



LAKESHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
 5065 Sherbrooke Street,
 Lachine, Qc. H8T 1H9
 (514) 637-6974

MARCH 2017

MARCH 5TH - 10:30 am.

**Traditional Values in the Transformation of Local
 And Global Food Systems
 Timothy Johns**

The linkage of agricultural production by small-scale rural farmers in developing countries with the diets of growing urban populations can draw effectively on wild and cultivated biological biodiversity. I will draw primarily on case-studies in Sub-Saharan Africa to discuss efforts to facilitate the transformation of increasingly market-based food systems in ways that are sustainable environmentally, economically and in relation to human health. Many indigenous plant foods, such as leafy vegetables, have superior nutritional and health-promoting properties to cereals and other staple crops; they can be critical buffers to malnutrition related to deficiency in vitamins and minerals on one hand and to diabetes and cardiovascular diseases associated with the over-consumption and obesity on the other.

Service Leader: Gary Spiller
Musician: Kerry-Anne Kutz

Hospitality: Christopher Thomson
TBA

A POT LUCK LUNCH follows this service – please bring food for us all to share.

MARCH 12TH – 10:30am.

IT'S SIMPLE – WE NEED A CHANGE NOW

Rev. Kathy Sage

Why mark International Women's Day in 2017? Aren't we 'beyond' women's issues? This year more than ever we need to re-frame International Women's Day to help everyone recognize the simple changes that are 'overdue', urgent, and so important in the world this year. As Unitarians we've often led the way. This is not the time to feel overwhelmed. Come explore *Intersectional, Intentional, and Interconnected* to clarify plans for change now. Our world is counting on us.

Service Leader: Sheila Laursen

Hospitality: Monique Riedel

Musician: Kerry-Anne Kutz

Rob Lutes

MARCH 19TH – 10:30 am.

WORLD WATER DAY

Gary Spiller

Canada Water week (March 20-27) and World Water Day March 22 reminds us of the critical water issues including clean drinking water, effects of climate change on arctic sea ice, warming in the Pacific ocean and getting polluters to pay for water treatment downstream.

Water success stories: What can we do to improve water quality in Canada especially in first nations communities.

"Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects." Dali Lama

Water is of Global importance, fresh water is a basic right for all living things, so let's get the word out all around the world!

What is happening to water supply and quality? What can we do to ensure clean drinking water? How can we reduce the loss of arctic sea ice? What is the effect of climate change on water supplies? How can the polluter pays principle be used to improve our drinking water quality in Montreal?

Service Leader: Dan Amstutz

Hospitality: Sari Kelen

Musician: Kerry-Anne Kutz

Phil Prince

SERVICE AUCTION to follow service – light refreshments will be served.

See page 5 for details

MARCH 26TH - 10:30 am.

**END OF LIFE CARE IN CANADA
Rev. Heather Fraser-Fawcett**

A recent study of end of life care found that almost 70% of dying Canadians said they would like less aggressive, less technological, and less institutional care. What are the challenges and opportunities for changes to our health care system to accommodate these desires? How can individuals, families, and communities be involved in end of life decisions? These are practical matters and spiritual concerns we need to consider.

**Service Leader: Monique Riedel
Musician: TBA**

**Hospitality: Sara McDonald
Dori Abbott**

CARING COMMITTEE

We are glad to hear that **Blake Camp** is recovering well from his bypass surgery and that **Rev. Heather** is doing well after cataract surgery.

Hélène Cimon is recovering from shingles and **Jean Merrifield** is feeling better after having had pneumonia. We wish that everyone of you will soon be restored to good health.

**There was an old man with a beard
Who said it is just as I feared!
Two owls and a hen
Four larks and a wren
Have all built there nests in my beard
- Edward Lear**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's March! Can you feel the stirrings of spring in the air? The weather is teasing us a little, isn't it... For me, March brings hope for new beginnings, new energy and vitality. It's time to dust off the cobwebs from our shoulders from being sedentary and cooped up inside all winter. It's time to begin thinking about those spring cleaning projects, and not just the ones where we purge junk from our closets, but also some of the junk we've accumulated in our thoughts. Time to purge those winter blues, and make way for all the beauty and growth that the spring season heralds.

I think our Pasta Bar and Line Dancing Fundraiser was a lot of fun and was a great way to shake off some of the mid-winter gloom. While I don't have the final result of the money raised, I would like to take a moment to thank everyone, who helped put the activity together. Kudos to **Sari Kelen**, who organized the teams of helpers and pasta sauce makers, as well as shopping with **Cat Forbes** for the pasta and desserts. The hall was beautifully decorated under the watchful eye of **Jose van Amerongen** and her team and **Vanessa Soldano**, our pasta expert, who rallied the SE to prepare and serve all the pasta. And for **Peg Wooley**, who organized the line dance animator, who turned our motley crew into somewhat competent line dancers!

Kerry-Anne's Festival de la Voix will be a major highlight at the end of March – see page 6. I hope you will all take the opportunity to attend the concerts and/or workshops, it's definitely worth the price of admission!

- *Irene*

Why don't you join 15,000 others at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Hudson on Sat March 18th. This is a fun event for all ages.

LUUC SERVICE AUCTION – MARCH 19TH – CALL FOR OFFERS

Could you bake a cake, or have a special recipe for delicious soup, or bread - or chili - or something else?

Would you like to prepare and host others for a special supper and congenial evening?

Could you knit or crochet a hat or scarf for someone?

Do you enjoy fixing leaking faucets, or doing other home repair tasks?

Could you organize a movie afternoon in your home, or a sing-a-long, or a discussion?

Could you offer lessons- such as singing, dancing, cooking, knitting, etc, etc?

Could you tutor someone - in math, or language skills, or getting the most from your computer?

Do you have a guided outing to offer, such as a canoe trip, or a weekend at a cottage, or tickets to the theatre or an event?

The possibilities of offers for our Service Auction are as endless as our imaginations and talents.....what would you like to offer?

Please make an offer to contribute to our Service Auction that will be held on March 19. Hand in the offer form (available at church) or contact Sheila Laursen 514 697-4195, or by email at sheila.laursen@bell.net

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING RAISE FUNDS FOR OUR CONGREGATION IN
THIS FUN WAY!**

FESTIVAL DE LA VOIX

Friends and fellow LUUCers! The FOURTH Festival de la Voix is taking place from Tuesday, March 21st to Wednesday, March 29th. The theme this year is "Songs of Our Roots and Family Ties" in celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, Montreal's 375th birthday and Dorval's 125th birthday!

The wonderful singer and entertainer Connie Kaldor (who wrote **Wood River**) will perform a concert with her family on Tuesday, March 21st, 7:30 p.m. at Christ Church Beaurepaire near the Woodland exit at 7:30 p.m.

The Gala concert will be held on Friday, March 24th. There will be more than sixty voices in our mass choir Le chœur Vox Aeterna and the concert will feature soloists and music of Quebec, Canada, Syria, Ireland, Italy, Austria, northern Quebec (throat singers), and a touch of gospel! Our very own **Karine Deschamps** will be the special guest for the Gala concert along with her sister and mother, the great Judi Richards and Monique Fauteux of Harmonium!

On March 25th there's a concert for seniors (**Golden Voices**) with Generations Big Band, Quavaria Vocal Ensemble and Island City Barbershop Chorus and fiddler Jason Biem with his mom Dr. Sandra Biem on piano. Rides and limousines are available for this event.

We have **Rock 'n Blues** on Saturday night the 25th featuring the young rock band Made Them Lions which recently toured right across Canada.

And la pièce de résistance: Four choirs singing at the beautiful Église St-Joachim in Pointe-Claire on Sunday afternoon, March 26th, 17h00 in a concert entitled **Choralissimo!**

Our six workshops on Alexander Technique, The Singer Storyteller (acting workshop with an incredible actor/professor Joan McBride), song-writing with our own Rob Lutes and a Great Gospel, a workshop with Marcia Bailey! Two of the acting workshops are already full but we've opened up a third to accommodate more people! You can find our tickets on Brown Paper Tickets or contact **Kerry-Anne Kutz at** (514) 758-3641

'NO CONGREGATION IS AN ISLAND ENTIRE OF ITSELF'

My apologies to John Donne for cribbing the title of this month's piece on Stewardship from his famous poem. A few years ago I was visiting St. Augustine in Florida and a Sunday morning found myself in good fellowship with a bunch of Unitarians listening to a Buddhist teacher. It was a wonderful experience to find a piece of what I call home in a strange city in a strange land. It was a powerful reminder for me that we are Unitarian-Universalists, part of a broad movement existing in several countries, of free-minded searchers. Again, this past Fall, our own Congregation hosted the Canadian Unitarian Council's Eastern Fall Regional Gathering, bringing together members of our denomination from Kingston through to the Maritimes with about a quarter of our own members who participated. For those of us who took part, it was a rewarding, learning experience and an occasion for sharing beyond our own immediate community.

We couldn't have put this on without the active support of the personnel and resources of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). Just as our own LUUC is sustained by the contributions of time, energy and money by our members and friends so too is the CUC sustained by the support of the Canadian Unitarian-Universalist communities who are its members. The CUC, in addition to being a resource for its member bodies, is also the national voice of Unitarian Universalism in Canada. The CUC currently asks member congregations to provide financial support at the level of \$93 per voting member though the financing formula is up for discussion this coming summer. During the last five years, LUUC has not been contributing at that level.

The 2012 LUUC Annual General Meeting voted to give \$70 per member, but a special meeting later that year reduced the contribution to \$45. Since then subsequent Boards have discussed and referred to committee for study the question of CUC dues, without any revision of our contribution. The current Board, energized by the recent collaboration with CUC, has judged it appropriate to return to a higher level of contribution this year. So we have paid the denomination \$2660, i.e., 38 voting members times \$70, which compares with \$1440 last year, i.e., 32 voting members times \$45. We hope that the members of LUUC will share in the Board's appreciation of the value of membership in the CUC, which constitutes a key part of the spiritual and cultural ecosystem within which our own immediate congregation thrives.

- Christopher Thomson, Treasurer

DEAR CHRISTOPHER THOMSON, TREASURER

In response to the article titled "*Some Thoughts on Sustaining and Growing Our Community*" in the February Newsletter, I must admit that I am somewhat confused as the message being sent is not clear to me. I think it is about a money shortage at LUUC, and the Board developing a conversation about stewardship, but is the Board asking the membership to increase their pledges? to do more fund-raising? or to agree with taking money out of our endowment funds? – or all of these actions?..... and what precisely makes this necessary at this time?

The second paragraph of the article presents a positive picture of LUUC – are you hinting that we should be willing to pay more for this?

You then speak about withdrawing income from our endowment fund "is far from unusual". I agree that it has been necessary to do this for many years at LUUC but I think we should always strive to protect these funds. I also know of the church that "*gets nearly one-third of its total income from its endowment fund*" but this is an old well-established church that has a large membership, a large endowment, owns a modern church and property in Westmount, and does not rely on growth.

Without growth LUUC will not survive and I think this is where we should put our emphasis. I believe that we can grow at this time as many people who have left the orthodox churches are now actively looking for a place where they can find all the good things that happen at LUUC. I still have a dream that LUUC will grow and I want to hang on to our endowment money and one day have a home of our own.

Perhaps a clear picture of the budget and the steps the Board is taking to meet our financial obligations could be printed in our next Newsletter. Personally, I like to be given a realistic picture – so a little more straight talk and less beating around the bush might help!

- Peg Wooley

\$\$\$ OUR FINANCES \$\$\$

I'd like to comment on our Treasurer's article in the February newsletter – "*Some Thoughts on Sustaining and Growing our Community.*" He mentioned the perennial problem of a shortfall in our revenues. For the last 20 years, (and more) 19 treasurers have chosen to dip into the Investment Fund – to the tune of \$10,000 - \$17,000 per annum. Over this period, this has amounted to more than a quarter of a million of our dollars. A lot of LUUC money!

Christopher Thomson states that the Quebec Government requires that we donate 3.5% to charity each year. 3.5% of our investments (\$300,000.00 approx.) amounts to a whopping \$10,500. We at LUUC drink very expensive Fair Trade coffee each Sunday; donate canned goods to the Roxboro food bank; raised \$17,967.00 for Child Haven last September; support 2 children in Africa (SFA) at \$500.00 per year, etc. – and then there's our Syrian refugee family, who for some time to come will require extra help for medicals, visas and rent, etc. This adds up to more than double the Government's request.

In Christopher's article in this current issue of the newsletter (page 7), I was disappointed to note that the Board decided to increase the annual payments to CUC – and unfortunately, they had to dip into our reserves to do that. A few years ago, the fees were cut "*until we get back on our feet financially.*" What is wrong with trying to remain solvent? I feel this action sends the wrong message – if we take money from our reserves to give away – this will be reflected in a lower Sunday Plate. If however, we have a plan for the investments, (stated clearly) then people will respond and be far more generous with their donations. I truly believe this - it worked for me!

All these are very worthy causes – but we have to know when enough is enough. How can we "*sustain our community*" if we give so much of our money away? Surely, Charity begins at home.

We will generate more income if we increase our membership - this is where I'd like to see our money spent.

- Heather Falconer



Happy Birthday to **Peter Abbott** on March 3rd. - we hear he has already had a big birthday party to help him celebrate.

It's **Henry Frost's** birthday on March 4th. We hope you enjoy your special day Henry – see you soon.

Our favourite trumpet player, **Michael Cartile** has a birthday on March 6th – have a wonderful day Michael.

Happy Birthday to **Jessica Burpee** on March 14th – it's always nice to see you Jessica.

Lovely **Simone Lutes** is growing up fast – she was a babe in arms when we first met her. Happy Birthday Simone.

A young lass from old County Down
Was arrested for painting the town
“It just got in me head
To paint the town **RED”**
Which she did in her night-sleeping gown.
- Denise Rodgers

COME TO THE SERVICE AUCTION ON MARCH 19TH – IT'S A FUND-RAISER
– AND LOTS OF FUN!

BRIGHTER DAY

Sometimes small things become big things. I was in a Ste. Anne's shop not long ago, when a gorgeous woman floated in – she was dressed completely in purple, stockings, coat, hat and a saucy purple boa – you couldn't miss her. Both she and I had our shades on – but somehow we couldn't stop looking at each other – and then at the same moment, we recognized each other. "Heather," she proclaimed loudly for all to hear, "I'm still married after 37 years! – You did a good job – the marriage stuck." Big hugs ensued – and the whole store had to know that I had married her all those years ago - and that she was now a grandmother – and everyone in her family was hearty and happy.

I well remember that wedding in the back garden of a charming Baie d'Urfe home on a beautiful sunny day – with love oozing out of the flowers. The bride carried a bouquet of simple field daisies. I was so tickled pink that the purple lady recognized me after all that time – that for a short while, I was whirling around in her magic - she certainly brightened up my day! - ed

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE

If you give regularly to various charities, you may be interested to hear about a useful website entitled **Charity Intelligence** (www.charityintelligence.ca) which rates and reviews Canadian charities so that donors can be informed, give intelligently and have impact. You can see a summary of charity financial statements and find out about salaries and administrative costs. They also have a listing of top-rated 4-star charities. Information on charities may also be accessed on the Canadian Revenue Agency website under charities. Submitted by the Merging Waters Outreach Committee

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BACKGROUND TO LUUC'S KNITTING GROUP

Several years ago Kathy Prystasz started our knitting group. Kathy moved to Ottawa two years later, yet we kept on going. We started with knitting squares and made several beautiful blankets which we donated to the Veterans in Ste. Anne's, various senior homes, as well as Suitcases for Africa, (SFA.) Our colourful handiwork was featured in the Gazette. Our next project, also for SFA was to crochet 'mattresses' that we made out of plastic milk bags. The women and their babies in African prisons sleep on bare earth floors, and our mattresses acted as a barrier to keep out the damp and the bugs. Later we knitted little dolls for Doctors without Borders and sent them over-seas for small children in trauma hospitals. We are presently making baby hats for the same purpose. We like to have a project going and were pleased to undertake knitting several cherry-red scarves for our choir. Concurrently with these projects, we make mittens and scarves for our Christmas Mitten Tree. Last Christmas these items were delivered to our next-door neighbours at the Maple Grove School.

We meet in each other's homes and while we are knitting, we discuss books, movies, politics and ideas for our Church. We always put on a small Christmas Bazaar selling our baking products and in the past we have organized several mini- bazaars throughout the year, raising upwards of \$800 to help fill our LUUC coffers. We started the Caring Committee a few years ago and recently organized flower arrangements for the altar. We feel as a group that we are quite productive in our own unique way. Everyone is welcome to join.

Perhaps other groups within the Congregation would like to tell us their story.

- Dori Abbott

Hot News – we have 2 non-LUUCers wanting to join our group!

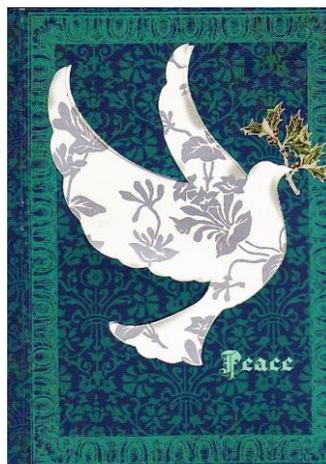
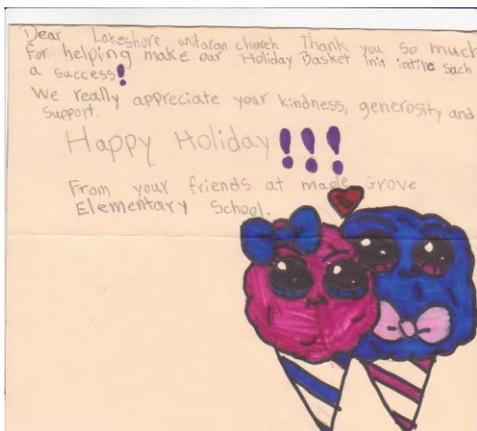
COME TO THE SERVICE AUCTION ON MARCH 19TH – IT'S A FUND-RAISER
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THANK-YOU FROM MAPLE-GROVE SCHOOL

This year we partnered with our neighbour – Maple Grove School – to execute our annual Christmas Basket Project. We contacted Corine Guy, the coordinator of their Christmas Basket Programme who selected a needy family from their list of those families designated to receive one.

Corine was able to be a liaison between us and the family, so that the follow-through was easy. We also took all the items donated for our “mitten tree” to the school for distribution.

The following thank-you notes were received from the students and from Corine:



- Susan Czarnocki

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HEAR THE EARTH'S CALL

Carly Gaynor's talk to us on February 19th was inspired by the Canadian Unitarian Council's new vision statement for Canadian Unitarian Universalism: **"Our interdependence calls us to love and justice."** She considers this both "a simple statement and a radical one: We are called to love and justice. Not just love. Not just justice. But both. And we are called not by a book, not by a specific person, not by a governing body, nor by a God or Goddess, but by our connection to one another and all life. Embraced in the interdependent web of all existence, we are called by that same web to return the embrace not just in words but in acts... acts that increase the love and justice in the world."

She began with the observation that "currently much of our relationship to the "web of life" is mediated through our busyness." She quoted Joanna Macy, an environmental activist: "Both the progressive destruction of our world and our capacity to slow down and stop that destruction can be understood as a function of our experience of time. ... By opening up our experience of time in organic, ecological, and even geological terms and in revitalizing relationship with other species, other eras--we can allow life to continue on Earth."

We should be acting to make our UU communities places that help us "slow down, build connection, and from that rooted place, work for healing. Act to make them places where social justice isn't just one more thing on the agenda, but is integrated into the fabric of living life together. It is "our interdependence that calls us to love and justice."

Carly spoke of her hope that our Unitarian Universalist communities can be sustained as places on the edges between the calm and the hurried. The challenge is to create spiritual communities that offer not just monastery refuge from the world, nor a brief hour of sanctuary to inoculate against another week of chaos, but ones that offer practical tools to navigate the busyness of life, to find new ways of being. She motivated us to engage in shaping these tools through the realization that it is the "river flowin' in my soul", and not our productivity, or busy agenda or success that gives us inherent worth and dignity. It is our connections: to our loved ones, to every living thing on this earth, to each other, that invites us, compels us to work for a more beautiful, just, peaceful world.

- Susan Czarnocki

WHAT'S ON AT THE MOVIES

SOUP AND CINE: Tuesday March 7th at 7:00 p.m. at Union's Adair Hall, 24 Maple, Ste-Anne's: (admission \$7.00)

“Wadjda” is a movie of firsts. This is the first feature film made by a female Saudi filmmaker, and the first feature film shot entirely in Saudi Arabia. The story is of an enterprising young girl living in Riyadh determined to raise enough money to buy a bike in a society that sees bicycles as dangerous to a girl's virtue. Wadjda is not a model student, but she decides to sign up for her school's Koran recitation competition in order to win the prize money to help her purchase the green bicycle that has captured her interest. Wadjda's mother is too preoccupied trying to convince her husband not to take a second wife, that at first she doesn't realize what is going on.

POINTE CLAIRE LIBRARY: (admission free)

Tuesday March 14th at 1:30pm: **“A Bigger Splash”** – with Ralph Fiennes – a light comedy.

Tuesday March 28th at 1:30 pm – **“Snowden”** – concerning Edward Snowden, who fled to Russia after he leaked information of shocking surveillance practices by the National Security Agency.

Wednesday March 29th at 7:00 pm – **“Deep Water Horizon”** with Mark Wahlberg, Kurt Russel and John Malkovich concerning the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

* * * *

Mary writes: ...Re: Chasing the Winter Blues Away.

I really enjoyed this morning's service. **Kerry-Anne** came with **Michael Cartile** and it was a tremendously fun morning. **Rob Lutes** even had a singalong song: he mentioned that he is a self-taught guitarist.

I remember that Larry King once interviewed Paul McCartney; McCartney was asked if he was a good guitarist. Replied Sir Paul: "I'm a great guitarist!"

~ **Mary Hunter**

AND

We all enjoyed a musical *Ban the Winter Blues* service featuring **Kerry-Anne Kutz, Rob Lutes, Michael Cartile** and **Karine Deschamps**.

Karine started it off by jazzing up the Children's Time – and danced up the aisle leading the children out of the church to their classes. Kerry-Anne and Rob, both professional musicians, told their story and passionate for music. Kerry-Anne sang and played a piece by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as well as the haunting song *The Windmills of Your Mind*. Rob accompanied himself on his guitar –and composed one of the songs he sang. We so appreciate their many talents.

- *ed*

175 YEARS OF UNITARIANISM IN MONTREAL

The Unitarian Church of Montreal is celebrating its 175th Anniversary, and they have organized an exciting lineup of special events and activities, that we are invited to enjoy too!

On February 15th, Peg Wooley, Mary Hunter and **Sheila Laursen** enjoyed recorded organ music from the old church on Simpson Street, followed by a delicious luncheon and then a wonderful piano recital by a McGill post-graduate student in Music.

On Sunday March 19, there will be a Symposium from 2-4 p.m. at UCM, on "Remaining Religiously Relevant", with keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Paul Rasor, author of *Faith Without Certainty: Liberal Religion in the 21st Century*. A panel discussion will follow on the future of religion in a secular society. This event is co-sponsored by the Montreal Theological College.

- *Sheila Laursen*

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A HORRIFIC TRAGEDY AND A HEALING RESPONSE

On Sunday, January 29, the late night TV News led with the shocking and horrifying details of an attack on a Quebec City mosque - with 6 people killed as they were praying, and several others injured when a gunman deliberately shot everyone he could.

I was so distraught about this that I sent an email to Mehmet Deger, the President of the Dorval mosque at midnight:

“I am shocked, horrified and devastated at the unfolding news about a deadly attack on a mosque in Quebec City. I don't know what to say other than I am sick about this, and hold you, your family and your Dorval members in my thoughts and heart. If you need people to stand vigil in solidarity outside the mosque, I will volunteer. With deep sympathy, Sheila”

I woke up the next morning, to learn that Mehmet had already been interviewed by CBC Radio at 6:45 a.m. about the tragedy, which continued to unfold...

By noon that Monday, I had not been able to reach Mehmet, but my overwhelming need to show solidarity and support had grown so much that I decided to take action immediately, before I headed off to my volunteer 1:30 - 6:00 p.m. shift at Dix Milles Villages.

In spite of not knowing if Mehmet would agree (although in my heart I was sure he would...) I decided to send out word of a vigil at the Dorval mosque for 6 p.m. that same evening. I emailed it to our Summerlea Refugee Support Coalition and West Island Refugee Network members, and to Shaheen and Uzma, two Muslim women who are active in our West Island community.

My suggested “plan” was that we would stand outside the mosque, in silent vigil with candles, and then sing the song “Oh Fearful Ones” that was originally written a year ago by a Raging Granny in Madison, Wisconsin, and which I adapted that Monday morning to fit this current tragedy. I had included the words to the song in my email.

I asked to leave Dix Mille earlier than usual that evening, and as I drove to the Dorval mosque at 5:45 p.m., I figured I might be joined by 30 people.....well, after I was able to find a parking spot down the road from the mosque, I found that about 20 people were waiting outside for me, shivering in the bitter wind of that night, and at least 15 had already accepted Mehmet's invitation to come in, take off their boots, and to be seated in the mosque's prayer space.

Upon climbing up the stairs inside the mosque, each one of us was greeted with a warm welcome and handshake from Mehmet and his wife as we entered the prayer space. And people kept arriving, and coming in....until over 200 people were there, finding a seat or a spot on the plush oriental rug. There we were - people of all ages and colours - packed together, sharing greetings, condolences, and support with each other. Most had never been in a mosque before.

Mehmet expressed gratitude for our presence, and our support. We sang "Oh Fearful Ones" together - with tears in our eyes and a lump in our throats. And then Mehmet invited whoever wished to speak to come to the microphone....

I still find it hard to describe the overwhelming spirit of togetherness that followed, so I will quote the words Rev. Vicki Cowan of Union Church used to share her experience at her following Sunday service:

"John and I experienced a profound sense of connection with this Moslem faith community and those like us who were there to support and protect them. And there was more. As people shared from the heart, faces began to glow. People became radiant. The room lit up. There we were, fulfilling our gospel lesson that calls us to be light-bearers. Light-bearers bringing out the God colours of the world."

The "light-bearers" who spoke that evening included a 4 year old girl who told us that "we are different, and that is nice - and good" and a 14 year old boy who stated that he believes not in God, but in justice for all. Two Protestant ministers, a couple of Muslim women, and at least a dozen other people shared their sorrow, their support and their determination to build together, strong and safe communities for us to live and play in peace and harmony.

As we left the mosque an hour and a half later, we were greeted with two snowbanks of flickering lights from the many candles that had been planted in the snow. Only later did I learn that about 20 people never made it inside, and braved the cold, keeping vigil and singing “Amazing Grace”.

Amazing Grace it was indeed. For me, and for most of us there, it was a spiritual experience; one that we will hold close in our hearts for a long time to come.

On Sunday February 12, in spite of the deepening snowstorm that afternoon, many people accepted the Open House invitation of 14 Montreal area mosques, of which the Dorval mosque was one. Once again, those of us gathered there shared a strong desire to increase understanding, to build interfaith commitment and to offer mutual support.

And we can! At the Vigil, Mehmet replied to a question from our Jose Van Amerongen about how we can learn more about Islam. He noted that they hold classes every Saturday (from 10 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.) for children and adults, and that anyone is welcome to come.

I plan to do so, and would like to arrange for a group of us from LUUC - youth and adults to attend one Saturday. If you would like to join me, let me know: **Sheila Laursen** 514 697-4195 or by email at sheila.laursen@bell.net

RUDDIGORE BY THE LAKESHORE LIGHT OPERA

At Lakeside Academy theatre – opposite LUUC - the Lakeshore Light Opera are presenting two matinees, on Sunday March 5th and Saturday March 11th, both at 2 pm. – and four evening shows, on Friday, March 3rd, Saturday, March 4th, Thursday March 9th and Friday, March 10th - all at 8 pm.

Tickets available now at (514-804-4900) and leave a message or at our website (www.llo.org) and be connected to Brown Paper Tickets.

- David Johansen, Lakeshore Light Opera

