

The Harcourt Herald April 2024

The Harcourt United Church Community





Harcourt Memorial United Church

An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada

We are a people of God called together and sent forth by Christ to... **Seek. Connect. Act.**

Our Mission: Inspired by the Spirit, we participate in Christian practices that strengthen us in the building of just, compassionate and non-violent relationships.

Our Vision Statement: To be an authentic community of spiritual growth and service.

Our Core Values: Risk... Respect... Responsibility... Vulnerability... Trust

Our Purpose: To welcome and strengthen in community all who wish to serve God and follow the way of Jesus

Conor Russell
Administrative & Technical
Coordinator

David Kucherepa
Custodian

Pat Eton-Neufeld
Rental Coordinator

Office hours:
Tue - Fri, 9-12am

The People with

Rev Kate Ballagh-Steeper
Minister

Pamela Girardi
Manna Lead Coordinator
& Community Engagement
Animator

Alison MacNeill
Director of Music Ministry
and Arts Ministries

87 Dean Ave.
Guelph, ON N1G 1L3
519.824.4177
office@
harcourtcommunity.ca

The Harcourt Herald is
published 10 times per
year (in paper and
digital formats).

Submission Deadline:
20th of each month.

harcourtherald@
harcourtcommunity.ca

Herald Team:
Marion Auger
Judi Morris
Andre Auger
Lisa Browning
Marilyn Whiteley



Table of Contents

From the Editor's Desk.....	4
The Heart of a Community of Faith – Kate Ballagh-Steeper.....	4
Council News - Kent Hoeg, Chair.....	5
Food for the Journey: What is a Charism anyway? - Stan Bunston, for the Spiritual Life Collective.....	9
“What blessing have you experienced when doing volunteer work, and how did it feed you?” - Dan Ganesh.....	12
The Joys of Committee Work - Brian Magee.....	13
The Benefits of Volunteering – Frank Webster, Chair, Property Committee.....	14
Love Around Your Shoulders – Joan Bowland.....	15
Volunteering – Jill Gill.....	16
A Life of Volunteering – Lorraine Holding.....	17
Stepping beyond my community - Peter Jackson.....	19
“Flourishing” through Volunteering – Peter Gill.....	21
Experiencing joy as a volunteer - Rosalind Slater.....	22
Volunteering: You Never Know!! - Tony Wagner.....	23
New in the Library – Mary Lou Funston.....	25
Harcourt Communal Garden – Jill Gill.....	26
Your calling: where your joy meets a community need.....	27
An Interview with Rev. Henk Dykman - Judi Morris.....	28
Blessed Beyond Words - Lisa Browning.....	35
Interns: Harcourt's contribution to theological education – Marilyn Fardig Whiteley.....	37
Nudged Toward Resurrection - Arlene Davies-Fuhr.....	40

From the Editor's Desk



April 2024 – Harcourt is readying itself to start up again the great task of volunteering for the community gardens, to beautify the look out of the sanctuary windows, and to provide hundreds of pounds of fresh produce for Chalmers.

So, the Herald wondered what blessing people experienced when doing volunteer work and how does it feed them.

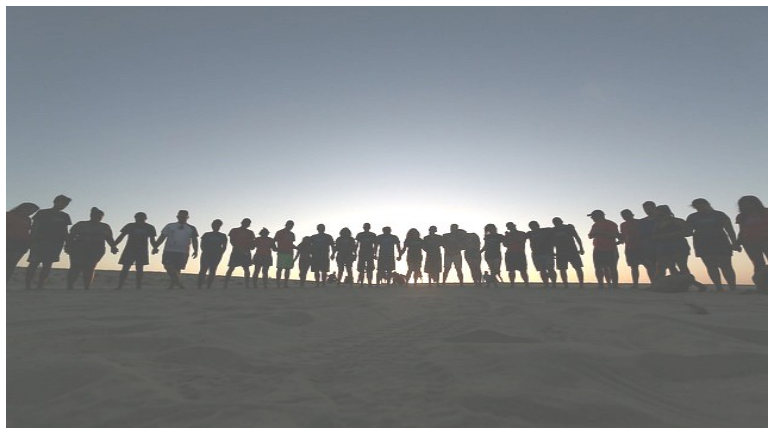
Yes, we suggested something like this topic before. But by the responses we received, it was by no means exhausted. You will find many wonderful new articles. And, you know, these are always only suggested topics. By the way, do you have any specific topic you are interested in?

Let us know!!!!

The Heart of a Community of Faith – Kate Ballagh-Steeper

We have different gifts that are consistent with God's grace that has been given to us. If your gift is prophecy, you should prophesy in proportion to your faith. If your gift is service, devote yourself to serving. If your gift is teaching, devote yourself to teaching. If your gift is encouragement, devote yourself to encouraging. The one giving should do it with no strings attached. The leader should lead with passion. The one showing mercy should be cheerful. Romans 12:6-8 The Common English Bible

I have at times explained my career as a minister in the church as; “a branch manager of a large global organization. I work with a couple of hundred volunteers who together feed the hungry, cloth the naked, befriend the stranger and who create a community that often eats together, raises thousands of dollars



and maintains a building for their meetings which they share with the wider community.” If I am speaking to someone who does not know me and know that I am a minister and that I’m talking about the Church, they are pretty impressed! And so they should be!

I have had the privilege to offer service as a volunteer, and to be the lead of an organization that relies on volunteers (that’s you in the church!). Offering our time, our energy, our experience and our wisdom in service to both the church and or the world beyond the church is sharing the gifts we have been gifted by a loving God. It is faithful. It is valued. It is important.

We know that many organizations including the church are struggling to find volunteers who will commit to leading, and participating in projects and work that is ongoing. One off opportunities still seem to get the support they need – but it is the ongoing work that is suffering in church and elsewhere. One of the impacts in this decline in volunteer leadership, is the greater reliance on staff to not just do the work that needs to be done, but also to make decisions and provide the leadership. This erodes the democratic nature of the church and other organizations. Could this also be contributing to the popularity of political leaders who are less democratic??

If your volunteering days are behind you, perhaps one of the things that you can still contribute is to encourage the young people in your life to offer themselves in service to others and other organizations. Share the stories of your volunteering and what it meant to you, the gifts it gave you and why you thought it was important.

May the stories on the following pages inspire you. May we pray for the ways that we can involve and evolve volunteers for this time.

Peace, Kate



Council News - Kent Hoeg, Chair

This month we were asked what blessing we have experienced when doing volunteer work and how did it feed us.

For once a Harcourt Herald question where my answer comes fairly easy!

I'm a working chap, but certainly have done volunteer work. By far the most satisfying is when I'm volunteering with food banks or other similar organizations. I have always left energized, but disappointed that I haven't let myself to do it more often.

Which leads me into how did it feed me? As stated, I feel energized and wanting to do more. I have NO doubt that when I retire (a few years yet) I will significantly increase my time helping out at a charitable organization (or two). No doubt because of Harcourt, I am drawn to Chalmers. I see so many at Harcourt who give so much of themselves. I am inspired by them, and I want to follow in those footsteps.

As my work/life schedule impacts the hours I can volunteer, I compensate by donating monthly to Chalmers, Food4Kids and United Way. I give several one-time donations to other organizations such as Stepping Stone. This is of course above and beyond givings to Harcourt, M&S, Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke, and others. I certainly want no thanks. I'm blessed to be able to do so.



Thank you for this month's question. It is such a blessing when I am able to volunteer. I get so much more out of it than I would imagine. I want to do so much more, retirement can't come soon enough!

Council News

Wow what a busy past month!

On February 27, 57 members of our Community of Faith joined by Zoom and approved our 2024 Budget. Please see our annual report for what comprises our budget. During this meeting we also approved setting our Community of Faith meeting quorum to 35. We want 100 out to annual meetings, but for votes to occur we do need a minimum of 35.

On March 3, we held our Annual Meeting. The meeting followed our joint service where we experimented! Our congregation sat at tables. We shared Communion with one another at these tables. I loved that experience! We also had a small breakout session where we asked the question "In 2023, when you think about Harcourt church communities, what is a moment, event, or activity for which you are most grateful?" We received over 115 responses! These will be shared with an adhoc Stewardship team who will find ways to share these responses with all of us.

After the service we were fed a wonderful snack of vegetables, fruit, cheese and crackers. It kept the hunger at bay during our meeting. Thanks to Sandra Welch and Heather Hoeg for their efforts!

After a bit of a technical glitch, the annual meeting started. We had 82 attendees, both in person and on Zoom. The Annual Report from Committees, Teams and Groups was accepted. Roz Stevenson then gave us a presentation on the 2023 financial report. While the 2023 budget was approved with a \$73,000 deficit we ended the year with a surplus of \$42,000. Yee haw! The 2023 Financial report was accepted as presented in the Annual Report. Dan Ganesh then gave a 2023 Pillars report. This was accepted as presented.

We then broke into our table groups and were asked the following “Looking forward, what is most meaningful for you in living out our mission in our world as God’s people?” We received approximately 90 responses. These will be shared with the various committees who can see what plans can be made to have some of these ideas come to life!

Next, we had updates about the Guelph United Ministries (GUM) and Harcourt Commons. We are finding ways to experiment, increase rentals, find partnerships

.
Our 2024 M&S target was set to \$60,000 after receiving \$56,000 in 2023.

Finally we concluded by approving the (large) list of names who have agreed to serve on positions for committees and teams.

The full minutes of the Budget Meeting and Annual Meeting are available from the office should you wish more detail.

On March 5, the GUM Executive met. Key highlights:

- On April 14, our ministers will do a pulpit exchange. Kate will preach at Trinity United. John Benham will preach at Harcourt. Bruce Dickson will preach at Three Willows.
- On June 30 (Canada Day), Trinity will go to Dublin that Sunday. Harcourt will either go to Dublin or watch online at Harcourt.
- On August 4 (Civic Holiday), all churches will be invited to Harcourt for a joint service.
- On September 1 (Labour Day) all churches will either travel to Trinity or watch that service online at their own church.
- June 8, 2025 was set to have a joint GUM event to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada.

- We continue to explore how we can address a lack of volunteers within our churches. We are discussing if we should experiment with combining some committees (such as Stewardship – which Harcourt does not have).
- Our Ambassadors group has started up. We will be meeting in April to (hopefully) have a plan on how the group will move forward.
- We all provided recaps of our respective Annual Meetings.

On March 20, Council met. Key highlights:

- Steve Pierce provided plans to acquire a heat pump for Room 202 and the Chapel. This will provide us all heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer! Badly needed and yet one more selling feature for rentals.
- Lynn Hancock provided plans for the 2nd floor kitchenette renovation. The old cupboards have been removed and we should see a fully renovated space by early April. It's going to be beautiful!
- We did a retrospective on the Annual meetings. We had far more what we loved, than what needed to change!
 - Love the hybrid Zoom/in-person option
 - Food was spectacular
 - The table arrangement was outstanding.
 - The service was wonderful, and we were glad we broke into a table exercise during the service. It saved us time during the Annual Meeting.
 - The Budget meeting was well attended, and it too saved us time during the Annual Meeting.
 - We could make some improvements on the tech side, but everyone was very patient.
 - For those on Zoom, it was difficult to see/hear, including who was speaking. We will think about how to improve next time.
 - During the service when we broke into our table groups, it was hard to find what table we belonged to. Something to do better on next time.
 -

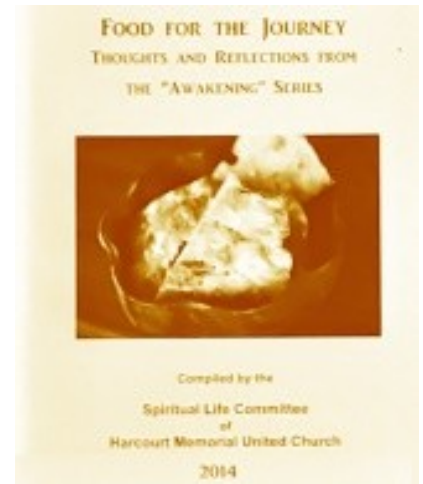
Financial Update

Our February results are in. We are running a surplus of over \$17,000. We done all of us!

Food for the Journey: What is a Charism anyway?

- Stan Bunston, for the Spiritual Life Collective

The word charism is always linked to the Harcourt Community for me, no doubt because that is where I first heard it in relation to a United Church congregation in today's world. I would like to share why that has become a meaningful word in my faith journey – indeed “food for my journey”, food that I would like to share. So please be patient with some personal storytelling.



After a first career in public accounting and raising a family in Toronto, I completed the requirements at Emmanuel College, U of T and the discernment process of the UCC to be ordained as a United Church minister in 2009 and was posted to Grace United Church, Hanover for three years. On retirement from that position I began some volunteer and church-related community activities locally and worshipping at Harcourt. Actually my contact with Harcourt had already begun while I was completing my studies by participating in the Guelph Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer in 2008 and 2009. Spiritual food for my beginning journey in ministry came through the gift of Henk Dykman, my guide in 2009. Henk encouraged me to spend the whole week on just one passage of scripture – the disciple Peter getting out of the boat to walk on the water and, in doubt, sinking until being lifted up by Jesus' outstretched hand. What a metaphor and what a gift as I anxiously anticipated beginning a new role, in a new place, among strangers to me in Hanover..



Some years later, after retiring from Grace United, I dropped into the 9am service in the chapel at Harcourt and here I began to appreciate the spiritual meaning behind the word Charism. Here is one explanation from the internet:

“Charism” is the Greek word used in the New Testament for “favour” or “gratuitous gift.” Charisms, or spiritual gifts, are special abilities given to all Christians by the Holy Spirit to give them power to represent Christ and to be a channel of God's goodness for people.

So what are the special abilities that reside within Harcourt? While there are many, the ones that I wish to draw attention to here are the spiritual offerings that I was introduced to beginning with the circle discussion [“Holy Listening Circle” – Ed] now so prevalent at Harcourt that uses small groups for two rounds of sharing. My introduction to that practice began following the “early service” to reflect upon what touched each of us in the worship service. That warm, welcoming, personal sharing drew me into the Harcourt community.

While the annual Week of Guided Prayer is a different format, the one-on-one sharing between a Guide and the Retreatant also takes place with an emphasis at the intersection between the Retreatant's life story and the Divine. Perhaps this is somewhat like the shape of the Christian cross being a metaphor for the intersection of our human journey (the horizontal part of the cross) and the Divine or Something More (the vertical part of the cross reaching up).



My use of “Something More” is intended to illustrate how the language used in the WoGP has become intentionally broader. For example, beginning some years ago, the Handbooks for Guides and Retreatants emphasized openness to include Scripture AND other spiritual expressions: such as “text / image / art activity” and the description of the week became “Week of Guided Prayer and Spiritual Exploration”. A charism of the United Church, and certainly the case for the Harcourt community, is to welcome and offer sustenance to all who seek spiritual nourishment. To illustrate how varied that sustenance can be, I share with you (with permission obtained) that this year in the recently completed Week of Guided Prayer, my Retreatant and I spent the entire week on a single John O'Donohue poem.

Sometimes I wonder how many in the Harcourt community are fully aware of the opportunities Harcourt provides for anyone seeking to explore the world of spirituality. Consider:

- the Week of Guided Prayer website (guidedprayer.ca) under “What's Next” - available to everyone through the internet -- lists many resources including retreats, meditation groups, books, daily disciplines, eastern and generic / eclectic spiritual traditions and much more;
- one of the great resources listed is a comprehensive website on spiritual practices (spiritualpractice.ca) maintained by Andre Auger;
- while the Week of Guided Prayer is ecumenical, roughly half of the planning team and guides are from Harcourt with a solid contribution from others;

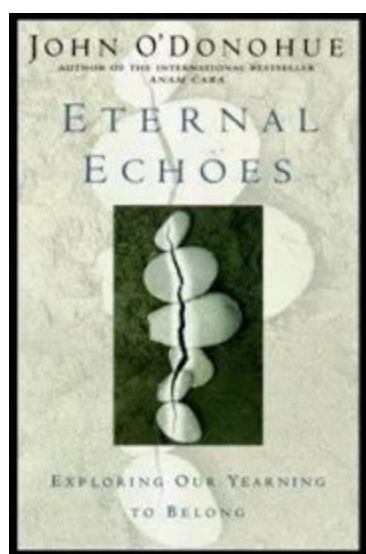
- a “gift” of the pandemic (and Spirit) is that the Week of Guided Prayer is now primarily offered “on line” which has initiated a renewed vitality and representation from people both near and farther away;
- Harcourt in 2024-2025 is again offering the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (and no one will be excluded over finances);
- For those who have previously experienced the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, or those who would like an alternative approach, there is now an offering based on the book “The New Spiritual Exercises” by Louis Savary. The daily meditations are offered with the aid of a companion volume entitled “Praying The New Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life” by Andre Auger. As Savary remarks in the Preface, “[Andre's] intent was to turn my book into a structured series of daily meditations, and he did so masterfully”.
- Harcourt Spiritual Companions are available for one time or on-going one-on-one support by contacting Marion Auger or the Harcourt office.

On a more personal note, I found the experience of the Exercises to be life changing not just in 2013 when I walked with a Guide through the “Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life” but ever since with the continuing impact of my own “Principle and Foundation” daily prayer and spiritual practice inspired by that journey.

Naturally when we find nourishing spiritual “Food for the Journey”, we want to share it, so I thank you for taking the time to walk with me in these paragraphs. The Week of Guided Prayer poem by John O'Donohue referenced above, entitled “For Presence”, concludes with this line:

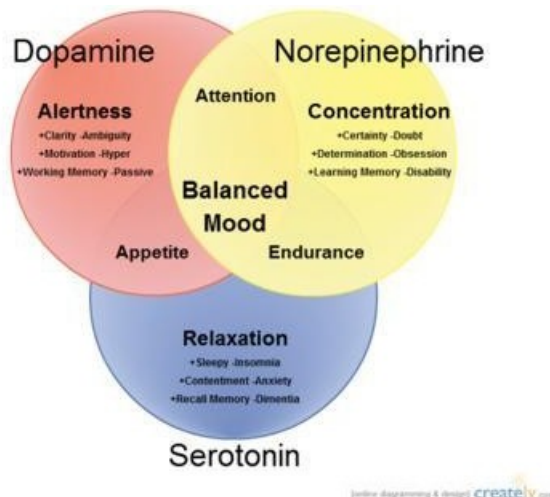
May [we] experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.

May it be so in the Harcourt community and beyond! Charism indeed!



“What blessing have you experienced when doing volunteer work, and how did it feed you?” - Dan Ganesh

Be selfish. Volunteer. Sounds like an oxymoron, but in reality, the science behind volunteering lies in dopamine formation. Dopamine is known as the ‘feel good’ hormone. When we volunteer, we feel good because dopamine is being released. The benefits are apparently even greater for those aged 60 and over. One possible reason is that retirement can bring a feeling of unimportance, a lack of relevance. There is nothing so debilitating to the mind as someone who has lost their feeling of self worth. Thankfully, in a world where volunteerism is apparently declining, churches such as Harcourt survive through a series of dopamine transmitters – several who volunteer their time, money and passion – in the act of serving others. So I guess the message is - be selfish and volunteer!



Volunteering offers several potential benefits – networking, self-esteem, sharing with others of similar beliefs and passions etc. However, for me, the act of volunteering is based on a feeling of wanting to share what gifts I have, and it has to be genuine with no thoughts about benefits. On reflection on being asked that question, I have come to realize that the benefits are indeed blessings.

That is a brief on the logic and science. But where does the Bible fit in?
Volunteering is Stewardship, and stewardship is doing God’s work.

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

1 Corinthians 12:12 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”

I would be remiss if I did not mention the dark side of volunteering. In my early childhood in a developing country that existed under colonialism, there were many examples that could be cited of volunteers who were misguided souls and who did more harm than good. There are several other examples of course, but that is another topic.

Back to the more pleasant side. One of my greatest joys has been in coaching and managing boys and young men's soccer teams. Since these were city rep teams, the time spent practising and travelling to games, picking kids up, attending meetings etc were long and arduous. I no longer do it, but the memories remain. The driving force initially was my son, but it soon became important to me (and my fellow coaches) that there were important life lessons that could carry on far beyond the game itself. It was so interesting to experience the transition of looking down and then having to look way up (at least for me with my somewhat diminutive stature) as these boys grew into young men. There are many stories. One that stayed with me is when my Mom passed, and there was a knock on my door that night. In paraded a group of those adolescent boys to offer their condolences. I'm happy to say that many of these young men have turned into responsible citizens. Today, I can help to offer the Kabiry girls (Sherzai family) the opportunity to play soccer. I feel blessed that I can help them in this manner.

One other blessing is being close to the University of Guelph. With my work experience, I take delight in meeting young post-graduates (MSc, PhD) who have expressed an interest in working in my Industry. Whenever I can share my knowledge and experience with young peers, I do so. It helps me to stay young!

Of course. I can mention my activities at Church. In the early days as an altar boy, member of the Luther League and Church Choir in Guyana to my activities today at Harcourt. Choir, Worship Committee and Trustees would be the bulk of these. There are of course several times when the balance of these activities with work, being a grandparent and babysitter and also helping my wife with her Mom can be overwhelming. However, it forces me to be organized, which I guess is also a blessing. Finally I should mention how humbled and stimulated I am by several Harcourters who volunteer so much more than me. These folks are a blessing that nourishes my soul.

The Joys of Committee Work - Brian Magee



I first started volunteering on committees at Harcourt shortly after joining the church in the late 1980s. First it was the property committee for 4 years. It was a great way to meet people and to contribute my "handy

man” skills to projects in and outside the church. I have always enjoyed helping and participating in activities.

I next got involved in the financial side of Harcourt. Over a span of more than 25 years, I volunteered in every role of the Finance Committee, some roles overlapping. At times these were challenging roles. It did provide the opportunity to learn new skills and put to use work experiences. I find it very rewarding to be able to adapt to and manage new challenges. Mixed in with financial side, I also accepted the role as a member of the Ministerial Support Group. This was a real stretch for me, as this role was way outside my comfort zone. But again, it was a way to interact with and understand people's points of view. Another opportunity to learn and grow.

Being asked to be a Trustee for a term of seven years and being asked to be a Trustee a second time is a great honour. It makes one feel valued for their ability to contribute.

Knowing that volunteering at Harcourt makes a difference for us and the community makes it all worth while. It leaves one with a great feeling of being part of something amazing.

The Benefits of Volunteering – Frank Webster, Chair, Property Committee

I will start off by saying that I was exposed to volunteers from a relatively young age. I had a lot of respect for various sport coaches, Sunday school teachers, TYRO leaders etc., etc.



My goal in volunteering is to build connections both within and outside the church. Volunteering gives you the chance to meet new people and increase your relationships. I have come to know so many people by volunteering. We always need more volunteers.

Love Around Your Shoulders – Joan Bowland

Andre has asked me to write a short article for the Herald. “What blessing have you experienced when doing volunteer work, and how did it feed you?” I have been a part of the Prayer Shawl Group since Rev Monica started the group in 2008.

I have always loved to knit, and making something special for someone else just seemed like a good idea to me. Some of us prefer to crochet; that’s good too for variety. I have worked with many wonderful women over the years in the group.

The friendships and the support we have shared have been amazing. Unfortunately, many of them are no longer with us, but I remember them and they are all a blessing to me.



And what brings me joy in this ministry? When we are choosing a shawl for someone, we try to find a colour we hope they will like, and that it will bring them comfort, and that they will feel the love from the Harcourt community as they wrap it around their shoulders.



Volunteering – Jill Gill

Volunteering has consumed a great deal of my time since I retired from teaching Theatrical Costuming (almost 17 years ago). At that time I began offering a free mending service for guests at Chalmers on Friday mornings. Once the word got around, I was swamped with requests to replace coat zippers, hem pants, stitch sleeping bags and tents, reattach coat sleeves, etc. You name it, I've probably seen it and more. Because demand was so high I started taking work home and usually did 8-10 hours of mending per week. Since Covid I've returned to the Friday mornings only routine.



I take great pleasure in doing this activity for many reasons. I love to sew and share my skill. Because I'm familiar with how clothing is constructed it helps figure out how to make repairs. Plus, I love problem-solving – and there's often some puzzling involved to find the best way to mend an item. I've been blessed to hear many stories from guests at Chalmers and many of them revolve around the item I'm mending. It's so delightful to see the smiles when I manage to fix someone's favorite coat or other item. Many of Chalmers' guests would be hard put to replace their prized articles of clothing. I'm also very pleased to say that mending helps to keep items from taking up space in the landfill. In addition I do mending at the Guelph Tool Library's Repair Cafes held every second month and derive great pleasure from that too.



I started volunteering in handwork classes at the Trillium Waldorf School once a week when our granddaughter, Grace, was in Gr. 1 (She's now in Gr. 7). I've continued that each year and when our grandson, Oli, started Gr. 1, I helped in his class too. This year I am assisting in Gr. 1, Gr. 3, Gr. 4, Gr. 7 and Gr. 8! It's so wonderful to have our grandkids request that I help in their classes (I'll say yes for as long as they ask!). I have

the great privilege of seeing them in a setting that most parents and grandparents aren't privy to and I can watch them and their classmates mature, increase their life skills and create projects they are really proud of.

As coordinator of the Harcourt Communal Garden I am grateful to work with many other volunteers to grow vegetables, fruit and nuts which are donated to Chalmers food pantry. It is amazing to see how much nutritious and delicious food can be harvested from a few small garden beds and be able to help feed many folks in need.



In the last two years, Pete and I have been part of a team from Harcourt and Trinity, working to sponsor a family of 7 from Afghanistan. Now that they have arrived safely and are settling in, it is a great source of joy to spend time with them, see them start to relax and feel safe in Canada and not be looking over their shoulder expecting some harm might come to them.

Over the years since retirement I've had volunteer opportunities too numerous to mention, but the overarching sense of achievement, joy, pride and delight I have received as a result is what keeps my spirit energized and that's why I'll keep doing it.

A Life of Volunteering – Lorraine Holding

*"I pledge
My **head** to clearer thinking,
My **heart** to greater loyalty,
My **hands** to larger service
My **health** to better living,
For my club, my community, my country, and my
world."*



Learn To Do By Doing

CANADA

For those who recognize these words, they are repeated by 4-H members (youth) and volunteer leaders across North America and in other countries. Growing up as a 4-H member, followed by a career in working with hundreds of 4-H leaders and volunteers in many rural organizations, it has been a natural fit for me to offer my time and talents within other organizations when opportunities have arisen. The pledge has guided me through my life, often inherently.

As most of you know, Harcourt has given me many opportunities to volunteer. Have I experienced blessings, and been fed by them? For sure. Each has created a sense of community and two-way connections with others, while “working” collaboratively on projects, learning together, and strengthening friendships. I have expanded my comfort level with ways to discern, pray and focus on recognizing and listening for/to the Spirit’s guidance.

My lengthy term as Council Chair certainly covered very challenging times, including the pandemic, three significant ministerial changes and an extended visioning process. Were there blessings that fed me? Through all the ups and downs, these come to mind:

- Being able to maintain connections with people using new approaches;
- The many contributions and positive efforts of others working together;
- Feedback about helpful processes for discussions and meetings, while visioning and re-imagining our community of faith during difficult times;
- Actual progression of steps (small and large) to move forward and adapt to change.
- Guiding and sharing health system updates/protocols to match Harcourt’s needs;
- Supportive comments and prayers, especially if the going was tough.

This year’s National Volunteer Week is April 14-20 and the theme is “**Every Moment Matters.**” Here’s a timely quote from Volunteer Canada: “Sharing of time, skills, empathy and creativity is vital to the inclusivity, strength and wellbeing of our communities”. Several years ago, in a speech about motivating volunteers, I asked the audience, “what motivates YOU to volunteer?” There are four basic motivators, and bits of each keep me involved, too:

- Affiliation by being part of an organization or team, with similar beliefs, goals or projects;
- Accomplishment of work, especially specific or hands-on projects;

- Opportunity to influence or teach others, and be part of decision-making;
- Recognition of talents used.

So now I ask, what motivates YOU to volunteer within Harcourt and our community? There are many blessings that can come through sharing your time, interests, energy and skills within our community of faith.

Every moment matters!
Every person matters!
Thanks be to God.



Stepping beyond my community - Peter Jackson

I appreciated the invitation to write about a gift received through volunteering. However, for me volunteering has connotations of optional choice. In contrast, working for the church has felt more like a response to a call, a necessary dimension of participation in a community of which I considered myself part.

Then I remembered an invitation many years ago to join the Special Gifts Committee in the Department of Stewardship Services at the United Church of Canada. Back then, my participation was exclusively in the local congregation; the national church seemed remote and I felt no obligation to get involved. However, the General Council Offices were on St Clair Avenue West in Toronto, so I could take a few hours away from my downtown office to participate in meetings there. Accepting the invitation felt like volunteering, and I did so out of personal regard for the person who invited me, the reverend Vince Alfano.

The Special Gifts Committee had three programs, which now are run by the United Church of Canada Foundation: bequests through wills; gifts of life insurance, where the donor pays the premiums and the church benefits from the payout on death; and gift annuities,

where the donor buys an annuity and collects a monthly income while alive, and the church receives any surplus remaining on death (instead of the surplus going to an insurance company).

Several gifts flowed from from stepping beyond my community and into this new opportunity. I'll name three.

First, a deeper sense of participation in the broader church. I came to understand the national church not as a faceless institution but as a group of faithful people doing their best to provide leadership in difficult times of declining church membership, finances and influence. The whole staff would gather to pray and worship together at least once a week; I participated a couple of times and it was moving.

Second, participation in a corporate culture prompted by service, a distinct contrast to the money-motivated corporate culture where I earned my living. My fellow committee members were lawyers, accountants and other professionals. Their example helped me to understand how I might better live out my personal values within a work context.

Third, contact with some saints of the church. I think of the consultants we employed to promote our products across Canada, gifted people who worked hard for relatively low financial compensation. I think also of our customers and clients: many were retired clergy and their spouses who were glad to find one more way to give to the church. Their example is a continuing source of inspiration.

Early in the Ignatian Exercises, participants are invited to reflect on their blessed history - the times in their life that God's presence is discernible. The process of reflection continues long after the formal Exercises are completed. I'm grateful that accepting the invitation to write this article brought its own gift: a stroll down stretches of Memory Lane I've not trodden for a long time.



“Flourishing” through Volunteering – Peter Gill



In his very recent post-pandemic book “Languishing”, author Corey Keyes writes about the antidote to languishing (a word that was popularized during the pandemic) which is the term flourishing.

Keyes describes five “vitamins”, activities which help people to flourish. One of them is having and living your purpose, especially helping others or supporting a cause – volunteering can be a critical part of that.

For me, volunteering as a young father was mostly about family activities, coaching my daughter’s soccer team, serving on the Suzuki string school board for example.

Since I stopped working 10 or 12 years ago I made a conscious decision to try to help those living with scarcity in our city and maybe beyond. After a year or two of occasional helping I suddenly became all-in when I chaired the board and later took on a role as volunteer executive director at Chalmers. The work was demanding and at times frustrating but I always had the sense that it was the right thing to do. As a front-line volunteer as well as having a managerial role, I have felt tremendously privileged to meet guests from all over the world, all of whom have stories – Fuad from Iraqi Kurdistan, Sameen and her sister Saliha’s family from Afghanistan, Steve from Guelph who wins numerous track and field medals in the over 50 category.



Chalmers Centre

I have been incredibly blessed to form relationships with other folks in our community who are doing amazing work to improve peoples’ lives – Guelph Wellington Poverty Task Force, Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition and many others, including the United churches of Guelph.

I hadn’t really thought about this gift of volunteering as bringing joy but when I see a young mum leaving Chalmers with groceries and diapers and maybe a cupcake for her child, I do have a sense of satisfaction, accomplishment and yes, even joy.

Experiencing joy as a volunteer - Rosalind Slater.

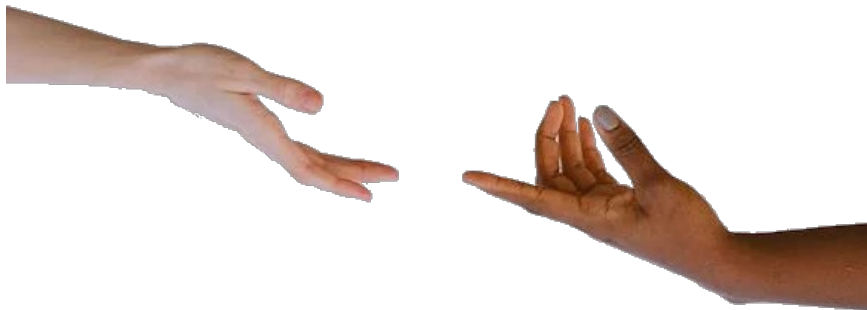
When Keith died eight years ago the loss of him left a huge hole in my life. I realized that I had to find something to fill that hole. I didn't want to return to the things we'd done together that would have reminded me too much of what I had lost.

So I decided to reinvent myself with a completely different lifestyle. I joined New Horizon's band and started playing flute. This activity has given me great joy and a new group of people to get to know. I didn't feel that I was doing anything to help others though, so I volunteered to join Council at Harcourt. There was definitely a need and when I was offered the position on Outreach Councillor I jumped at the opportunity. I needed to fill a need and this was the one that spoke to me.

Outreach gave me a wonderful opportunity to help others, The position has many parts with a very wide umbrella. The parts include, Indigenous rights, LGBTQX1, uniformed groups, Chalmers, Saturday night suppers, Rainbow chorus, the vegetable gardens, refugees, and many other small groups that are affiliated with the building.

Now we are Harcourt Commons. Things will change a little with the Outreach committee, but in the meantime my place on council has given me a new life to fill my need. Helping others has been a wonderful way to fill my own need and I've met some great people who have shown me that hardship comes in many forms and guises.

This year I've made the decision to stay on Council for another year at least. With the joy of welcoming a refugee family from Afghanistan this year, life has opened up even more and I'm learning things I never would if I hadn't opened myself to new beginnings. This leads me to thank God for the opportunity to serve ...



Volunteering: You Never Know!! - Tony Wagner

Where does one start? I guess the beginning is as good a place as any. It all began about 23 years ago when I experienced a series of strokes over a two-year period. I entered a rehab program at St. Joe's Health Care Centre while they were still located in their old hospital-like building on Westmount. My physical disabilities evaporated quite quickly but my mental capacity remained a challenge in a number of areas. With my wife's help, my math and reading returned in relatively short order but my speech lagged and I was assigned a Speech Therapist. I guess she saw some potential in my progress and continued well past my allocated time. It is something that would never happen these days. During this extra-time, I was approached about volunteering within St. Joe's volunteer program. Since my strokes had forced me to terminate my regular job and retire, and St. Joe's had been extremely good to me, I agreed.



Those years at St. Joe's, until it shut-down in early 2020, have been particularly rewarding from many perspectives, and I have seen many clients come and go. But, I would like to highlight two individuals, both women. This particular woman had every reason to be angry with her lot in the latter stages of life. She was paralyzed from the neck down and confined to a bed. As a volunteer, one does not ask the reason for a disability. Yet, she was concerned that today's generation was so very dependent on, of all things, "processed sugar". She also wanted me to discontinue my stroke medication thinking I may be over-medicated. Always thinking of others and not an angry bone in her body. In the second case, this woman's family was especially appreciative of the assistance provided to their mother as was the mother herself. The vigil held during her final stages involved all of us even though there should have been a boundary. The love demonstrated was something to behold and I received the straw hat she wore during those sunny day walks as a token of their gratitude. I also received a communication from the family when my wife past away.



Fast forward to Harcourt during the pandemic. Some five years ago, Sandy Middleton called me to see if I might consider becoming Usher Coordinator. Jean Hartman had been Coordinator for many years and had done an excellent job but was asking to be relieved. I agreed. The first nine months went well but Jean, whom I had hoped would be a valuable resource past away. Then Covid-19 struck and everything shut down. During this period, many within the ushering pool either asked

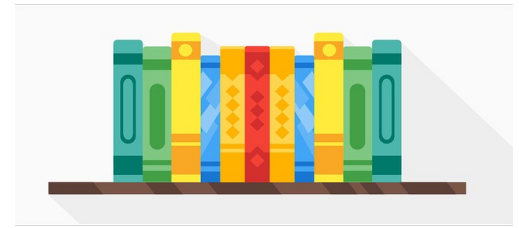
to be removed, developed medical problems, or passed away. When in-person worship services began some two and a half years ago, online programming was in full swing. Those wishing to attend in-person worship were asked to preregister so that the maximum would not be exceeded. The Choir with Alison looked after themselves. Other than recording those attending, there wasn't much to do. There would be no programs to fold, no people to usher to their seats, no offering, clearing the auditorium by 11:00, etc, etc. Things would be different, but how? Until things were sorted out, I decided to go with the flow as requested by the Worship Committee with Dan Ganesh as my contact.

Fast forward to the present. I just indicated that there was not a lot of the old styled ushering to be done other than opening and closing the auditorium doors and ensuring offering plates were available at the end of each aisle. Subsequently, the Worship Committee felt that there should be a person at the front door where I was spending a lot of my time anyway. Here I am, and you never know where volunteering will take you! As a relative new Harcourt member, there are/were a lot of members I did not know nor did they know me. A forty year member would receive the same welcome as a first time attendee. The opening of the doors is just a natural extension since many times people approached the door with both arms full. Smiling and saying "Good Morning, How Are You" seems so natural but until recently, I wasn't sure how it was received by most members. For me, it was an opportunity in disguise as well as a blessing. Heck, I even get the occasional hug, which I will always gratefully accept. You just don't know how good you feel!

Ps; This even provides me an opportunity to thank Marta and Malcolm Coutts as well as Mark and Marilyn Sears who VOLUNTEERED as back-ups should I falter or otherwise be unavailable.



New in the Library – Mary Lou Funston



At long last here is a listing of new books in our library. This lot includes an interesting mix of authors dealing with the spiritual journey, either their own, or that of others.

I'll begin with two books from our own author:

So Much To Ponder. A Walk Through My Spiritual Reflections and *Much More to Ponder*
269 AUG Andre Auger, PhD

Together, these volumes “cover a period from the early 90’s right up to 2023.” One quote from the first volume, “Meditation is about getting out of the way so that God can become fully present within.” Andre’s sharing of his conversations with God show the power and glory of this.

The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World 200 THO Deanna A. Thompson

This book explores what is the church in a digital world. It is divided into 3 parts – The Virtual World is Our World; Virtually There: The Body of Christ as a Virtual Body, and The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World. The virtual church is alive and thriving (as we know from our own experience of it).

Grateful. The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks 241.4 BAS Diana Butler Bass

The author has presented the power of thanksgiving in 4 parts moving from the individual to the community:

- Me: Emotion Me: Ethics We: Emotion We: Ethics.
- She then ends with an Epilogue: A Call to the Grateful Way

Personal Pilgrimage At Midlife. One Day Soul Journeys for a Time of Transition 233 HUR
Viki Hurst

This book, too, is divided into three parts -

- Journeys to Midlife Balance - 3 chapters exploring midlife balance issues

- Personal Pilgrimage Templates – such as careers, finances, relationships In this section she treats each template as a pilgrimage for which she provides instructions about preparing for the journey, making the journey, then the homecoming from the journey. She provides lots of space for writing about your experience in each journey

- Index of Inspirational Guides. This one contains, for me – a BIG surprise: On the list of 25 people from around the world and through the ages is Pierre Elliot Trudeau!

Harcourt Communal Garden – Jill Gill

It's early March and we are currently experiencing much warmer temperatures than normal accompanied by lovely warming sun. It is unlikely that this will continue indefinitely, but it puts me in a gardening frame-of-mind and specifically in the Harcourt Communal Garden (HCG) where we grow vegetables and herbs.



This will be our 14th growing season in the HCG. All the produce we grow is donated to Chalmers Community Services Centre food pantry. So far we have donated almost 4 tons of organically-grown vegetables, herbs and fruit! Chalmers is a Harcourt supported charity helping to feed some of Guelph's most food-insecure folks.

The HCG is entirely maintained by volunteers who plant, water, weed and harvest from June until late October each year. The time commitment for each person is quite reasonable. We work in teams of 3 or 4, for 2-3 hours about 6 or 7 times during the season.



Lisa Mactaggart, Landscape Architect and Urban Farmer plans our crop rotation and prepares seedlings for planting each year. Then, in early June, families from the Manna Community plant the seedlings along with additional seeds to start the garden growing.

We are always looking to increase our volunteer team. You don't need to be an expert at vegetable gardening, just willing to learn, get your hands dirty and have some fun! If helping in the Harcourt Communal Garden is an activity you might consider, please contact me, Jill Gill at 519-767-8110 or email me at iamjsew12@gmail.com to find out more about this satisfying volunteer activity.

There will be an introductory meeting in Room 202/203 on April 14th at 10:45, following the service. Please plan to attend if you would like to find out more about volunteering.

Your calling: where your joy meets a community need

You've read all the wonderful ways in which volunteering ("lay ministry," really!) brings joy to the volunteer as well as service to the community.

Are you ready to extend yourself into some volunteering, help the community and find some joy? We asked Kent Hoeg, Chair of Council, what the most urgent needs at Harcourt are:

"Most urgent would be Finance Chair. We have none, and this point no idea who will create next years budget. Next we need a complete Stewardship Team, including Chair. After that, I would say the Property Team could use some volunteers. And, selfishly, we could use a vice-chair of Council so I can eventually step down! 😊"

If you don't feel that Council would feed your soul, how about the Community Garden? Or helping with the Harcourt Cafe? Or working the with Spiritual Life Committee to create new opportunities for people to experience God? Or visiting those from Harcourt who are no longer able to get to church and would love some occasional company? Or, if you appreciate the monthly Harcourt Herald, coming on board as associate editor?

- Ed



An Interview with Rev. Henk Dykman - Judi Morris

This is part two of an interview with the Dykmans following Lorraine Dykman's in March. Lorraine was present as well as Henk and has contributed information with this interview, as Henk did with Lorraine's.

Judi: Lorraine's portion of the interview has you married, in Guelph and working at the Ontario Correctional Centre.

Judi: I would like to step back to your early life in Holland during the war. You were liberated by the Canadians as you told us in your submission last month. Can you tell us something of how that affected you as a young boy and how it still affects you today?

Henk: Well, that last winter I lived in an area where from mid December "buzz bombs" were launched. Earlier in the war they were launched from the French coast for London. These ones were aimed at Antwerp in Belgium. They were the very first version of the cruise missile. These projectiles were not effective yet and blew up where they were not supposed to, some near our village.

Let me tell you one thing In February 1945, the Germans moved a couple of printing presses into our school because it wasn't being used for classes any more. They printed maps. Two of the printers had high ranks in the German army. They also had a room in our house, the "Master's House," which was attached to the school. My father would talk to them to the great dismay of my mother. He got into politics with them and talked to one printer who kept saying, "Hitler is going to win the war." My Dad said, "Look at the map. You can see that you are losing territory all the time." He said to my Dad, "Ya...but Hitler is going to get the "atoombombe." Fortunately, he was wrong but that was the first time we heard about this magic bomb.

Judi: The Canadian soldiers who liberated you? Did you find them?

Henk: Yes ... yes ... I found them. I found five of them who remembered being in our house.

Judi: Wow ... That must have been as overwhelming for them as it was for you.

Henk: You caught the spirit of that moment ... They also came to a reunion of this particular regiment. I call them the Glens – The full name is the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders. They had this reunion in Peterborough, about a year after I got in touch with the first of these men. Peterborough provided the regiment with a particular

military unit when the army was organized. The section in Peterborough joined the Glens who were already based in Cornwall. They were just as excited as I was. When I went there, they offered us a meal and paid for my hotel. We felt like royalty. Getting to meet these guys started in 1985.

Judi: You were liberated and eventually came to Canada - what had you done up to that point?

Henk: I went to horticultural college in Holland. Two years of classes and one year working on horticultural placements. I was twenty-two when I came to Canada.

Judi: When you came to Canada, did you come alone or with family?

Henk: I'm a middle brother of a family of six kids and I came on my own to B.C.

Judi: What did you intend to do in Canada when you arrived here?

Henk: I thought I would follow up in horticultural work. I took a job in a nursery when I arrived but was given the advice that you don't go very far in horticulture unless you are a businessman. That's not my strength. They said why don't you go back to university? I checked that out and it was quite possible. At UBC I could take agriculture focusing on horticulture. I came in '56 and in the fall of '57 I started at UBC with horticultural courses. My most interesting course was plant diseases.

The winter I was working, I went to the little local church in the village...the services there were done by a student from Union College. Union College was the United Church's seminary. While talking to him he told me it would be easy for me to step into training for church ministry.

Judi: Did that appeal to you?

Henk: Yes ... it did. Although, Judi, it was more the theological studies that interested me... practical ministry was not easy for me because I am too introverted to reach out to large groups. I never wanted to work in big churches. I did finish the courses and was ordained.

The churches I served were all small. In one parish I served five of them with a team of three ministers ... a different way of meeting the people. Then something happened there. A humongous car crash. It involved a wedding. I was waiting with the bride and her family and everyone else at the church for the groom. The father of the groom went back to the farm on a gravel farm lane to pick up the forgotten wedding cake. Unknown to them, the groom went

for the same. On the way back crash ... the two cars hit each other head-on, --- five dead. The groom, the best man, and another friend of the groom in one car; the groom's father and sister in the other. The only survivor - the youngest brother of the groom, a little boy with a heart condition. He had been sitting in the back holding the cake.

Judi (*gasping*) And you had to handle that.

Henk: Yes, most of it. I did manage to talk to the mother of the groom. There was a protective ring of women around her to protect her from people she didn't want to see. I managed to talk to her just a little. Enough for her to realize I could be trusted ... kind of.

That was at a time I had colleagues in a larger parish with five different churches. Two of us were ordained ... the other a retired lay preacher who did a lot of visiting. When the funeral came there was one service at the largest church. After the service, the caskets were divided and buried at three different cemeteries. Each team member had a different cemetery to look after.

Judi: ... (*a very long pause*) ... I don't know what to say ... what question to ask
(another pause and deep breath) ... how did that affect you?

Henk: It made me realize after that I wanted to know more about myself. What I was good at ... and not so good. All of a sudden, I was in the middle of these people ... with these people ... united with these people in their grief ... and I was no longer the guy that didn't like talking to strangers.

Lorraine: You became very important to these people

Henk: Judi, to make a big jump forward, I realized later on when I was with Canadian veterans and the relatives of those that were killed in my neighbourhood, when we got to talk and I told them I was there, we were instantly close. it was like magic

Judi: In Bruce McLeod's interview, he spoke about an accident that gave him lessons not learned in seminary. It speaks to the affect events have on those in your profession.

Lorraine: I remember, Henk, you coming back from seeing the bodies still in the smashed cars and saying it was like looking at the war again. It just opened all of that up for you. And you knew you needed to deal with some healing and learn more about being with people who are traumatized.

Judi: How is the war in Israel affecting you Henk?

Henk: Well ... I turn the news off.

Lorraine: And Ukraine ... The experience of children ...

Henk: Hamas started with a massacre. Someone asked me, "Wasn't it terrible?" Yes, it was; but what I'm going to say also is this: I'm not condoning it ... but I understand it ... because five years of occupation in the Netherlands was enough to create enormous hate for our occupiers. When you turn that into fifty years you can't be surprised.

Lorraine: It has roots in the 2nd world war. It is as if that war has not been finished. The wounds fester.

Henk: So much is being said now about anti-Semitism, but that is a useless way of talking because the Semitic peoples include the Arabs, the Jews, the Palestinians, and some more. The Palestinians aren't anti-Semitic, they are pro-Semitic. So, it gets totally confusing and it's better to think in terms of two brothers fighting. That's what it really is.

Judi: After your chaplaincy training in Vancouver, you discovered there were not many jobs available in B.C.

Henk: I was interviewed in Ontario for a prison ministry. We ended up in Simcoe where there was a prison that had a rather progressive minimum-security program and tried to help young offenders but they shut it down only a couple of months of my being there. We had bought ourselves a dilapidated century house in Simcoe to renovate but had to move. I then was going to go to an Etobicoke prison and we bought a house in Bronte. I planned to commute from Bronte but had secretly applied to Guelph Correctional Centre. When I got the Guelph job two months later, we bought our third house. After moving to Guelph, Mindy said, "Dad if you want to move again, go ahead, I'm not coming with you."

Judi: What was your goal with that job? What did you want to do with it?

Henk: I had taken this training. Supervised Pastoral Education. After you had done a certain number of courses (*each one was 3 months*) you could apply at a certain level to be a supervisor. So, I pushed for that. I started with a small group of four or five. I had done some work with Jesuit volunteers ... the novices. People took my three-month course.

Judi: Tell us - what does a Prison Chaplain do? In the movies they follow somebody to the gallows.

Henk: The ideal chaplain does a good listening job and resists pressure from the prisoners to go out and buy this and that for them.

Judi: Did they ask for you or did you go cold turkey to see them?

Henk: You get requests to see you. People in segregation I would see once a week. When people did not want to see me, I didn't push that. I did have lots of experiences where people would say, "You don't act like a minister, so I want to talk to you." My students found out if they wanted to be effective chaplains, they wore their blue jeans.

Judi: Did you do services in the prison on Sundays?

Henk: We had a chapel apart from the main building and the attendance on Sunday mornings varied a lot. The Catholic chaplain who was there when I came was popular and the chapel then was often quite full. The same with some of my students. They regularly talked with the prisoners. They were more open with strangers than I was and got to know people well, even in this very strict setting. Indeed, they got to know them very well. They were marvelous students.

Judi: I have heard from hospital chaplains about their emotional burnout and I understand this burned you out.

Henk: There were lots of stresses in the job, also because I was an advocate for the prisoners. By the time the students left at the end of July I was exhausted. They were doing what I did. They were looking at themselves a lot. When you start listening to people's traumas as a chaplain, you start looking at yourself. So, being with the students as a group, reading their verbatims and then listening to the students individually was deeply moving. If they had any trauma in their lives, you were learning about it as well as the problems of the people they were talking about. It was a time where everybody involved was going into what had hurt them in the past.

Lorraine: When you were in the prison, you had people from the churches visiting prisoners and you had some from Harcourt.

Henk: Yes, especially Trevor Dickinson. Most came from Chalmers.

Judi: You had to leave. Did you take time off or did you go straight into Saint Luke's Place?

Henk: I had this idea that I would be alright if I went into another prison that had pastoral training. I took a job in Brampton but that didn't work out and I took some time off. Lorraine had recommended I take a year off and I always regretted not doing that. I was unemployed for half a year, then was invited to be an associate pastor in a church in Kitchener. St. James-Rosemount. Then I moved to Christ the King United Church.

Judi: While he was doing all this Lorraine, did you have to be the minister's wife again?

Lorraine: I started attending each church occasionally but I was still involved in trying to get the spiritual direction program going at Harcourt, and I then realized that...no, I cannot do two things at once,,, my call is to spiritual direction and I need to stay with Harcourt. There were some hurt feelings.

Henk: I was part time at Christ the King United Church and part time at the seniors' residence, Saint Luke's Place.

Judi: How did you find Saint Luke's with the seniors?

Henk: There were a couple of veterans there that became my good friends. There was a woman there with also the name Dykman. In one same year my mother died and I buried two Mrs. Dykmans.

Judi: I'm interested to know, because of your enjoyment of music and how much you read, who might your recommended author might be and your connection to music.

Henk: For author, John Dominic Crossan, in terms of history of the Bible. He wrote a book called *The Birth of Christianity; Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus*. For music, my good old Dad was self-taught on the organ. He played one in a church in the neighbourhood. He started it during the war. As a teenager I joined the choir he had. During the war we had no hydro until after seven in the evening. My mother would have supper ready by five and by six it would be dark but we had no light. We couldn't wash dishes or do anything so we sang an hour every day. My Grandmother sang alto. I thought, "That is fun," so I sang alto with her. It was a wonderful way of being together in the midst of all that crazy stuff going on all around. We sang the Dutch versions of Amazing Grace type songs. We didn't have an organ at that time. In a small dining room and with ten of us, there was no room for one.

Lorraine: It was a cozy expression of faith at a time that was pretty scary.

Judi: Your daughters were involved at Harcourt.

Henk: Dineke was 9, Mindy was 12 1/2 when they started Sunday school and the children's choir. And they were both confirmed at Harcourt.

Lorraine: When Dineke joined the church, Henk was in an accident and hospitalized instead of watching Dineke join the church. Dineke still sings in the choir. Marg Benson was her singing coach and she got involved with helping her with the Junior choir.

Judi: Henk ... once you had Sundays free, you came to Harcourt and joined the choir.

Lorraine: Whatever church he was serving, he was in the choir singing tenor.

Judi: You also joined very early morning Mindstretch once a week and Men's Breakfast Group once a month. Mindstretch, led by John Buttars ... John presented titles and we would select a book. We read selected pages then gathered at 7:00 a.m. for coffee & muffins. Prior to it beginning, there would be a bell and there was no talking for a period of time until we sat down & began to discuss the book. What might your favourite book be?

Henk: *The Book of Joy; Lasting Happiness in a Changing World.* It describes a birthday visit from Archbishop Desmond Tutu to the Dalai Lama in India. The author, Douglas Abrams, was a secretary to Desmond Tutu and accompanied him on the visit. Abrams describes the visit and records the conversations between Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. It's a fantastic book!

Judi: Henk, I intended to finish off with your retirement ministry with veterans in Canada and the Netherlands; however you have agreed to give us a submission in the Herald each month. So I will leave it at that with you currently singing in Harcourt's Choir.

Thank you, Henk, for having me in your home, sharing parts of your life's work and stories and in particular the ones you are sharing with us each month in a separate submission. This interview will long remain with the Harcourt community along with the books you have recommended and the emotionally poignant history shared.





This month's prompt led to an unexpected journey down memory lane, for which I am most grateful.

I first joined Harcourt in 1990 ... and it didn't take long before I was firmly ensconced in committees and volunteer work (thanks to the likes of Murdo Mackinnon and Dean Sherman!). I started on what was then called the Fellowship & Communications Committee, and also joined the newsletter sub-committee. At that time, it was simply known as *The Harcourt Newsletter*, until I suggested changing the name to *The Harcourt Herald*. I believe it was Audrey Madigan, who also worked in the church office, who put the newsletter together. She was an incredibly kind and compassionate woman, and an absolute delight to work with!

I took over as Editor of the Herald shortly thereafter, and remained Editor for many years, until turning it over to Terry MacDonald. It goes without saying, I'm sure, that this particular task was one of my favourites, given the connection through storytelling angle!

In those early years, I also coordinated a Children's Birthday Card program, where Sunday School kids designed birthday cards, which were then mailed to Harcourt children on their birthdays. Another heartwarming activity!

When I took over as Chair of the Fellowship & Communications Committee in the early 1990s, I also took over the responsibility of coordinating the annual Christmas dinner. I have fond and vivid memories of Tom Moseley peeling potatoes, and Bruce McCallum washing dishes. It is not so much the work we do, but the people we do it with that makes volunteer work such a wonderful experience. Other people who I had the pleasure of serving with include Mike Peleschak, Fran Mathieson, Peggy Knapp, and Erma Webb ... and of course I had numerous dealings with Darko Cikovic as a result of these undertakings and events. Such wonderful memories of wonderful people.

I put my promotional skills to good use over the years, helping with the promotion of the wonderful shows that Harcourt presented: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Godspell*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*; as well as the Guelph Cares event, in support of Dr. Anne-Marie Zajdlik's *Masai for Africa* campaign. Further connection to amazing people was made through small group events I hosted, including Creative Intentions (exploring various art forms

as a way of spiritual expression), The Artist's Way (a self-reflective journey through Julia Cameron's work), and Writing as a Spiritual Practice.

From the first day I walked into Harcourt back in 1990, it felt like home, and its people felt like family. I have been blessed beyond words to be able to serve in the ways that I have over the years ... and I resonate most strongly in the words of Mahatma Gandhi:

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

Thank you, Harcourt, for allowing me to do just that.

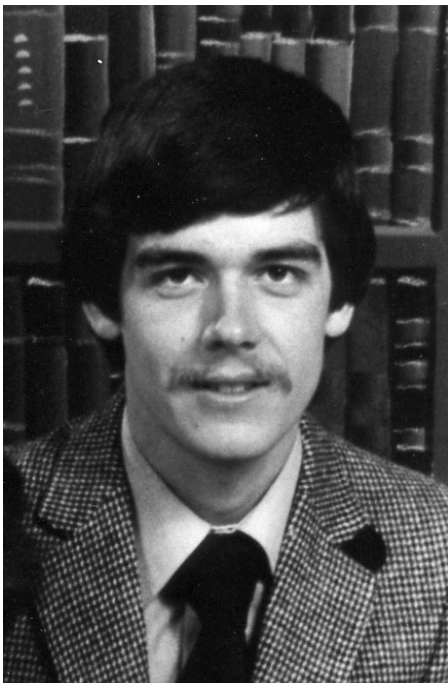


Interns: Harcourt's contribution to theological education – Marilyn Fardig Whiteley



Many of us were saddened to learn of the recent death of Karen Hilfman Milson, who had been an intern at Harcourt during the mid-1980s. But others, upon learning of the death, may have wondered, "Intern? What was that?" Well, "that" is an important part of Harcourt's heritage. It was a part of Harcourt's outreach, a contribution that Harcourt made to the United Church — although the decision to have an intern didn't start out with thoughts of service to the denomination.

The truth is that Harcourt's minister, John Buttars, was overworked. The congregation had employed a minister to serve part-time alongside John, but for various reasons that hadn't worked out well. What was to be done? Part of the solution was to hire an administrative secretary, Audry Madigan, with much wider responsibilities than the previous church secretary had held. But more was needed.



Theological students heading toward ordination needed experience. One way that some of them gained this was through placements in which they ministered to a congregation during the summer months. But the United Church offered a second possibility: a student could spend a year before his or her final year at seminary, working in a congregation under the supervision of the local minister. So a decision was made, and Harcourt applied to have an intern.

In the fall of 1980, Harcourt welcomed its first intern, Neil Elford. Neil was succeeded the next year by Richard Smith, who was followed by Barry Henaut. During each of the next three years, the intern was a woman: Elizabeth Macdonald, Joan Wyatt, and Karen Hilfman Millson.

It was the need of “assistance” for its minister that had led Harcourt down this path, but the result was not so simple. The year that each intern spent working in a congregation was an integral part of that intern’s theological education. Each intern took on a significant amount of work in the church. But it was the nature of the denomination’s program that interns needed supervision. Internship was part of the training of candidates for ministry so John took the necessary training in supervision. This supervision added significantly to the minister’s workload. John summarized the matter in 1983: “As a general rule of thumb, an intern helps in the ‘physical energy’ load of getting things done. But an intern consumes the emotional and spiritual energy of a supervisor.” An intern was both a gift and a challenge.

What did the interns do? They did a significant amount of visiting in the congregation, and they gave leadership in the Sunday morning services. Each intern also brought to Harcourt their own particular interests and talents. They might work with a youth group or lead a study group, perhaps on Maxie Dunnam’s *Workbook of Living Prayer*. The three women also brought with them concern for such issues as the language of worship. When someone remarked on this, the response was, “Don’t you know, you’ve had as interns the three strongest feminists at Emmanuel College?” Also many will remember the 1986 performance of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, produced by Karen Hilfman Millson and Bob Miller, music director.

After six consecutive years of supervising interns, John Buttars needed a break. But later Harcourt hosted several more students, generally under slightly different arrangements with the United Church.

Having an intern helped with getting things done. But beyond that, receiving and nurturing interns came to be recognized as a ministry exercised by John and by the



congregation, a part of Harcourt's outreach and a significant contribution to the denomination.

(And what became of these interns? Well, that will take more research, but maybe I can give a bit of an update sometime in the future.)



Nudged Toward Resurrection - Arlene Davies-Fuhr

Radical shifts, slight alterations, reveal life changes.
Everything contains a kernel of brightness.
Shafts of light stir dormant yearnings although
underlying doubts remain. Love appears amid the tension.

Remnants of jagged memories surface.
Resilience gifts strength, courage,
energy to banish harsh ghosts.

Certainty of peace wafts hope amid fear.
Turbulent times do not stab for ever
Intense wars miraculously resolve.

Openhearted conversations, heartfelt affirmations
nudge me toward resurrection.

