Church. Active in the denomination, she is on the Religious Education Curriculum Task Force of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. Meg calls herself a panentheist, seeking to engage the life-



transforming power of Spirit to work towards a more loving and just world.

# 2000

## May 19–22, 2000

During the Annual Conference of the CUC in Calgary, negotiators were directed to reach a new agreement with the UUA to define the structure of the community of congregations in Canada.

## June 30, 2000

The Church formally became a "Welcoming Congregation," committed to "uphold the dignity of all human beings" and "challenge and educate those who diminish the rights of another person."



## September 2001

Although our two-year sponsorship of Faradin and Ylfete Canhasi and their children as Kosovo refugees formally ended, many members and friends continue to help the family.

## 2002–2003

An all-Church Vision Quest weekend in June 2002 and a wildly successful canvass in November led to the initiation of three "visionary" projects in 2003: "Empty Bowls in Calgary", "Green Sanctuary", and a leadership development program.

## Index

- American Unitarian Association  
1907, 1911, 1921, 1946, 1961
- Backhouse, Helen..... 1986
- Barker, Ruth..... 1986, 1989
- Bartlett, Josiah..... 1991
- Bonisteel, Roy..... 1984
- British and Foreign Unitarian  
Association..... 1907
- Brown, Dwight..... 1961
- Brown, Roderick M..... 1994
- Calgary Herald*..... 1909, 1980
- Canadian Unitarian Council..... 1984, 2000
- Canhasi Family..... 2001
- Cass, Douglas..... 1986
- Charlton, Mrs. J. F..... 1921
- Christmas cakes..... 1979
- Churches  
Unitarian Church..... 1968  
Unity Hall..... 1911
- Crescent Heights United Church..... 1968
- Eddis, Charles W..... 1956
- Empty Bowls in Calgary..... 2003
- Eye Opener*..... 1914
- Fellowship..... 1951, 1957
- First Unitarian Services in Calgary..... 1909
- Glenbow Museum and Archives..... 1986
- Grayston, Isobel..... 1979
- Green, Helen..... 1986
- Green Sanctuary..... 2003
- Hewett, Phillip..... 1986
- Howell, Jerome..... 1968
- Huseby, Leif..... 1914
- Irvine, William..... 1916
- Kerby Building..... 1960s
- Kochendoerfer, Violet..... 1964
- Kosovo Refugees..... 2001
- Labour Temple..... 1958
- Leadership Development Program..... 2003
- Loadman, Jack C..... 1979, 1980
- Manning-Egleston Lumber Company... 1957
- Mardiros, Anthony..... 1979
- McKee, William..... 1986
- Ministers  
Bartlett, Josiah..... 1993  
Brown, Dwight..... 1961  
Brown, Roderick M..... 1994  
Howell, Jerome..... 1968  
Huseby, Leif..... 1914  
Irvine, William..... 1916  
Kochendoerfer, Violet..... 1964  
Loadman, Jack C..... 1979  
Presley, Lisa..... 1991  
Roberts, Meg..... 2003  
Worsnop, Dana..... 2002
- Mount Royal College..... 1957, 1960s
- Nutcracker, The*..... 1916
- Oddfellows Temple..... 1968
- Partner Church Program..... 1996
- Pickett, Eugene..... 1981
- Presley, Lisa..... 1991
- Quest* newsletter..... 1958
- Roberts, Meg..... 2003
- Romero, Mauricio..... 1993
- Smyth, Mary and Des..... 1979
- Star Temple..... 1959
- Starr King Ministry..... 1964
- Thirtieth Anniversary of the Unitarian  
Fellowship in Calgary..... 1986
- Unitarian services, first in Calgary..... 1909
- Unitarian Universalist Association  
1961, 1981, 1992, 2000
- United Farmers of Alberta..... 1916
- Unity Hall..... 1911, 1921, 1946
- Universalist Church of America..... 1961
- Vision Quest..... 2002
- Welcoming Congregation..... 2000
- Western Canada District..... 1992, 1997
- William Irvine Award..... 1989
- William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie  
Radical*..... 1979
- Women's Alliance..... 1921, 1957
- Worsnop, Dana..... 2002
- Wright, Frank..... 1907
- YWCA, Old..... 1951