

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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Important Information

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NEWSLETTER

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Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month.

Please sign submissions, so we may reach you if we have questions. Submit entries one of two ways:

1. Email it to jsgray@crocker.com.
2. Mail it to 219 Wendell Road, Shutesbury MA 01072.

Please limit entries to 500 words (100 for the "For Your Information" section). Submissions may be edited to save space or to maintain a consistent style. Thank you!

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Schedule of Services

Sunday, January 7, 10:30 A.M. – *Flinging Stars, Sowing Hope*

The Reverend Cynthia A. Frado preaching

A story of science and a story of faith, today's sermon is part narrative, part reflection as the Rev. Frado explores the world of American anthropologist, educator, philosopher, and natural science writer Loren Eiseley, and extrapolates its insights and wisdom for the world we live in today.

This is a GREAT way to start the new year!

Sunday, January 14, 10:30 A.M. – *The Fierce Urgency of Now*

The Reverend Cynthia A. Frado preaching

Inspired by the words of Martin Luther King Jr., today's sermon will address the dangers of apathy and paralytic conformity when it comes to needs of immediacy. Notions of powerlessness are not an option. Join us on this MLK weekend for some provocative thought and warm fellowship!

Sunday, January 21, 10:30 A.M. – *Sanctuary: A Ministry of Presence*

Glen Bertrand

Please join us for our Social Action and Social Justice service. Our guest this morning, Glen Bertrand, will be speaking on the spiritual and moral implications of the sanctuary movement, its history and its principles. Glen has been a member of a sister congregation, First Congregational Church of Amherst, since March 2017, and has been deeply involved with their undocumented resident under protection.

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday

Sunday, January 28, 10:30 A.M. – *How It Really Happens*

The Reverend Georganne Greene

The Rev. Greene returns to us this morning with a reflection on the nature of change.

Many sermons and readings are posted on our website, www.uusocietyamherst.org. Click on the "SERMON ARCHIVE" button on the right side of the home page, and then on the title of the sermon you wish to read.

An Offering from the Interim Minister's Inkwell

New Beginnings

The difference between December 31st and January 1st from a basic observational point of view is marginal (unless one imbibed too much on the former and has a whopping headache on the latter). Certainly, a minute or two more sunlight is nothing at which to scoff, but other than that there isn't a momentous difference from one day to the other. The exception, of course, is that magical line of demarcation between one year and the next.

It is truly amazing how profound that marker between the past and the future impacts us in so many ways. There are some years that we cannot wait to leave behind, while others that held such joy and promise that we hate to see them end. Clearly, this was not one of those years for most of us on a national level...and unfortunately, we will be carrying much of the craziness and angst into the one set before us. HOWEVER, the real magic of the precipice upon which we are now balanced is the hope and promise of the dawning light—personally, communally, and fingers crossed, politically.

In terms of this faith community, it is the anticipation of a ministerial candidate who might be called to lead UUSA into the coming years that holds much promise. It is certainly an exciting time to dream; a time to envision where you want to go and what you need to take you there. I certainly know that this is a wonderful congregation to serve, and a settled minister will find many opportunities to bring you into a bright and vibrant future.

My prayer for you, both personally and as a congregation, is that this will be a year of sustained good health, filled with the warmth of love and friendship, and occasions (large and small) for you to bring your compassion, wisdom, service, and brilliance to the altar of our humanity.

Blessings and peace and Happy New Year...

Rev. Cindy

Dedicated Offerings

Dedicated Offerings provide a way for our Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst community to recognize and financially support worthy organizations engaged in projects that reflect our guiding Unitarian-Universalist principles.

On one Sunday every month (except for June, July, and August) we schedule a Dedicated Offering (DO), recognizing that our Society needs our support on the other Sundays of the month. Dedicated Offerings are suggested by both individuals and committees of the Society, and the program is managed by the Minister and the Dedicated Offering Committee. Our goal is to cover a wide range of areas of need in our area and in the larger world, including these categories: local, regional, national, international, environmental, medical, educational, animal rights, arts/music/culture, and different ages and genders. Recipients for FY18 have been chosen. Forms for suggesting recipients for next year are available in the Meetinghouse office.

Thank you for showing your support for the Dedicated Offering program, not only with your contributions to the DO recipients themselves, but also with your contributions to the Society on other Sundays when our budget counts on those receipts. Remember that no one is required to contribute to our Dedicated Offering recipients – this is a voluntary initiative.

The December Dedicated Offering's total for **The Sanctuary Program at First Congregational Church of Amherst** was not available at press time. (The offering had been scheduled to be for The Hampshire Mosque Parking Project, but at the mosque's request, it was changed to benefit First Church's efforts to provide sanctuary to Lucio Perez.)

On Sunday, January 21, the UUSA will receive a dedicated offering for **Amherst Community Connections**. The following is a statement from **Hwei-Ling Greeney**, Founder and Executive Director of ACC, who will be joining us to share more with us about the mission and work of this great organization. More information can also be found at <http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net/>.

“Amherst Community Connections (ACC) is a local resource center that provides case management, referrals, outreach, and advocacy to vulnerable individuals and families in the Pioneer Valley. We primarily serve those who are low-income, disabled, incarcerated, experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, and facing personal challenges related to mental health or substance use — all of whom want to create positive, lasting change in their lives. While establishing a plan to help participants achieve long term goals of stability, safety and independence, we also function as a One-Stop Resource Center to support the immediate needs of our participants. These include services like referrals to soup kitchens, crisis centers, detox services, as well as advocacy through food stamp/fuel assistance applications and help with housing move-in costs.

“ACC recognizes that it can be incredibly difficult to escape homelessness, poverty, and substance use the longer one is immersed in it, so we also organize the community to engage in long-term, coordinated solutions that emphasize homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing, affordable housing and appropriate supportive services. One example of preventive organizing is our successful Housing First Program, approved for a \$150,000 three-year grant thanks to the Amherst Community Preservation Act Committee and Amherst Town Meeting. Through this program, three chronically homeless Amherst residents were awarded housing vouchers as a temporary housing solution while ACC worked with them to provide wrap-around support service with the goal of assisting them to get into long-term stable housing and become valuable members in local communities. All three have graduated from the program to secure permanent housing and jobs. We hope that you can support our ongoing efforts to advocate for and serve members of our community that need it the most!”

Hwei-Ling will share more stories of her participants' hard work and triumphs through partnering with ACC.

We have received letters of thanks from three recent recipients of Dedicated Offerings. Excerpts follow.

North Quabbin Citizen Advocacy's Nate Johnson, Executive Director, and **Bonnie Frank**, Administrative Director, wrote, “Thank you for the generous donation from the Dedicated Offering. In these difficult financial times, each gift helps NQCA to continue its work of fostering and supporting unpaid advocacy relationships between people with mental disabilities. The relationships are important for the partners in them, for our community, and for other communities as well. . . . Your gift helps NQCA to continue recruiting advocate/friends for people in need and then supporting their relationships.”

Diane Dukette, Chief Development Officer of **Cooley Dickinson Health Care**, wrote, “Please accept our heartfelt gratitude for Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst’s recent gift of \$707 to the new Breast Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital. . . . With your gift, you have ensured that the highest quality care is provided across the breast care continuum from skilled, compassionate caregivers. Your support will bring together cutting edge technologies in a single, easily navigable, patient-centered environment. Of greatest importance, your commitment has ensured that breast care services are available to those most in need, directly impacting literally thousands of lives throughout our community.”

Mindy Domb, Executive Director of **The Amherst Survival Center**, wrote: “Thank you all at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst for inviting me to speak and for your generous offering of \$1,042. . . . Every day at the Amherst Survival Center, we resist the fiction that people — our neighbors — are hungry, poor, or isolated because they are lazy, weak, frivolous, or somehow at fault. Instead, we embrace the reality of their struggles and their strengths, and renew our commitment to each other. With the help of your donation, we will continue to fill a critical role for our community as a welcoming, nonjudgmental source of support.” In a handwritten note, she added, “So happy to be invited to the UUSA and provide an update on the Center. Looking forward to coming back so I can thank you — and the congregation — for their warm welcome and support.”

How did Unitarian Universalism come to be all that it is today?

Well, it’s a fascinating story! The UUA has produced *Long Strange Trip*, a six-part video series that takes us from the very beginnings to the present. Ron Cordes explores the history of UU thought and practice from the early liberal strands at the beginning of the Christian era to what we know today as UU. The Membership Committee will be showing an installment of the series once a month following a Sunday service. Each video lasts approximately one hour. Following that there will be a chance to discuss the film, based on a study guide by the UUA. Plan to come for the film and stay for the discussion, if you can.



Our journey starts with *In the Beginning* . . . to be shown Sunday, January 21, 12:00 P.M. in Classroom A.

Fundraising



Many thanks to all who helped with the Stone Soup Bazaar and Café. It was wonderful to have so many UU’ers pitch in to make the day go smoothly and help shoppers feel welcome. An added bonus is always the opportunity to be with our UU community, working for a common goal. The event grossed \$4,466 and the congregation’s generous donations (soup and baked goods ingredients, basket contents, time and talent) made it all possible.

Hats off to you!

Cheers,

Sue Kelly & Kate Rice

Membership



Getting to Know UU Are you new to us and curious about who we are? Come join us downstairs in the Conference Room on Sunday, January 7 at noon for light refreshments and a brief introduction to Unitarian Universalism and the UU Society of Amherst. Bring your questions! What are you looking for — and what might we have to offer?

Please welcome our newest member! Anne Moore (shown at right) signed our Membership Book on Sunday, December 3. Anne resides in South Hadley.



Anne Moore

Greetings from Sandy Sladen and Margaret Manson. These longtime members of UUSA moved in November to Dunedin, FL, a small town on the water north of Tampa/St. Petersburg. In December, they sent an email and photo to be shared with all. (*Continued on next page.*)

We were so surprised and touched when we learned from **Rachel Peterson** that we would be receiving the congregation-made quilt [created for the raffle at Stone Soup Bazaar] this year. Apparently the person who won the raffle donated it back and somehow we became the lucky recipients of your generosity. This is particularly meaningful to us not only because we made a few blocks but more so because it is such a nice reminder of our community there. We cannot thank you enough for this. As you can see in the picture, it looks great in our guest room. And our guest room is ready and waiting when you want to come visit!



Love,
Sandy Sladen and Margaret Manson

Ministerial Search Committee

Ministerial Search Committee Update !!!

The new year brings one of the most exciting times of our ministerial search! Your crack Search Committee has spent the past several months gathering your ideas, hopes, and dreams; preparing a comprehensive Congregational Record and Packet for ministers in search to review; and we're ready to be busier than ever. We've heard from our UU Ministerial Search Representative that the products we developed are impressive, and true to the results of the survey and cottage meetings. Ministers who are in search have had all of December to review the Congregational Records of congregations seeking a new minister.

The search is now in earnest as we await ministers telling us they'd like to be considered. Once we've read their Ministerial Record, and if we're interested in going further, we'll exchange packets.

This is the phase where confidentiality for the Search Committee's work becomes extremely important. Some candidates may have not told their present congregation that they're in search, and would prefer not to do so unless and until they receive and accept an offer from another congregation.

We'll be narrowing the field of candidates to those we want to get to know better. We'll then conduct Skype interviews with the most promising candidates, and check primary and secondary references with probing questions in order to better understand strengths and noteworthy accomplishments as well as any past concerns. From that group, we'll choose 3-4 candidates to preach at "neutral pulpits" – churches where neither we nor they are known – and spend from Friday through Sunday of that weekend in interviews and casual conversations over meals. Needless to say, you won't be seeing much of us for a while.

We thank you for your love and support along the way, and wish you all a very Happy New Year!

Ministerial Search Committee:

Carolyn Cave (chair), Jenn Chylack, Lisa Cyr, Mary Herman, Anne Perkins, Steve Rice

Religious Education Ministry



Happy New Year!

May this new year bring love, happiness and understanding into our lives. We have half a year left of the UUSA service schedule, which means we have a lot of learning, fun and worship to do. The Elementary children will continue to grow together and gain understanding through stories, mindfulness activities, art and games. In the preschool, **Jacy** will work on helping the children build relationships with each other and an understanding of how we can learn together in our UU space. High School Youth will continue to meet twice a month, and the 9th and 10th grade OWL group will reconvene to take on Part II of the year.

Do you have talents you would like to share with the RE program? Please come talk to me and we can figure out when you can come share them with the children.

YoUUrS,

Rebecca Fricke, DRE

New Night for Mindfulness Group UUSA member **Jessica Murphy** offers a mindfulness group to our UUSA congregation. She would like to experiment with hosting the group on Wednesday evenings (instead of Tuesdays). In January, this would be January 17 and 31, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jess at 413-575-1963 or jessica.mindfulness@gmail.com for details. If you were planning on coming, but Wednesdays are never good for you, please let her know.

Crafting for Connections at the UUSA

Beads of Gratitude—January 20

Traveling Table Top Altars—April 7



*Create Simple Projects and Learn Practices for Creativity and Contemplation—
led by Kelly Aiken and Rebecca Fricke*

Saturdays from 9:00-11:00 A.M.

Please RSVP for each craft gathering two weeks prior to the event—FrickeDRE@gmail.com or 413-687-8722
Separate material fee for each activity.

For ages 14—100

****Part of the UUSA Lifespan Education Program****

Social Events

Join us at the January Social Supper! The next UUSA Social Supper will be on Saturday, January 27, at 6:00 P.M. at the home of **Eric** and **Jessica Murphy**, 43 Aubinwood Road, Amherst. This will be the first time that Jess and Eric have hosted this monthly event and we all are invited to enjoy a cozy winter evening of good food and interesting conversation. Please call them as soon as possible at 413-549-0023 if you can bring an appetizer, salad, main dish, or dessert. Although it's by no means a requirement, consider using even one local ingredient in whatever dish you prepare. And, if you bring a dish containing shellfish, please label your dish, as we have some folks with severe allergies to shellfish.

To find their house, drive several miles East from the Amherst Town Center on Main Street, which becomes Pelham Road, until you see an "Echo Hill" and "Heatherstone Road" sign on the right. Turn onto Heatherstone Road and then turn left onto Aubinwood Rd, which is the third road on the left off Heatherstone Road. Their house is the third house on the right (#43), and look for two lit lamp posts along their driveway.

Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you! ALL ARE WELCOME.

The Men's Breakfast Group meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 A.M. at Kelly's Restaurant (314 College Street, Amherst). Contact **Michael Sussman** at msussma@music.umass.edu for details.

Women's Lunch The Women's Lunch Group meets every other Thursday for conversation and local, inexpensive cuisine. The next luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, January 11 at The Taste Thai Cuisine, 25 North Pleasant St., Amherst. We welcome every woman, whether new to our Society or a longer-time member or friend. It is not necessary to RSVP, but if you have questions, need help finding a ride, or want to be on the e-notification list, contact **Janis Gray** at 413-259-1584 or jsgray@gmail.com.

UUSA Open Studio: Are you a painter? Once in a while, would you enjoy some company while you paint and appreciate getting helpful feedback on your work? If so, this is for you! UUSA will be holding Open Studio for painters of all media and all levels in our beautiful Social Hall on six more Fridays this winter. You can paint or draw whatever you'd like: bring photo references to paint from, finish something you started elsewhere, such as plein air pieces, or just make up something. You can come to one or come to all sessions – it's up to you! We will paint from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., then share a bag lunch and friendly critique from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. Next sessions will be held on the following dates:

January 12 & 26 February 9 & 23 March 3 & 23

There are just four things you need to do:

Let us know each week when you are coming by emailing SusannePersonette@gmail.com so we know how many people to expect.

Bring \$5 cash each time to help offset the expenses of opening the space.

Bring your own cheap **plastic shower curtain** to protect the floors and tables around your work area.

Bring all **your own paints**, brushes, canvases, portable easel, etc.

Email me with any questions. Hope to paint with you this winter!

Susanne Personette

Our Caring Ministries



At this time of year, as we bundle away our candles and Christmas trees and try to tidy up the house, natural and human metabolism slows. We may become more aware of simplicity and economy, beauty of a single snowflake...

“The thin snow now driving from the north and lodging on my coat consists of those beautiful star crystals. They are about one tenth of an inch in diameter, perfect little wheels with six spokes, ... six perfect little leaflets, fern-like, with a distinct, straight, slender, midrib, raying from the centre. On each side of each midrib there is a transparent, thin blade with a notched edge. How full of the creative genius is the air in which these are generated! I should hardly admire more, if real stars fell ... Nature is full of genius, full of the divinity, so that not a snow-flake escapes its fashioning hand.”

- Henry David Thoreau

Our Caring Circle Coordinators are **Catherine Porter** and **Clare Bertrand**. Please contact one of them or your own Caring Person for rides, food, and simple needs. Caring Circle members are **Linda Callahan, Carolyn Cave, Sue Kelly, Karen Mack, Martha Nelson, Susan Rice, Chas Stevenson, Lynn Sussman** and **Gordon Wyse**.

Our Pastoral Care Team coordinators are **Pete Rogers** and **Mary Wyse**. Other members are **The Reverend Elizabeth Alciade, Charlie Atwood, The Reverend Cindy Frado, Bo Mack, Fran Plumer, and Libby Walton-Stanforth**. Please contact one of them for your more complex or personal needs.

Sending loving thoughts to **John and Susan Barbaro, Jan Cole-Stryker, Vicki Hinson-Smith, Ann Howard, and Millis Mershon**.

We will miss longtime friend and member of the choir, **Cynthia Brown**, who died December 2 at the age of 90. She will be remembered for her sense of humor and for the music which she composed and which we will continue to enjoy.

With love from our Caring Circle, Pastoral Care Team, Small Groups and Minister, and warm wishes for simplicity, economy, serenity and beauty to each other and to all the Earth.

UUSA Volunteering Survey

UUSA's **Caring Circle**, part of our Caring Ministries, arranges for support to members and friends in times of need, whether due to illness or another life-altering event. If you are involved in our Society, you are a part of our caring circle.

Participate in our survey indicating your willingness to occasionally help and join the list of volunteers.

Survey available online: <https://goo.gl/forms/2Xqsd1r0nnzGLqEs1>

Survey responses will be organized by **Susan Rice** and held by the Caring Circle.

Thank you.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 10, at 7:15 P.M. at the Meetinghouse, in Judy's office.

Green Sanctuary

The Green Sanctuary Committee invites you to see “Chasing Coral” on Tuesday, January 16 at 7:00 P.M. in the Willie Eaton Social Hall. Chasing Coral is a beautiful and informative Netflix movie about climate change. Coral reefs are an integral part of the ocean's ecosystem, and are dying at an unprecedented rate due to warming oceans. The filming includes gorgeous underwater photography and stories of scientists gathering real data in the ocean, which can be a peaceful or a stormy field site. Your Green Sanctuary Committee enjoyed watching it and felt newly inspired to continue the process of trying to work against climate change. Please join us on January 16 in the Willie Eaton Social Hall. We'll watch it together and have some discussion afterwards. Climate change is easier to face with friends!

Look for the Green Sanctuary Committee's Action Table in the Social Hall on the second Sunday of every month. We will provide information on an environmental issue and a way for members of the congregation to contact legislators or other key people. We want to make it easy for you to take action on critical issues. Please visit us!

The Green Sanctuary Committee will meet on Thursday, January 25, 7:00 P.M. at the home of Gordon and Mary Wyse, 219 Lincoln Ave., Amherst.

Social Action



Interfaith Cot Shelter Every year, the first Thursday of each month from November to April, UUSA members, in cooperation with those of South Congregational Church of Amherst, provide a home-prepared meal for the Interfaith Cot Shelter in Northampton. The meal feeds between 24 and 28 people experiencing homelessness and three employees of the shelter. This fiscal year, the following people have contributed with food or service: **Chas Stevenson, Naomi Yanis, Mary Latham, Maria Lydia Spinelli, and Rebecca Fricke**. Rebecca has been our bread and milk provider for all six months. We are again in need of food donations and service volunteers for the following dates:

January 4 and March 1 Appetizers and dessert (for 24-28 people), delivery and service

February 1 and April 5 Main meal and vegetable or salad (24-28 people), delivery and service.

If you can help in any of these, please contact **Maria Lydia Spinelli**, email: spinelliml@gmail.com, or telephone: 708-567-1759.

Just One Thing On January 14 a collection will occur for the Survival Center. A basket will be placed in the foyer for donations. As always, anything you can give is most appreciated. THANK YOU for continuous support. For information contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, mbsem@comcast.net.

Voices for Sanctuary benefit concert On Sunday, January 28, at 4:00 P.M. at the Jewish Community of Amherst, 742 Main Street, Amherst, the Leverett Chorus, directed by **Anne Louise White**, will perform a concert, “*VOICES FOR SANCTUARY*,” in collaboration with the First (Congregational) Church of Amherst's Immigrant Sanctuary Fund.

This concert is a benefit to support the family of Lucio Perez who is in Sanctuary at First Church Amherst.

In addition to raising much-needed funds for Lucio's family, which is struggling economically without Lucio's income, the concert will celebrate through song the loving, generous, strong community that continues to grow in support for Lucio, immigrant justice, and resistance to cruel deportation policies.

Suggested \$10 donation (or more if inclined) at the door. Donations will go to the First Church Amherst's Immigrant Sanctuary Fund, are tax deductible, and will go to Lucio's family.

Additional donations can also be made online at <https://tinyurl.com/ImSanctuaryFund>.

UUSA COMMUNITY BREAKFAST NEEDS YOU!

The UUSA has been providing volunteers for the free Community Breakfast in the Willie Eaton Social Hall every Wednesday for three years. We serve 80-120 guests a freshly cooked hot meal of eggs, home fries, sausages, pastries, cereal, toast, juice and coffee or tea – all provided by Amherst's Craig's Doors. Our breakfast is important as the Amherst Survival Center, which is open other days, is closed on Wednesday.

Our breakfast team works closely with Craig's Doors, which helps people find ways to become empowered and

improve the quality of their lives through the creation of safe, respectful shelter and housing.

We regularly experience a shortage of volunteers both in the summer and the church year. Dishwashers and cleanup crew are especially difficult positions to fill, but many other jobs are also available. Contact **Clare Bertrand** at clarebertrand@gmail.com. She will send you a weekly email reminder with a link where you can see what positions are available for each week. For questions or more information contact Clare, or **Sophie Rogers**.

Denominational Affairs



WhaleCoast Alaska 2018 Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2018** is for you! Four Alaska UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wild-life, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, seals, and otters. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise ships – our program is the best way to visit Alaska! Tours led by Dave Frey, member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and Alaska travel expert. Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime. For complete information go to: www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org or call 907-322-4966. Discount for groups of 8 or more. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

May 6-14 2018: The Gilded Age Meets Downton Abbey Travelling with UUs in England, we learn about the heiresses who went there to save the aristocracy's estates. **New Yorkers Consuelo Vanderbilt and Jennie Jerome** were two of the most famous. We visit their homes and explore Victorian life in England with a Blue Badge Guide. From the unique university town of Oxford, we visit the fabulous homes of Highclere Castle, Basildon Park, and Blenheim Palace. Spending a full day in the charming Cotswolds, we visit Unitarian Beatrice Potter's Yew Tree Farm, as well as other Downton Abbey film sites. In the Midlands we visit Althorp House (Princess Diana's childhood home), Ironbridge, Blists Hill Victorian town, and have high tea in Leamington Spa. In London we explore the neighbourhoods of the Victorian aristocracy. Contact UU Beverly Carr: beverlz@me.com www.nuuc.ca