



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

*A church for people
with enquiring minds*

Our Mission Statement: "We covenant to support an empowering church that affirms the individual and celebrates history, science and mystery in a welcoming, joyous and evolving fellowship."

March 2021

Upcoming Services

March 7 - The Mystery and Spirituality of Music - presented and led by Eva Schwartzentruher

Eva examines the power of music and how it transcends the boundaries of language and how it can inspire us to good or ill.

March 14 - The Beauty of Trees - presented and led by Liina Veer and Matt Virro

While lost in the trees, we sometimes miss the meanings embedded in the forest. Liina and Matt will explore the forest and trees in the context of pagan and contemporary spiritual mythology.

March 21 - Black History in Niagara - presented by Rochelle Bush

As a historian, activist and entrepreneur, Rochelle will guide us through the rich and complex history of African Americans in the Niagara region from the Underground Railroad of the early 1800's to the present day.

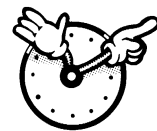
Service led by Penny Blake

March 28 - A Closer Look at Stuff - presented and led by Mary-lyn Hopper

Material things can enhance our life, providing comfort, convenience and support to our well being. But material objects can be imbued with spiritual, psychological and historical significance that goes beyond simple accumulation. Mary-lyn will lead us in this exploration.

"The longer we dwell in our misfortunes,
the greater is their power to harm us."

~ Voltaire 1694 - 1778



Remember the time
changes on
March 14, 2021
Set your clocks

**Unitarian Congregation
of Niagara**

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2020/2021

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Penny Blake

VICE PRESIDENT:

Matt Virro

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SOCIAL ACTION:

Beryl Stovell

LAY CHAPLAINS:

Doreen Peever

Karen Stovell

ADULT RELIGIOUS

EDUCATION: Karen Stovell

CHOIR and MUSIC:

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COMMUNICATIONS:

Roy Blake

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:

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LAY CHAPLAINCY:

Doreen Peever

MEMBERSHIP:

Doreen Peever

NEWSLETTER:

LesLee Turmel

PASTORAL CARE:

Doreen Peever /

Joan Rothman

PROPERTY: Alan and Hilde

Wheeler

RENTAL: Alan and Hilde

Wheeler

SOCIAL: Susan Velkers, Jim

Glassford, Karen Stovell,

Abu Hosein

TRUSTEES:

Jim Glassford

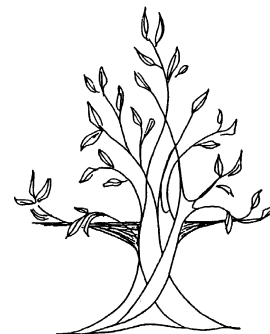
Jenny Leach

Doreen Peever

Donna Lemon

Donna, a revered and long time member of UCN, passed in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Thursday, January 28, 2021 at the age of 99. Her obituary can be accessed at www.legacy.com>obituaries.

Joan Rothman and Doreen Peever held her friendship dear and wanted to honour Donna with their respective tributes:



It is a pity so many of the present congregation did not know Donna. She was such a kind and gentle person, although she would speak up if she thought strongly about an issue. She and her husband, Ed, supported the Sierra Club and were active at UCN so long as they were able. For many Sundays they brought “Free Trade” goods from the Niagara-on-the-Lake outlet to sell at UCN. This was quite the commitment. I found it such a pleasure to have known Donna and Ed.

– *Joan Rothman*

Donna Lemon was a gentle, kind, intelligent and thoughtful lady, a lady in the truest sense of that word. She lived her life to mean something to her family, to her church and to the community. I never heard Donna complain about anything. Donna and Ed were the perfect match for each other and they had a loving marriage for 65 years. They shared many things, including sailing to exotic places, travelling widely for Ed’s career and renovating a house on Ricardo Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake. That house was badly in need of renovation as its then occupants were raccoons, squirrels and birds. With much work, they turned it into a beautiful home which even had a lap pool in the basement. While living in Tortola in the British Virgin Islands for several years after Ed’s retirement, Donna offered to volunteer at the local hospital. Her offer was refused; she was supposed to sit on the porch drinking tea with the other wives and mind her own business. She didn’t really enjoy that time in Tortola. After Ed’s death in 2009, Donna was very lonely. Their three sons were living in the States, as were her grandchildren, and couldn’t visit her much in NOTL. She lived a long and fulfilled life, loving and being loved, making a difference. I miss her.

– *Doreen Peever*

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to Considerate Cremation and Burial Services, 26 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines, 289-362-1144. Online condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca

President's Message . . .



As we reach mid-winter, I hope you are all well and dealing with the February-March and COVID blahs with excursions into nature or by doing a favourite hobby or keeping in touch with friends and family. Roy and I have taken advantage of the fresh snow, enjoying still winter woods and a bit of cross country skiing.

Your Board has been active working to find the best solutions to keep and improve the UCN building so it functions at its optimum. In the area of Social Action, Beryl Stovell has been learning more about our Queenston neighbourhood and preparing for our annual Out of the Cold Meal-COVID style on Friday, March 5. Doreen Peever has met with Reverend Paul Miller of Westminster United Church to talk about UCN's history. Paul is writing a book from a compilation of stories, pictures and memorabilia from the Queenston Neighbourhood in St. Catharines. If you have any of these you wish to share, you can contact Paul at paulridleymiller@gmail.com.

We are all working hard to keep the UCN going. I hope to see and hear from you at our AGM on Sunday, February 28.

– Penny Blake

International Women's Day March 8, 2021

This year's theme is 'Choose to Challenge.'

A challenged world is an alert world. Individually, we are all responsible for all our thoughts and actions - all day, every day. We can choose to call out gender bias and inequality. We can all choose to seek out and celebrate women's achievements. Collectively we can all help create an inclusive world.

International Women's Day is a global celebration of social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It also marks a day a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

Commit to challenge inequality.

Call out bias.

Question stereotypes.

Challenge long held beliefs about women that are categorically false.

Challenge yourself, your biases and stereotypes and long held beliefs.

From challenge comes change. So let's all choose to challenge.

- from www.internationalwomensday.com

March's Guest Service Speaker - Rochelle Bush

Early Black History in Niagara

Sunday, March 21, 2021

Rochelle Bush is a Trustee and the resident historian of the Salem Chapel, British Methodist Episcopal Church, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Site, and owner and operator of Tubman Tours Canada. Rochelle was born and raised in St. Catharines. Her great-great grandfather was the minister-in-charge of the Salam Chapel for a period in the 1850's when Harriet Tubman was a member.

Over 20 years ago, Rochelle began to preserve, promote and protect Canada's rich Black history. This included participating in the development of the early Black history narrative and government tourism initiatives in St. Catharines and the Niagara region. Concurrently, Rochelle began to offer step-on guide services to showcase Niagara's Freedom Trail, which includes the Salem Chapel. Almost ten years ago she created the "Harriet Tubman Tour" to highlight the heroic figures's time in St. Catharines.

Rochelle is an independent researcher and a member of the Historical Society of St. Catharines, a past board member of the St. Catharines Museum, a former Emancipation Day organizer, affiliated with the Central Ontario Network for Black History, and an associate with the Zion Baptist Church, a certified Niagara Tourism Ambassador and a licensed Niagara Tour Parks tour guide.

In addition, Rochelle is a Social Service Worker and a Niagara College graduate.

- bio taken from CUFW St. Catharines website

Pub Night

Thursday, March 25 at 6:30 p.m.

Spring inches closer, and with it plenty of budding stories about hope and re-emergence worthy of sharing. I reflected back to our Pub Night on poetry in January which was emotional and fun. I thought, perhaps, there were other guiding light stories or 'once upon a time' stories in other formats that we would like to share: A letter, a funny or memorable bedtime story, an article you keep by your side or an oral account of a story you, a family member or friend have lived through. It can be a factual story from here and now, fictional story or an historical account. You can bring more than one! We will chat about all of them.

Here is one story that comes to mind from a humorist and a 13th century Sufi mystic, Nasrudin, that reminds me of the beauty of double entendre:

The dervish Nasrudin entered a formal reception area and seated himself at the foremost elegant chair. The Chief of the Guard approached and said: "Sir, those places are reserved for guests of honor."

"Oh, I am more than a mere guest," replied Nasrudin confidently.

"Oh, so are you a diplomat?"

"Far more than that!"

"Really? So you are a minister, perhaps?"

"No, bigger than that too."

"Oho! So you must be the King himself, sir," said the Chief sarcastically.

"Higher than that!"

"What?! Are you higher than the King?! Nobody is higher than the King in this village!"

"Now you have it. I am nobody!" said Nasrudin.

Join us, as always, at month's end. Everyone is welcome, including newbies. Please join in on Zoom! Roy Blake will provide the Zoom link later in March.

– *Matt Virro*



Birds of Niagara

I want to share a bit about a webinar series offered February 12 to 15. It is available to everyone at any time and is worth a look. I learned that 'Birds on the Niagara' is a prominent voice working to ward off conservation threats to the Niagara River Corridor, both from the American and Fort Erie side of the Niagara River. I learned about Fort Erie and how things fell on hard times in the 1930's and how, now 90 years later, the city fathers are feeling pressure to accept development dollars to build on those wetlands. A good case was made for an alternative future; for the wetlands on either side of the border to make money by becoming a hub for 'ecotourism' for all to enjoy.

I was really struck by the story of Waverly Woods and its history in the Niagara River Corridor. Marci Jacklin, an ornithologist and faculty member at Brock University, spoke lovingly about the spiritual dimensions of Waverly Woods and how it is viewed as a sacred place by the indigenous people. She advocates strongly for the protection of this area as a bird sanctuary. Sounds like a social action initiative!

Check out the website for Birds on the Niagara: www.birdsontheniagara.org

– *Matt Virro*

Wild About Birds

Feeding our feathered friends is a soulful act. Beyond being fun and educational, it is an exercise which benefits both birds and humans. While keeping the birds nourished, it lowers our blood pressure. Feeding basics are not complicated, but the exercise comes with some challenges.

Feeding birds is a commitment of time, energy and money. Birds will become accustomed to the food you provide and rely on it as part of their daily food intake. Many species cover a large area and one feeder is just one stop of many. Some territorial birds will set up their winter territory based on the presence of particular feeding station. Don't begin to feed birds if you cannot consistently provide a food source. This is especially important during winter and breeding seasons when they require larger quantities and better qualities of food.

There are many kinds of bird feed, but all birds need high energy foods to survive in a variety of weather conditions. Choose blends made up of oil seeds like niger, sunflower, canola or safflower.

Check around your neighbourhood to determine which birds frequent your micro-environment and determine the food based on that population. You will also want to think which of those birds you want to attract. Buy the best quality food you can afford.

Feed birds bird food. Do NOT feed birds bread, cookies or scraps. Bread provides empty calories. Quite literally, you create a fat bird that dies of malnutrition. Additionally, fresh or dry bread products can choke a bird. It is better not to feed birds if you cannot provide the right food for the right bird. My backyard caters to Doves, Cardinals, Juncos and a variety of Sparrows and Finches. These birds co-exist comfortably. I choose to feed these resident birds safflower seed which has a high fat content, important for the winter months and the breeding season. Safflower is not a favoured food for what I refer to as “bully birds” such as Blue Jays and Starlings. They will dominate a feeder and can be downright aggressive with smaller birds. I feed these more aggressive birds in the front yard where there is reduced risk of conflict. They are fed a blend of nuts and sunflower seeds. The smaller birds like this food also, but because they have a more favoured source in the back yard, that’s where they tend to congregate.

One last word of caution. Birds are messy and you need to keep the feeder and area around the feeder clean. Occasionally, an unwanted rodent will show up and want to dine with the birds. Where one rodent goes so do many. I discourage them with cayenne pepper.....about 4 tablespoons for every 20 pounds of feed. Black pepper, hot or smoked paprika, and chili powder are also irritants to mammals. Most consider these deterrents are harmless to birds, but there is very little research to support this. Be cautious. I have been tearfully reminded that I am also a mammal and learned to wear gloves when handling the treated food.

There is much to research when you decide to feed birds, including types of feeders appropriate for different bird species, where to place them, maintenance and how to create a safe yard for birds to feed and nest. There are a wide variety of books available to guide you. Be sure to access information relevant to the Niagara Region or the region in which you live. You can begin your research by consulting the Canadian Wildlife Federation - Wild about Birds website: cwf-fcf.org>explore>wildaboutbirds

If you can, feed the birds and do so conscientiously. We are responsible for much of their natural habitat loss. Until we can restore and replace what we have taken from birds, we can provide them with the best resources we can muster. – *LesLee Turmel*

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