

Declutter and secure your summer beach reads with the Aurora United Church Women



By Brock Weir

It's spring cleaning season and, as luck would have it, Goodwill's gone.

Chances are you are finding yourself ankle-deep in clutter and fewer options to get rid of it.

If you're looking to unload a few books, the Aurora United Church Women want to hear from you.

For decades, the Aurora United Church Women (UCW) have become renowned for their annual bake sales, silent auctions, rummage sales and bazaars, but since church itself burned to the ground in the devastating April fire two years ago this Monday, they have had few opportunities to hold their fundraisers.

Next weekend, however, they are aiming to get back in the saddle with their Spring Book Sale, which will be held at Trinity Anglican Church on Saturday, April 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Featuring nearly 2,000 adult and children's books ? and counting! ? and priced to sell at 50 cents each or three books for \$1, proceeds will go to a number of local charities the UCW support, including the Aurora Food Pantry, Blue Door Shelters, Gran Aurora, Hospice King Aurora, Inn From the Cold, Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers, and numerous other organizations.

?For many years, we had fundraisers to support the charities in the community but because of the fire two years ago, we don't have the facilities and our opportunities are limited to raise funds,? says UCW member Helen Roberts. ?We were trying to find something we could do that was relatively simple that we could do in the space.?

Adds Anne Ella-Arnold, a fellow member who received a substantial donation of nearly 1,000 books that sparked the idea: ?This is our new normal. Hopefully we will have a new normal in the near future, but right now this is our new normal.?

Since Ms. Ella-Arnold received the ?seed funding? of this first donation, the UCW members have been hard at work gathering books from within the congregation and the community at large, collecting a significant amount of children's books, pocketbooks and trade paperbacks. Hardcover books, however, will not be collected or sold due to limited space.

The more books that come in, and the more books that are sold, the more they can help the community as a whole.

“We try to do local,” says UCW member Pat Innes. “We focus on the smaller charities, and groups that sometimes fall through the cracks, especially the things that deal with women and children. We have had to sort of cut back our support over the last two years in fundraisers and this is another reason we want to get back to doing this. We have had to cut back on the organizations we support as well as the amount we are giving them, and we would like to get back to where we were a couple of years ago.”

The UCW will be in the entrance atrium of Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria Street, next Friday, April 15, accepting book donations from 4 to 7 p.m. They will also accept donations from 8 to 10 a.m. before the sale opens on the Saturday.

“Anyone who reads always has a stash of books they have finished reading, and they’re good books they don’t know where to pass them onto,” says Ms. Roberts. “This is giving them a perfect opportunity to replace those they read with new ones.”

“And sadly,” adds UCW member Mary Smith with a smile, “we’ll probably all go home with a bag!”