

LAKESHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
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FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

ZOOMING ALONG!

With churches still closed, and the Covid variant still un-checked, we will continue our LUUC Sunday services on Zoom only until further notice.

LIVING OUR UU PRINCIPLES AND VALUES and LEARNING FROM FIRST NATIONS

Topics for our Sunday services are inspired by the UUA's monthly Worship Themes. For February 2022, the worship themes are ***Widening the Circle and Power***. And with this being the month of St. Valentine, we have added a dose of ***Love*** for good measure.

We also try to reflect the seven sacred teachings in Indigenous culture: truth, honesty, courage, respect, wisdom, humility and love. We hope you will find these teachings reflected in our Sunday Services.
 ~ Sheila Laursen

FESTIVAL DE LA VOIX 2022 – MARCH 19 – APRIL 10.

The **Festival de la Voix** welcomes each of you with love, care and hope for our world to be well again. We have created a lineup of incredible **concerts and workshops** which we hope to present in person this year.

More details to come – tickets and registration forms will be available soon
514-758-3641 or info@festivaldelavoix.com

February 6, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.

**The Gods Within My Hero's Journey
Scott MacLeod**

It is always a joy to welcome Scott MacLeod back to our congregation. In the past, he has shared his animated early immigrant stories from three of Canada's largest cultural communities as well as the heartbreaking tale of one of Canada's indigenous peoples, the Abenaki.

Scott will now share with us his own story. He has created a series of self-portraits examined via grounded theory in an art-based research exploration of his identity and past, present and future. He collected nine cultural myths/gods of his predecessors that best reflect his own life history - what Joseph Campbell called the "hero's journey".

Service Leader - Rob Lutes

Musicians - Kerry-Anne Kutz & Michael Cartile

Zoom Host - Margaret Godbeer

Greeters- Kathy Matyas and Nancy Schmidt

Joys & Concerns - Kathy

February 13, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.

**What the World Needs Now — A Larger Love
Rev. Carole Martignacco**

One feature of pandemic time is our continually shifting social landscape. Activities, events, appointments and gatherings are cancelled and endlessly rescheduled; schools and businesses close and reopen repeatedly. It used to be the snowy weather.

For one constant in today's world, we need look no further than the timeless theme of love. Call it Universalism writ large — together let's re-imagine what love looks like in our time.

Service Leader - Sheila Laursen

Musicians - Kerry-Anne Kutz & Michael Cartile

Zoom Host - Margaret Godbeer

Greeters - Kathy Matyas and Nancy Schmidt

Joys & Concerns – Kathy



February 20, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.

**Co-creating a Sustainable Future
Dr. Eliane Ubalijoro**

The last two years have seen deep societal disruption, from COVID-19, to social justice protests, to floods and fires reminding us of the planetary boundaries we need to take into account in all we do. How do we truly co-create a sustainable and inclusive future that leaves no one behind and grows natural capital?

As the pace of technological acceleration continues to exasperate inequalities, there has never been a more critical time to adopt inclusive innovation cultures and strategies that serve all. This talk will focus on the interconnectivity of the following grand challenges we are currently facing: pandemic, accelerated biodiversity loss, social justice and climate and what will be required by all of us to become the ancestors future generations require.

Service Leader - Caitlin Berry

Musicians - Kerry-Anne Kutz & Michael Cartile

Zoom Host - Margaret Godbeer

Greeters - Dori Abbott and Nancy Schmidt Joys & Concerns - Nancy S.

February 27, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.

**Truth, Warps and Lies- through the eyes of
Unitarian Universalists
Michael Rooker**

We believe in the never-ending search for truth but can we separate it from the warps and lies of life that have never been more confusing and all-pervasive? Can "pure truth" be isolated in our predominantly secular world? Is our search necessarily a spiritual one?

Aided by friends and family, Michael will systematically search for answers with you and will uncover some dark, contemporary pitfalls in the process.

(The essence of this presentation has been pre-recorded in our sanctuary with love and care).

Service Leader - Gary Spiller

Musicians - Kerry-Anne Kutz & Michael Cartile.

Zoom Host - Christopher Thomson

Greeters - Dori Abbott and Nancy Schmidt Joys & Concerns - Nancy S.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Omicron wave and the chilly temps have caused yet another pull-back from our hopes to re-start 'ordinary life' in February. So we canceled the clowns and the musicians (the February 6th extravaganza), and settled back once again onto our recliners and cozy couches. Sunday services continue to provide a weekly dose of spiritual nourishment: a wonderful shared experience for us all.

February begins the countdown to Board elections which must occur by April 30th. Our By-Laws have been written to provide over time for a renewal of the Board membership. Board members are elected for two-year terms, and can be re-elected for a second two-year term. After 4 years in office, they can serve another two-year term, in another position. After 6 years, a two-year hiatus is required before a person can take another position on the Board.

To provide continuity, only three of the six positions on the Board are voted on in a given year.

In 2022, the Nominating Committee is currently tasked with finding persons willing to serve as President, Secretary and Director A, with the positions of Vice President, Treasurer and Director B being voted on in 'odd years'.

The current president (me!) has served on the Board for six consecutive years, so is now ineligible to serve again until two years have passed. **Selina Rooker-Sanchez**, Director A, is not seeking re-election, so a replacement is needed to fill her spot. The current Secretary, **Sheila Laursen**, is still eligible for another term on the Board and is willing to serve.

2022-2023 will be the start of a new 'administration'. We all need to be thinking about bringing in new leadership to carry us forward into what we hope will be a post-pandemic world. **Christopher Thomson** is the chair of our nominating committee, and looks forward to hearing your comments and suggestions. Particularly think about putting yourself forward for a Board position. It is also beneficial if you encourage others to serve.

~ **Susan**



WOULD YOU CARE TO SERVE ON THE LAKESHORE BOARD?

Over the next **two** weeks, the Nominating Committee will have to propose three nominees for the April election of the Board positions being renewed at the June AGM.

This being an even-numbered year, it will be the positions of **President, Secretary and Director A** to be elected in April to take office in June, for a two-year term.

The current President, **Susan Czarnocki**, will have completed six years of service on the Board and, as per the By-Laws, cannot be reelected immediately for another term in any position on the Board.

The current Secretary, **Sheila Laursen**, is still eligible for another term on the Board and is willing to serve.

Director A, **Selina Rooker-Sanchez**, does not want to put her name in nomination for another term.

If you are yourself interested and wish to have more information or even if you wish to suggest someone to the Nominating Committee, please phone or email the Committee Chair, **Christopher Thomson**, at 514 634 5916 or cthomson683@gmail.com.

~ **Christopher**

👉 **SOUPENDOUS! IT'S IN THE WORKS...** 😊



If luck finds us, we'll have a hearty stew, soup & bread sale in March.

More info to follow mid-February.

Cross your fingers...

~ **Selina**

FROM THE TREASURER



I wish that the ATM's did throw money at us but sadly it's not the case! On a more realistic note, I am pleased to report that so far this fiscal year we are doing better financially than was anticipated. Preparing a budget at the best of times is difficult and it has been even more difficult with this seemingly never-ending pandemic.

We are optimistic that we will end this fiscal year with a deficit that is considerably lower than the projected \$17,000 although we will still be operating at a deficit.

Some members have been extremely generous with their donations. Additionally, our landlords and friends, the Norwegians, reduced our rent for part of the year and, in addition, shared some of the expenses of purchasing new equipment to enable us to provide hybrid services.

To those of you who have donated so generously many thanks for your help in keeping our small congregation alive and vibrant though these trying times. A special thanks to those who have given their time to organize fundraising events and, of course, to those who participated and bought soups, sweets and other treasures.

We are now back to Zoom only services but you can still make a donation either by e transfer to lakeshoretreasury@gmail.com or by sending a cheque to our address.

Don't forget we need your time and talent as well. All of our committees need new members and fresh ideas. We have ideas on how to keep us connected during these lockdowns but we need volunteers to implement them!

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, I will be sending out tax receipts in mid February. I will email them to everyone who has email. If you need a printed copy, please email me at lakeshoretreasury@gmail.com. For those who do not have email I will send it by regular mail.

~ Margaret Godbeer. LUUC Treasurer



COALITION INCLUSION QUEBEC

Many of us listened to Shaheen Juniad on Sunday, January 16th as she spoke of her Muslim faith and of the Islamophobia that many face on a day-to-day basis. We have heard such terrible stories over the past few years; the senseless murder of 6 men in 2017 at the Islamic Cultural Center in Quebec City, the family run down in London Ontario in 2021 and the teacher in Chelsea Quebec who was removed from her position teaching Grade 3 students.

What can we do? This is one way you can help.

The **CIQ** is a group of citizens who are opposed to Bill 21 (An Act respecting the laicity of the state). This legislation bans the wearing of religious symbols such as hijabs, kippa and turbans by teachers, lawyers and other government employees deemed to be in positions of authority.

Rev. Diane Rollert of the UCM is one of the founding members of this coalition and a number of LUUC members have been involved in meetings and demonstrations.

A legal team has been working *pro bono* contesting the legality of this very unfair law. In April 2021 Justice Blanchard did not strike down the law in its entirety but made it clear that the law violates human rights and that the government's use of the 'notwithstanding clause' is excessive.

This case is pivotal for our constitutional future. If Bill 21 is upheld because of the notwithstanding clause, the Quebec legislature and legislatures across the country are likely to start invoking the notwithstanding clause as a matter of course, rendering constitutional protections of basic rights and freedoms meaningless. We have already seen this in Quebec with the tabling of Bill 96 which proposes to make broad amendments to the Charter of the French Language and other laws. Following the pattern established by Bill 21, it too invokes the notwithstanding clause, this time to shield vast sweeps of government powers from the protections granted by the Canadian and Quebec charters of rights.

On June 2, 2021, the CIQ filed a declaration of appeal, setting out eight distinct grounds of appeal. CIQ's case is one of four cases which had been joined for trial and which are now before the Court of Appeal. They expect that the case will then be heard in the Court of Appeals sometime in the fall of 2022.

Their lawyers continue to work *pro bono*, dedicating literally thousands of hours of legal work to the case without charging a penny for their time.

However, there are still costs that must be covered. There are over 10,000 pages of exhibits and expert reports from the trial record which must be reproduced for the Court of Appeal. As well, there are costs for preparing and reproducing the physical copies of the briefs that will be filed.

continued/...

You can support them by donating online through Paypal: [Donate to CIQ](#)

OR

You can mail a cheque payable to “Comité juridique de la Coalition Inclusion Québec” to:
 Comité juridique de la Coalition Inclusion Québec
 c/o Gregory Bordan, secretary
 5615 Borden avenue
 Cote St Luc Qc H4V 2T9

~ Margaret Godbeer

THE KNIT CHICKS



The knitting group continues to meet on Zoom every Tuesday morning. Over the past months we have been making and collecting hats, mittens and scarves for children. Our plan was to donate them to Maple Grove Elementary School as we have done in the past. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors, this was not possible this year. These factors include school closures and changes in staffing (the person we have dealt with for the past number of years is no longer there and there is a new principal).

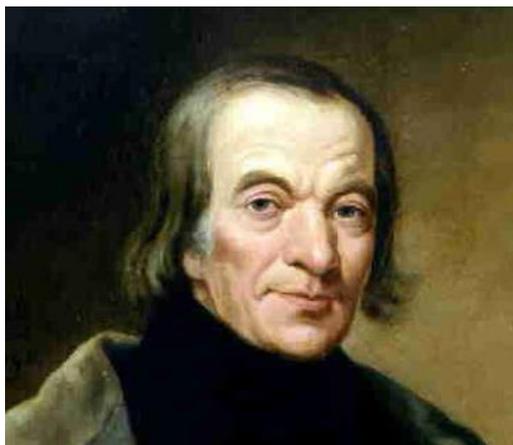
So, we looked for alternate places to offer our donations! **Margaret** contacted her friend, who is a school commissioner for the Lester B Pearson School Board, who is responsible for elementary schools in Verdun and LaSalle, an area with many low-income families. She has gratefully accepted our collection of winter items and promises to send us photos.

~ Margaret Godbeer

PS: We welcomed **Mary**, a new member to our ranks. - **ed**



THE LAST MAN JAILED FOR BLASPHEMY



On Sunday January 23rd, one of our new members, Linda Kneeland, gave us an excellent talk about one of her ancestors. It was about Abner Kneeland, who was Linda's great, great grandfather, although he may have been her great, great uncle – she is not sure.

Abner was born in 1774 in Gardner, Massachusetts. He was raised as a Baptist, but then he became a Universalist. He was ordained as a Universalist Minister in 1805. In those days Universalists were more liberal-thinking than other religions, but Abner's views were even more liberal. Today, his views are considered mainstream in UU circles, but he was about 150 years ahead of his time. So he was kicked out of the ministerial fellowship. But he continued to preach as a lay preacher in Boston and New York. Eventually he started his own newspaper and when he was challenged to publish his religious philosophy, he did just that, but his writings were considered blasphemous.

So, what were these radical ideas that got him in trouble? He believed in equal rights for women. He believed in equal rights for African-Americans. He believed in inter-racial marriage. He said if they love each other why not? He suggested that women should keep their own maiden names after marriage and maintain their own property. He advocated the right to birth control. He wrote of the right to divorce. He proclaimed that a woman shouldn't have to suffer all of her life for a decision made when she was young and unwise in the ways of the world. Moreover, he had his own definition of God.

Finally, he was arrested and tried for such "extreme" ideas. At the trial the prosecuting attorney said, "We can't allow Mr. Kneeland to continue with what he is saying, or women and blacks will be wanting equal rights!" The Boston elite seemed to be more worried that his social reform ideas would become the norm - rather than be concerned about his religious beliefs. He was found guilty of trying to mix his religion and his politics. He served 60 days in a Boston jail in the summer of 1838.

Linda's ancestor was way ahead of his time. He and his family paid a heavy price for his radical views – they were shunned by "the proper" people of Boston.

~ *Gabor*

C.A.R.E. - CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Every February, we celebrate Black history month. Each year, the theme of the celebration changes.

Who chooses the theme? This responsibility is given to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the non-profit organization that founded this tradition in 1926.

What does this organization do? It plans a variety of activities for the commemorative month, sponsors an annual convention for African life, and publishes the *Journal of African American History*.

Why do we need a theme? According to the ASALH, these themes help provide a fresh focus to the commemorations.

Here are 5 fun facts: <https://blog.frontrange.edu/2019/02/18/five-fascinating-facts-about-black-history-month/#.YfE3Nz7D2Y8.mailto>

2022 National Theme: Black Health and Wellness

This theme acknowledges the legacy of not only Black scholars and medical practitioners in Western medicine, but also other ways in which the Black community have contributed to healthcare (e.g., birth workers, doulas, midwives, naturopaths, herbalists, etc.) throughout the African Diaspora. (ASALH, 2020).



Alice Ball 1892-1916

LUUC's Circle of All Races Equity panel will meet next on *Sunday, February 20th, at 7pm*. Our young adult leader, **Talia Sanchez-Rooker**, will be hosting this month's discussion.

continued/.....

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95755955584?pwd=TVBPWWpPZGtVNjVtOFNoZlhVM1Zndz09>

Meeting ID: 957 5595 5584

Passcode: 123456

Welcome, all!
Selina

***I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands
- you need to be able to throw something back.***

~ Maya Angelou



It's **Erin Berry's** birthday on February 15th. Erin is our S.E. teacher and we all look forward to the day when she and the kids are back in the church on Sundays. Happy Birthday Erin – stay well and have a lovely day.

Happy Birthday on February 19th to **Michael Rooker**. Michael is a photographer of renown and he's also skilled in repairing damaged photos. He will be giving the service on February 27th - **Truth, Warps and Lies- through the eyes of Unitarian Universalists** – sounds intriguing. Have a happy day Michael.

SOME STORES WHERE THE UNVACCINATED ARE NOT ALLOWED

Canada Tire

Walmart

Bay

Costco

Rona

Home Hardware

Winners

Marshalls

Best Buy

Reno Depot

Home Sense

Bureau en gros



suggested by Lynette Rooker

A RARE EVENT



Deep in the Samburu National Reserve Safari Park in Kenya, a rare and happy event occurred last month – twin elephants were born. Fed by their mother Bora and guarded by their watchful father, the babies were spotted by the charity *Save the Elephants* – only the second set of twins ever encountered by the charity.

“Twins form around only 1% of births. Quite often mothers don’t have enough milk to support two calves”, the charity founder, Iain Douglas-Hamilton said. The last time Save the Elephants saw twin elephants was in 2006. “Sadly both calves died shortly after birth,” said Douglas-Hamilton. “The next few days will be touch and go for the new twins, but we all have our fingers crossed for their survival.” The twins are as yet unnamed.

~ ed/reuters

THIS AND THAT AROUND TOWN

Ste-Anne’s Market: Ste-Anne’s Market Winter Edition – Open each Saturday, 10am-1pm. Please spread the word that the market is ongoing at St-George’s Church. Indoors of course. Bring your own bags. Check out their Facebook page to confirm which sellers will be there.

NOVA: Nova has reopened – now we can shop, shop, and shop. Their shelves are bulging with bargains.

Fritz Farm: Looking for a safe, local outing this season? Check out what Quinn Farm has to offer here:

<https://mailchi.mp/lafermequinn/january-2022-newsletter?e=8aa74e1a26>

Pill Bottles: Susan Hawker is still collecting clean and label-free pill bottles, her email address has changed: sahawker13@gmail.com



SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

~ The Bard



KICK SLEDS – THIS SOUNDS LIKE FUN!



Have you heard about the kick sled? – a wonderful invention from Finland that has been around for over eighty years. These sleds can be used on hard surfaces, packed snow and ice. One foot stays on the ski and the other foot kicks to push off and send the sled sliding forward. In Scandinavia and Finland they are used as a form of transportation and in more remote areas, to buy groceries. There's a seat on the front.

In the rural municipality of Beaubassin-Est, about 30 kilometres from Moncton, the Mayor purchased a fleet of 14 sleds this year after receiving a provincial grant. The sleds are hand made in Finland – they come in different sizes for children and adults and cost about \$500.00 each.

They are free to the locals and can be borrowed for three days at a time. “The idea caught on very, very fast, because it’s new and kind of cool,” said the Mayor

~ ed

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP

Notice from Amnesty International

Amnesty International Group 18 (Toronto) has a wonderful campaign to send birthday cards to Huseyin Celil (at least 53!) in time for his birthday on March 1st.

Please forward birthday cards for Huseyin Celil a Canadian Uyghur activist jailed in China since 2006,

If you'd like to participate, please pen a greeting to Huseyin and mail it to me:

Catherine Drew
272 Montrose Avenue
Toronto ON M6G 3G8

It's probably best not to use a "Happy Birthday" card since it will hardly be a happy day. "Greetings on your birthday" or a "Thinking of you" type message would be appropriate.

Amnesty will open and discard all envelopes;

- a) to reduce the weight of the parcel and
- b) to eliminate your address in case you don't want that shared.

She will then ship the parcel by Canada Post's Priority WW-pak to the prison director on February 12 with a cover note imploring him to give them to Huseyin. It will require a signature on receipt and that, in addition to receiving a substantial package from Canada, should create pressure on him.

We need to keep up the pressure to release Huseyin,

Please ensure that your card/greeting is sent by Tuesday February 9

~ Gary



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE ACTIONS – WINTER 2022

The Social Action Committee met on January 25. **Jose** expressed concern for the homeless in Montreal and suggested that we work with some downtown churches to provide shelter, warm clothing and food. We agreed to contact Montreal City Mission and to collect warm clothing, please **contact Jose** if you have winter clothing to spare.

Selina spoke about the many topics that have been discussed by the CARE Equity Panel and noted that meetings in February would focus on Black History Month and in March on Indigenous History. Readers are welcome to participate in these discussions. Please contact Selina for details. **Gary** presented a Report Card for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action prepared by the Assembly of First Nations, https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020_TRC-Report-Card_ENG.pdf

Sari volunteered to lead the Education Study Group covering two categories and Selina will lead the Justice Category study group. **Susan** and **Paul** will prepare an Action Plan for Calls 48 and 49 in collaboration with other churches (UU and other denominations).

We discussed our support to the six refugee families here in Montreal and three Afghan refugee applicants in Pakistan. **Margaret** proposed that the Social Action Committee contribute \$500 toward the new Refugee Support Fund that has been established by LUUC, Summerlea United and the downtown Unitarian Congregation. The latter is applying to sponsor three Afghan refugee siblings currently waiting in Pakistan for papers to come to Canada. The SAC approved this resolution of a one-time contribution to the Fund from the SAC budget.

Environmental concerns including the protection of green spaces were also discussed. We expressed support for the recent decision to protect part of the Technoparc and ongoing efforts to save the Fairview Forrest from condo development. There is a weekly Saturday protest from 11am-1pm organized by the local Save Fairview Forest Committee.

Climate Change issues are being addressed by 350.org and the downtown Unitarian Congregation as a large rally will be organized in March.

Marlene Hale organizes a weekly webinar (Fridays 7-9pm) on environmental and spiritual issues. Topics range from support for indigenous struggles in BC to save Old Growth Forests at Fairy Creek to the pipeline protests in the north. We also had a discussion on Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu and a guided meditation session. Please contact **Jose** or **Gary** if you would like to join a session. ~ **Gary**



FROM AN APPEAL TO ACTION - HELPING AFGHANI REFUGEES



Just before Christmas - an email appeal from Ariel Nasr, a Montreal-based NFB film-maker, went out to UU ministers Rev. Diane Rollert and Rev. Heather Fraser Fawcett asking for their help to bring some members of Afghani families he knows to Canada as refugees.

He wrote, “I’m an Afghan-Canadian-American (my father is from Afghanistan and my mother is from California) living here in Montreal since 2013. I met Shahla Sikandari — one of Afghanistan’s first female boxers — in 2009 while making an award-winning NFB documentary called, “The Boxing Girls of Kabul”. Shahla and her incredible family welcomed me into their home to tell their story and opened their lives up to my camera with courage and hope.

Due to her courage and her impressive boxing career, Shahla was able to come to Montreal in 2015, and obtain refugee and then permanent resident status. Today she lives in Pierrefonds with her partner and three young children, but her family has remained in Afghanistan—until now.

With an unfolding disaster taking place in their homeland, the entire family is now in danger. We are asking our communities to extend their compassion and care by becoming a sponsor or helping to donate towards our sponsorship goals, to bring three of Shahla’s family members to Montreal.”

Link to watch the NFB documentary “Boxing Girls of Kabul”

https://www.nfb.ca/film/boxing_girls_of_kabul/

On December 30 - Sheila emailed all our West Island Refugee Network friends, who have actively helped asylum seekers since the Syrian family sponsored by our Summerlea Refugee Support Coalition settled in Montreal. She invited them to a Zoom meeting about helping Afghan refugees.

On January 8th - a Zoom meeting was held, with 29 people attending. Ariel described how the situation in Afghanistan has worsened greatly with the takeover by the Taliban in 2021. People who had worked with international government agencies and/or NGOs were targeted in particular. Shahla’s parents worked for NGOs and were at great risk. They were able to get to a refugee camp in Denmark, and 2 of Shahla’s brothers made it to Germany. However, they were not able to bring the other 3 siblings to either of those countries.

Shahia's two sisters and their brother are all university students. The two young women are activists and law students, and their brother is a music student. The family had

arranged for them to flee to Pakistan in August, where they are living in one room of a boarding house.

Shahla was also in our Zoom meeting. She thanked everyone for their love and willingness to help her siblings. She worries about them - they have always been together, and as boxers, the girls are in danger from the Taliban. The family arranged to fly them to Pakistan for their safety, even there it is not easy as they can't study or go anywhere. Shahla said that the support shown by us has given her hope, although she knows it is a complicated process.

January 13th - a second Zoom meeting was called for a smaller, working group, which had 24 people attend. We all recognized that while the 3 siblings had fled to Pakistan, their status is still very vulnerable there.

As the 3 siblings are over 18 years of age, each one needs a separate sponsorship application. All agreed to apply for sponsorship for each of the 3, in spite of the challenges involved. Quebec will only accept 825 refugees this year, from all countries. As there will be literally thousands of applications submitted, Quebec will use a lottery draw after the February 16 deadline for submissions to make their selection.

Groups of 2-5 individuals wishing to sponsor a refugee must demonstrate very strong financial capacity, and organizations such as churches or NGOs must have more than 10 years of experience in successful refugee sponsorships.

The challenges seemed overwhelming until Rev. Diane Rollert noted that the Unitarian Church of Montreal has a good track record, and all of its legal documentation required is already in French. They would be able to make up to 10 sponsorship applications. She offered to take it to the UCM Board the following week for consideration.

Discussion followed on how we could collectively raise funds to cover their costs in Pakistan, to help make that stay more comfortable. The CRA rules are very strict about money being sent overseas, so people donating money would have to know they could not receive a tax receipt. Concerts and other fundraising events could be organized, with the proceeds going to the 3 siblings.

Shahla was asked to find out how much her siblings would need to pay rent for a small apartment with 2 bedrooms, a kitchen and living room, and about the cost for food, household supplies and living expenses while in Pakistan.

January 18 – Rev. Diane wrote in the UCM Gathered Here weekly newsletter, “Not too long ago, we were approached by an Afghan Canadian filmmaker, Ariel Nasr, who had gotten to know an Afghani family of boxers when he made the film *The Boxing Girls of Kabul* for the National Film Board. Three of the daughters in the family are champion boxers. Yes, there are female boxers in Afghanistan and yes, their lives are now in danger. One sister managed to receive Canadian asylum in 2015 and lives in

Pierrefonds. Now she's desperately trying to bring her young adult siblings, two sisters and one brother from Pakistan to Montreal.

Amazingly, the Lakeshore UU congregation and a coalition of interfaith Christian and Muslim groups from the West Island have stepped forward to help. But they need our assistance. The Unitarian Church of Montreal is the one institution in the group that has all the necessary assets and documents to apply to sponsor these young people.

This is what I will be asking our board of management to consider this coming Wednesday. Can we apply to sponsor these three siblings? The chance of our applications making it through the Quebec lottery are very slim, and the board may have very good reasons to say no to my request.

But if the board should say yes, then we will need the support of all of you. It will be a game of hurry up and wait. We are still waiting for the arrival of the refugees we applied to sponsor in 2020, a young Iranian man stranded in Turkey, a persecuted Unitarian family from Burundi that has been living in Rwanda.

This is the heartbreak of refugee sponsorship, not only in Quebec but in all of Canada. The process can take so long that refugees give up and apply to go elsewhere."

Jan 19 - Good News! arrived when Rev. Diane Rollert emailed:

"Tonight, on January 19, 2022, the Board of Management of the Unitarian Church of Montreal voted and approved three resolutions to submit applications to sponsor Laila, Enjila and Dawood. The board was moved by your willingness to support these young people.

David and I will be working on the applications with the intention to have everything ready to go by February 12. I will act as the official spokesperson for the Unitarian Church of Montreal / personne morale, category R. Thankfully, I will also have the support of our very competent administrator. Let us hope, pray and cross our fingers that one or all of their dossiers will be chosen in the Quebec lottery." Many blessings, Rev. Diane.

January 24 - As I write this, we have raised over \$2,400 towards the \$2,800 goal for helping the 3 siblings to rent a small apartment with bedrooms, to purchase the items they would need for it, and to cover a full month of their living expenses. We hope to cover their rent and food costs for each month they are in Pakistan awaiting acceptance as refugees.

**IF YOU WANT TO HELP THESE AFGHAN YOUTH, PLEASE LET ME KNOW -
TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

Sheila Laursen (514-697-4195) sheila.laursen@bell.net

The following is from Rev. Diane Rollert's most recent weekly newsletter:

I'm happy to announce that the board of the Unitarian Church of Montreal voted unanimously and without hesitation to apply to sponsor three young adult Afghan Refugees currently in Islamabad. I am also pleased to share that members of Grace Anglican Church in Sutton have also agreed to work with us to sponsor a young Afghan woman (the aunt of one of our members) who is currently in Turkey.

As I explained last week, this is a "hurry up and wait" situation. The first step is to hope and pray these applications are chosen in the Quebec refugee sponsorship lottery. Applications are due by February 16. The lottery will be held sometime after that date, but how soon after, and when we will be notified, is anyone's guess. If any of our requests are chosen, it will still be a long process before any one of these young adults arrives in Canada.

I'm also thrilled to let you know that the Nahkla family, who we sponsored as Syrian refugees in 2016, have become Canadian citizens last week. This is such amazing news! The family of four writes: "We wanted to thank you all for bringing us here and giving us the chance to be Canadian citizens."

As Eleuthera sang on Sunday, "Every journey of a thousand miles begins with one step"

Rev. Diane



WELCOME TO LAKESHORE

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HAPPY ST. VALENTINE'S DAY



Sunday services acknowledges that we are located on un-ceded Indigenous lands.

The Island of Montreal is the traditional territory of both the Kanien'kehá:ka (KA-NYUNK-YA-HAGA), "Mohawk," and the Anishinabeg, "Algonquin," peoples.

