

The Harcourt Herald May 2023

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

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The People with

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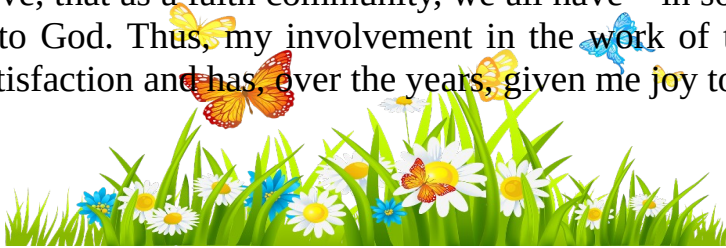
From the desk of the Editor

"What aspect of your involvement in Harcourt brings you the most joy?"

At this point, I have to confess, my involvement with the Harcourt Herald brings me the most joy. First of all, I love to find pictures or illustrations that enhance texts; I agree with the saying that one picture often can replace 1000 words; but most important and enjoyable for me is the response – month after month – I get from our faith family! If the suggested topic touches someone, they respond, they write and it is always very profound, personal and often very bravely shared.

And, of course, a family that can share deeply is a healthy family. Harcourt does it well.

I also believe, that as a faith community, we all have – in some way or another – the need to be connected to God. Thus, my involvement in the work of the Spiritual Life of Harcourt gives me deep satisfaction and has, over the years, given me joy too.



Notice:

We have now switched to the new email address:

harcourtherald@harcourtcommunity.ca

For a while we still can access the old email; but, please remember, to use the new one!! Thanks. M.



A Word from Kate ~ Kate Ballagh-Steeper

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

The theme for this month’s Herald is “where do you find joy at Harcourt?” There are many ways I have encountered joy among you. I have encountered joy in the midst of our worship together.

Perhaps one of the more surprising places or moments that I have encountered joy over the last 6 months as we have been getting to know one another is in meetings! Yes, you read that right – ! I have particularly been surprised by joy in some of the meetings where there is planning for the Community Hub. There has been laughter. But more, there has been imagination, energy and hope for the future as I have sat in on these discussions and planning. The varieties of Spiritual gifts that many people have offered to the Community Hub planning has been varied and wide. There have been some able to offer very practical insights and guidance. Others have offered a vision that keeps the group inspired and working. Still others have been able to hold the “big” picture in focus to keep the planning clear and moving forward. The amount of time that has been offered has been substantial and significant. It is a joy to be a part of a congregation that is willing to endure some discomfort to ensure the future for another generation of God’s people.



The last part of the quote from 1 Corinthians; “ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone”, is key to trusting the opportunities that lay ahead. The activities and shape of the church in 2023 is not the same as 2013 or 1963. The decisions that lay ahead for the communities that make up Harcourt (Music and Message 9:45 service, Manna service and the Holy Listening Circle) are significant steps toward the future. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians reminds us that God is the one at the centre of change, activating and calling people toward the Good News. Holy Joy can be both exhilarating and terrifying! I hope that as we head into our time of decision making around the Community Hub, that prayer will lead and guide us and that our discernment will be faithful and wise. Can we trust that God is leading?

Moments of Holy Joy often come out of difficult times. How often has there been deep laughter and joy at the death bed as a story is remembered and shared. How often has there been joy after the pain and anguish of child birth? Why would it be any different for the Church? May we embrace the challenges and anticipate with hope the joy that will emerge.



Council News ~ Kent Hoeg, Chair



Before I provide an update from Council, I must say it again – what an awesome group of people who assist within Harcourt. From staff, to Council and Committee members, to task group members, to the many, many other volunteers, and the list goes on and on! So many put in countless hours of effort. I am in awe!

This was witnessed on the April 12, 2023 Council Meeting. We met a week earlier than normal as so much is going on.

Manna continues to practice what it preaches. There is an Outreach opportunity for Manna in which they would join a program called [Take Root](#) which is a partnership between Forests Ontario, the City of Guelph, and Trees for Guelph. Manna would find 25 homes where they would plant 2 trees/shrubs. On top of that we would receive \$350 upfront and \$5 per tree planted. The following **MOTION** was carried: **That Harcourt Council supports the Manna Initiative to take part in the Take Root program, in partnership with Forests Ontario, the City of Guelph, and Trees for Guelph. This will provide a minimum of 25 homes with 2 trees planted.**

TCOW (Two Countries One World) is a program that "strive to awaken youth to the realities of economic and social Justice Issues in developing countries and how our own trade and foreign policies effect these issues for others and for ourselves. TCOW was developed as a continuation to the growth and development of faith for youth after confirmation and as a way to encourage their global citizenship."



- Harcourt has supported TCOW in previous years
- We typically have a couple of youth attend, sometimes an adult leader or two join as well. The youth do their own fund raising and make presentations to the congregation.
- We have in the past formally recognized the TCOW trip as an Outreach of Harcourt. What this means is that if someone donates to



TCOW, we will issue a tax receipt.

- After a (COVID) period of time off, TCOW will be sponsoring a trip to Columbia in March 2024.
- At this early stage, we do not know if any Harcourt youth or leaders will be attending.

The following **MOTION** was carried: **That Harcourt Council recognize TCOW as a supported Outreach project of Harcourt. Any donations to TCOW will be eligible for a tax receipt.**

Steve Pierce then walked Council through the latest Community Hub activity. My oh my, with Steve's leadership, the guidance of the Trinity Centres Foundation and countless contributors, we have moved quickly, thoroughly, thoughtfully and with the Spirit in mind. There is too much information to share in this Herald article. Instead, there will be a Congregational Information Session on **May 1, 2023 at 7:00pm by Zoom**. We will be sending out an information package shortly on this. You will hear an update and be given an opportunity to ask questions.

Then, on **Sunday May 7 we will have a Congregational Meeting at 1:00pm at Harcourt** (in-person only). Information will once again be shared, questions can be answered, and motions (hopefully) approved. We will be asking the congregation to endorse the hard work of the Community Hub and approve it to proceed. We will also be asking the congregation to approve Council's endorsement to allow alcohol for use at events within the Harcourt space.

I strongly believe in the Community Hub and its benefits to Harcourt and the Community. Join us to understand more.

All of this is to prepare us for a Community Consultation event with potential Community Hub partners. This will be held on **May 16th from 4:00pm to 6:00pm**.

While Council spent 3 hours discussing the matters of Harcourt on April 12 – it is those that have spent many, many more hours getting us to where we are that need to be thanked – and they do it for a love of Harcourt and doing what we can to ensure Harcourt can support our congregation and community for generations to come.

Financial Update ~ Brian Magee, Past Chair of Finance

The renewed financial support experienced at the end of 2022 has carried over into the first three months of 2023. The total revenue for the period was 33% greater than for the same period in 2022. This is a result of increased donations and rent revenue. However, expenses were up by 12%. Inflation and a catch up in necessities has increased expenses. The accumulated deficit for the first quarter was 47% less than for the same period in 2022. If all remains the same, Harcourt is on track to meet the forecast 2023 budgeted operational deficit of \$74,000. It is anticipated that more rental opportunities for the remainder of the year will help to diminish the deficit.



Financial Summary 1st Quarter 2023

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Donations	37,721	34,232	25,683	97,636
Other Income	15,152	9,190	16,502	40,824
Total Revenue	52,873	43,402	42,185	138,460
Total Expenses	44,716	60,451	52,666	157,833
Surplus/Deficit	8,157	-17,049	-10,481	-19,373

2023 Accumulated

Surplus/Deficit	8,157	-8,892	-19,373
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Note: The non-member donation of \$50,948 in February is not included in the calculations. The donation is considered to be an anomaly and the allocation of funds has not been determined.

February expenses include property insurance of \$11,537



Lasting Legacies for Harcourt ~ The Board of Trustees

May is “Leave a Legacy” month in Canada and we would like to highlight two recent gifts to Harcourt that will help to secure the future of our congregation and ensure ongoing support for the causes and beliefs that we all treasure.

We would like to recognize the bequest given in the wills of Ben and Norma Fear. Here is a short statement from their son Jon describing what Harcourt meant to them and why they thought it was important to give their time to the church and to leave a planned gift.

“My parents, Ben and Norma Fear, were always community-minded parents and active as volunteers. So, it wasn’t surprising that when they moved to Guelph and joined Harcourt United they became very involved in numerous church projects, committees and activities. Old age never slowed them down.

I remember they both seemed to especially enjoy gathering outdoors with other members to tend to the lovely church gardens. There was great satisfaction in working as a team to ensure this very special place in their lives did indeed look special.

People often see volunteers as individuals who give a lot, but most volunteers know – and certainly my parents did – that the volunteers benefit as well, making friends, developing new skills and experiencing countless opportunities that build wisdom and enrich their spiritual lives.”

Thank you to Jon Fear for that beautiful tribute.

The second gift we would like to highlight came to the church from an anonymous donor in recognition of their parents who were long-time members of Harcourt. The gift was graciously given “In memory of my parents and their support for the people and work of Harcourt”. We would like to thank this donor for supporting our ministry and our outreach. The impact of this donation will help us in our immediate need and provide a legacy for Harcourt into the future.

Thank you from your board of Trustees: Larry Smith, Judy Cimino, Dan Ganesh, Elizabeth Bone, Megan Ward and Tammy teWinkel

May is Leave a Legacy Month in Canada

April and tax season have come and gone. Like many of us, you may have missed the opportunity to consider how a Legacy gift can support Harcourt and its Christian outreach.

Legacy Giving allows you to shift monies from the CRA to a charity and cause of your choice. A gift to Harcourt is a way of acknowledging that Harcourt has had an impact on your life and on the lives of those important to you and your community. Each type of gift has different benefits both to you and to the Church, as well as different tax and financial implications.

Harcourt has a strong history of generous contributions. Harcourt's reserve funds have been grouped into four sectors receiving financial support. Referred to as pillars, these are:
Outreach, Property, Music & Arts, and Spiritual Life & Education.

Type of Gift	Advantages
Bequest or In your will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can make a gift in your will to any area of the Church. - You can divide your gift among several programs and ministries of the United Church.
Life Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A substantial future gift is created to support the ministry and mission of the Church. - This type of gift can be made for a relatively small outlay of cash. - This type of gift does not reduce the size of your estate.
RRSP RRIF and TFSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A substantial future gift is created to support the ministry and missions of the Church. - Your estate receives a charitable donation receipt that will offset taxes, which will in turn replenish the value of your estate. - Designating a ministry as the beneficiary of a policy helps avoid probate fees on these gifts.
Stocks, Mutual Funds and Bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can make a gift without depleting your bank account. - You receive a charitable donation receipt for the value of the stock, mutual funds, and bonds. - You pay no tax on the capital gain of the donated stocks, mutual funds, and bonds.

This Chart is from the United Church brochure "Gifts that Last Lifetimes"
For additional information and to obtain a brochure related to a specific type of gift mentioned, please contact one of the Harcourt Trustees.

Three very different events are happening at Harcourt this May.



Act quickly so you can enjoy an **All Haydn** concert by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra on May 5. Buy your tickets [online](https://kwsymphony.ca) (kwsymphony.ca) and enjoy beautiful music in our comfortable sanctuary.

The wonderful **Rainbow Chorus** will be performing at Harcourt on May 6, at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Their spring concert, *The Sound of All of Us*, celebrates the love and joy of being together and will feature special guests, the Artelli String Quartet.

Tickets can be purchased online (www.rainbowchorus.ca) although a limited number will also be available at the door.



On Saturday, May 20 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. you'll want to drop in on a most intriguing sale: **The Rare Plants and Rare Pants Market**. There will be live music and food trucks along with a fun shopping experience in a beautiful indoor/outdoor space. There is an [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) sign-up for this sale, but walk-ins are welcome.

Manna Learns About Carbon Footprints ~ Pamela Girardi

This April we were excited to have Abel Page from Esper'Ance in Action join us at Manna to lead us in a climate action workshop. Esper'Ance in Action is a local organization in Wellington County that is focused on supporting individuals & institutions who want to improve the way they are working to address climate change.



During the workshop we used an online carbon footprint calculator called Project Neutral to better understand our individual household impact. This is an Ontario-based program that is free to use. After you fill out the questionnaire, you will see a list of various actions you can take to reduce your carbon footprint. Each simple action offers

information about how much it will reduce your carbon footprint. This helps us to choose a few actions that have a large impact but are still simple and manageable.

Anyone can access this online calculator and fill it out for free by going to www.app.projectneutral.org.

Abel reminded us that every action matters. We don't need to be perfect; in fact, he emphasized that many people taking actions imperfectly is much more impactful than few people taking actions perfectly!

We were grateful for this opportunity to come together and dive deeper into learning about how we, as a large community, can practice stewardship of the earth. You can learn more about Esper'Ance in Action here: www.EsperanceInAction.com



Near Next Steps – Spiritual Growth ~ Andre Auger

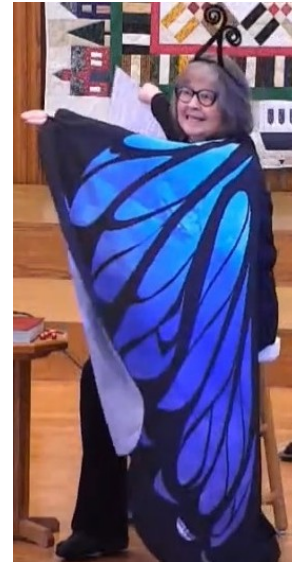
Bishop John Shelby Spong wrote a book with the ominous title *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*. I read it. This bishop was describing an important step toward a renewal which the Church desperately needs. The Church as a social club with a Christian flavour worked well during Christendom, and served the needs of a lot of people, including some of us today. But young people – even those raised in those massive Sunday Schools of a few decades ago of which we were so proud – have been drifting, (no: running), from this institution. This has happened in sufficient numbers that we need to ask ourselves why.



The answer is obvious, isn't it? Our Christian message seems to have become irrelevant to a very large number of people. To them, we are no longer seen as offering a credible understanding of the world's overwhelming problems, let alone doing much to solve them. And when the Church's voice is eventually heard in the public stage, it is usually a regressive and conservative voice which does not speak for those of us in the more progressive tradition.

Harcourt is doing something about this situation, though! As Kate's Lenten sermons reveal, we are presently at the "chrysalis" stage in our metamorphosis: our traditional theology

and rituals might be compared to the formless mass that once was the caterpillar. Fortunately, it's not just any formless mass. It's one filled with possibilities for new life! Out of this state will emerge, I am sure of it, something beautiful, relevant, full of promise and hope: a new take on the life and teaching of Jesus that puts healing the world back in the centre of our endeavours. Remember Elizabeth Bone's butterfly at the Easter Sunday service!



Harcourt has been working hard these past few years revisioning itself. Of course, the future is unclear, but we are proceeding in four clear directions: 1) renewed and more relevant worship; 2) new ways of living our lives with intentional spirituality; 3) a worship and community venue appropriate for children, young families, and anyone else who wishes a more experiential approach to Christian life; and 4) new ways to use our facilities as a hub for community life.

To keep us all engaged in the conversation and involved in this wonderful process of metamorphosis, each month one of us involved in "championing" one of these directions will write an article for the Harcourt Herald. This month, I will talk about the second direction - spiritual growth.



Spirituality takes an infinite number of forms. What connects them are these three threads: spirituality, whether it is silent meditation or planting the Community Garden, is intentional rather than incidental; it regular rather than occasional; and it is focused on our relationship with the Divine, not on self-improvement. Spirituality is essentially a way of seeing the world: seeing it as shot through and through with the Divine. It is about "ex-centring" ourselves – away from our self-centred point of view and toward seeing things through God's eyes – the eyes of Love, if you wish. Through the eyes of spirituality, for instance, "decision-making" becomes "discernment," because we have become aware that our decisions must be Spirit-led and not led by our egos. In a similar manner, it is a consistent spiritual practice which allows us to "see the face of Christ in everyone," and not just in those we like or who are like us. Through a lifetime of spiritual practice we come to see "thin places" and "thin moments" just about everywhere. A Celtic mystic said: "What a wonderful world it is, provided you believe in another world. Not over against this world, but interlaced with it." Celtic spirituality saw creation as vibrant with God's life.



Few congregations, let alone Protestant ones, seem to have a Spiritual Life Committee integral to their corporate structure to help them nurture this spiritual dimension. Harcourt

has had one at least since 2005. Its sole purpose is to help members of our communities of faith develop a deeper, personal, and experiential relationship with our Creator. That relationship forms the well from which we can always quench our thirst, refresh ourselves, and weather dry spells.

Most of you know of many of our regular activities: our Advent and Lenten devotional material; our articles in this Herald; our biannual offering of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life; our involvement in the Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer, to name a few. This year, we will resume the practice of having time away at a retreat centre for our communities of faith. Our day away will be at Crieff Hills on Saturday Sept 23, and it will focus on noticing thin places and moments. And one of us is always available to work with any committee or task group which would like to explore its own brand of spirituality: just ask!



What spiritual practices have come to have a significant meaning for you? In what ways have these changed your notion of God over time? Of prayer? Of worship? Of your purpose in life? What additional support might you need to deepen your relationship with God?

These are challenging, but very exciting times for Harcourt. We are not dying, because we are ready to change and metamorphose into something relevant and healing! Be part of this journey to our future: let's watch what God is doing in this place, and join in God's New Thing!

Harcourt Church – a Joy-Filled Place I Miss... ~ Julie Ashley

When thinking about Harcourt, there is much to say about the joy it has brought me and others over the years. I feel a bit sad, though, having moved to Stratford last year, and so far away from its walls. But thankfully, the reach of its Spirit is far. Particularly, with having co-purchased a Bed & Breakfast in Stratford, it means breakfast preparation for guests collide with my beloved morning Harcourt gathering and Sacred Circle.

I was just mentioning to my neighbour this morning how much I miss Harcourt. I reiterated to him as I have always said **“There is more intelligence and kindness per square foot at Harcourt United Church, than anywhere else in the universe.”** Given that my neighbour is a former-Diplomat, he may have doubted my declaration, but still politely nodded. Perhaps such a description sounds like an exaggeration to you too, but I am happy to dare anyone to prove me wrong.

I have considered joining a local United Church congregation here in Stratford but it isn't unlike losing a well-loved pet. (Please do not be offended by the comparison of an animal – they are like children to some.) It can seem that nothing will ever replace the comfort and love experienced previously, so why even try to replace the irreplaceable joy? As I pass people who are walking their dogs here, I still get pangs in my heart, not unlike the mention of Harcourt Memorial United Church. We all know that love and loss, joy and sadness are closely related. I often reflect and wonder what goodness is happening there now? What joy is being experienced and spread to the surrounding Guelph community? Regardless of the distance, I continue to feel a quiet joy in my heart, knowing that Harcourt will always remain. No matter what shape it takes, Harcourt is the people who form it. Irreplaceable.



Saturday, March 25th, 2023 - A day to remember! A day to celebrate! A day to inspire! ~ Lynn Hancock

As Umbrella Councillor for Harcourt Community Life, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for ALL who contributed to Saturday's events.



Since it was advertised as a fundraiser, I'll start with Janet Webster's report in the e-harcourt weekly. "200+ people attended the **Antique Sale** which raised \$620.00 in admission fees and a dozen vendors rented space to add another \$880.00. Heather (Hoeg) reports that the **bake sale** raised \$851.50". On a day that warned of freezing rain, it was impossible to know how the weather would impact the sales. All things considered, I would agree with Janet: "The Antique Sale was a new venture and was quite

successful.”. Janet also said that the “Volunteers made all the difference!”. Thanks to all involved in setup, cleanup, baking, serving, greeting, welcoming, guiding newcomers, taking admission, hosting and hospitality.

Behind the Scenes. In case you’re interested, it was Ron Loncke that approached Janet with a proposal for an Antique Sale at Harcourt. When this fundraising idea was written up, presented to Council, and approved, a Bake Sale was also proposed and subsequently approved by Council. Those two sales promised a busy day with the gym and greeting area intended for use between 8 and 4pm. As it turned out, the baking was SOLD OUT by 1pm. Cisca Vanderkamp and Jean Hume arrived prepared to offer soup, homemade cookies and coffee to vendors and volunteers for FREE! Hospitality at its best!

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry, supported/sponsored by Harcourt Church, held a visioning meeting with lunch included and they booked the Friendship Room and use of the kitchen for the majority of the morning and afternoon.

The Rainbow Chorus gathered from 1 until 4:30pm in the Sanctuary space for rehearsal.



The sanctuary was booked for an **Earth Hour** event scheduled for 8-9:30. It was a FREE event, thanks to Guelph Wellington Coalition for Social Justice, Kairos, Guelph and Harcourt United Church who served as sponsors. Pamela

Girardi, John Lawson, Rosalind Slater, Peter and Jill Gill were appreciated for their key roles in the evening.



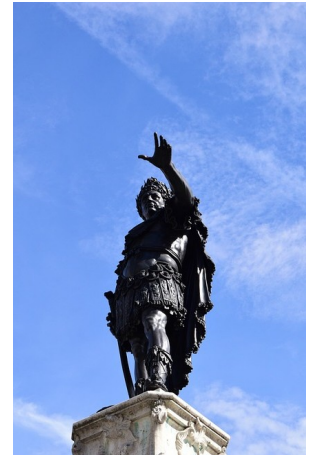
Did I mention a **birthday party**? The gym was rented from 6 until 10:30 pm.

A day to remember for sure. 87 Dean Avenue was a gathering place for hundreds of people on Saturday. A day to celebrate for sure. Individuals benefitted. Harcourt benefitted. The wider community benefitted. A day to inspire for sure. As we continue to imagine and envision our future, we will be able to add Saturday, March 25th to the list of significant dates. On that day/date, may I say we were all good stewards of the space. May we continue to be inspired.

Why Harcourt Matters ~ Andre Auger

I've given the Editor's question a little twist, which I'm sure she'll forgive: I want to address the question "Why is Harcourt important to me?"

My current understanding of our Sacred Texts is that they consistently challenge the "normalcy of civilization," as scholar John Dominic Crossan likes to call it – the way human empires have typically been organized. Humanity seems convinced that history is a succession of dominations by the rich, the powerful, or the famous. Great and glorious domination have indeed been created, but our Bible – and subsequent history - reminds us over and over again that they are created on the backs of the poor, the marginalized, the weak, and the undesirables.



Every now and then, some visionary or prophet invites us to consider alternative ways of being human together. Society either kills them, dismisses them, or turns them into gods to be adored rather than followed.



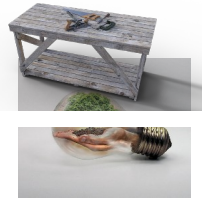
I am a member of Harcourt because I constantly meet people who see things differently. They question the status quo. They are aware of the dark side of the materialist consumer culture we are all part of. They are trying to live out a set of values different from the trio of values which pervade our world – wealth, status, and power. They are trying to live out of compassion, inclusion, forgiveness, and some form of distributive justice – where everyone has what they need.

I see it everywhere in our community of faith. Harcourt has groups dedicated to honest and deep sharing of experiences, questions, insights and doubts, whether that be Mindstretch or the Online Holy Listening Circle or Women's Spirituality. Manna is an intergenerational community trying to live out the values of a loving community: families help each other out; children learn about what truly matters by watching their parents at worship and in deep sharing and community action.

I can't count the number of Harcourt members who dedicate great chunks of their time and talent at Chalmers, befriending, serving, and helping out those in our community who are experiencing existential hardship. There are members who are convinced that our community will best thrive if it is grounded in the Spirit, and offer a wide range of opportunities for members to deepen their personal relationship with the great Creative Force behind and

within everything. There are members who bring to the community a wide range of talents and experiences from different cultures, ethnies and sexual orientations.

Then there are those at Harcourt dedicated to doing their part in reversing or slowing down the damages done by climate change through human exploitation. Others are actively involved in sponsoring refugees. There are those who understand the value and importance of meaningful worship and who sing, write, prepare the supportive electronics, create images, all designed to allow us to engage in meaningful communal worship. There are all the unsung heroes who maintain, repair, enhance, clean, and beautify our space; others work to ensure we have the financial means to keep this community alive and solvent. Still others ensure that we make spirit-led and spirit-filled decisions. Then there are those who nurture the community through all forms of communication, written and on-line. Not to mention those who visit our shut-ins, those who volunteer at Hospice, those who ensure that we have a chance to socialize after the service with refreshments, and those, who, behind the scenes ensure that Harcourt honours its responsibilities as a corporate entity. And I forget some, for sure! All of these intersecting groups, led, instructed and mentored by experienced and wise professionals who dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of the community.



This describes for me a viable alternative to the competitive, ego-centred and exploitative lifestyle I see all around me, reflected all too often in our media. Ours is a community working together for a higher Good, not for its own self-aggrandizement nor for that of its members. Do we not hear echoes of Paul's experience of the community at Corinth (1Cor 12: 1-11)? Or that of the author of Acts (2: 42-47)? "This is God's world," we are all saying, through words and actions. And we seem to mean it.

And that matters to me. That's what keeps me at Harcourt. It's the serious matter of existential hope, saying there is a better way to be a human community. We're not perfect, but we know what we are about and we do it with gladness! As Bill Lord always reminds us, we are Disciples of Jesus because we have heard his call and are responding to it; and we are Apostles because we have allowed the Spirit to send us out to heal this hurting world.

News from the Caroline Harcourt Women's Fellowship Circle ~ Jean Hume



The Caroline Harcourt Women's Fellowship Circle met for the first time in three years. The meeting was well attended on Easter Monday afternoon. The attendance confirmed that the women wished to continue meeting. It was also evident that 2:00pm was a favourable time to hold the meetings in the future.

The next meeting will be on **Monday, May 15th in the Friendship Room at 2:00pm**. The program will be announced closer to the date. Please also mark your calendars for the **Monday, June 12th meeting**. As in the past, the June meeting will be a special gathering!

All women are welcome. There is no pressure to "become a member".
Contact Jean Hume for any questions or comments regarding the meetings. 519 837-3895.

Three Act Play by Arlene Davies-Fuhr

On Stage in June 2023 ...



Going Viral

an original three-act play by
Arlene Davies-Fuhr

with sea shanties,
mystery, and merriment

June 2 & 3, 2023, 7-8:30 pm

Reid Hall
Village by the Arboretum
221 Stone Road East

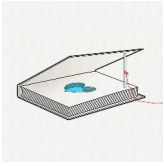
By donation for sound and light equipment

Bistro style.
Bring your own refreshments.

Ahoy, me mateys! Come. Enjoy!

Please come and enjoy an evening of entertainment. Bring a drink and some snacks to the Friday or Saturday performance. On Friday, James Gordon will make a cameo appearance. There are no tickets but donations will be accepted to purchase equipment for the Village by the Arboretum's sound and light group. Your attendance encourages those from Harcourt who are involved in this endeavour: The talented actors Nicholas Auger, Grace GillOrme, Tom Auger, Deb Murray, Daniel Ganesh, and Joan Charlebois (Soloist).

What's New at the Library ~ Mary Lou Funston



Greetings! The library has received some very welcome and interesting new books. Thank you to the donors and authors. These books will be displayed on the top shelf immediately to the right as you enter the library.

* SIGNS AND SYMBOLS IN CHRISTIAN ART, George Ferguson 704 FER

Divided into 14 chapters, the author describes the symbolism of many aspects of the worlds of plants, creatures, humans, dress and objects. I found the assignment of expressions of good or evil to various plants and animals very interesting. Did you know that the goldfinch is a symbol of the passion of Christ? Apparently because it eats thistles and thorns.

* PRACTICING PEACE, Catherine Whitmire 248 WHI

This is “a devotional walk through the Quaker tradition.” Each chapter begins with a scripture quote, followed by a short explanation by the author, followed by several thought-provoking quotes by other authors and ending with 3 questions for consideration.

* ROOTED IN THE DIVINE, Anne Martin 250 MAR

Nurturing Our Faith through Small Group Ministry

And now, writings from our own members:

* THE JOYS OF ALS: Finding Happiness in a Dark Place, Keith Slater BIO SLA

Our first copy of this uplifting account of a terrible disease has disappeared, so Rosalind, Keith's widow, has replaced it for us. This is a strong reminder that joy can, indeed, be found even in the worst of situations.

* TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, Rosalind Slater FIC SLA

The setting is 19th century England; the main characters are 2 small girls sold into cotton mill slavery; their story is one of escape, surviving freedom, and discovering who they are.

* THREADS OF JOY A Memoir, Marilyn Fardig Whiteley BIO WHI

Harcourt Communal Garden ~ Jill Gill

The Harcourt Communal Garden has been producing organically-grown vegetables and herbs for the past twelve years and the entire harvest (close to 7,000 lbs) has been donated to Chalmers, to help feed some of Guelph's most food insecure folks. Chalmers is a Harcourt-supported charity.

The garden is entirely planted, maintained and harvested by volunteers. At our work 'party' on April 15th, the garden beds were prepared for the season and seeds planted for early crops and soil-conditioning organic material.

Lisa Mactaggart, our resident Urban Farmer is planning crop rotation and raising seedlings to be transplanted on June 4th. We have eight Harcourt volunteers and another 6-8 students from U of G who expressed interest in helping this year. Volunteers work in teams of 3 or 4, once each week (for 2-3 hours), approximately 6 times between June and the end of October. We welcome new volunteers. There are experienced gardeners willing to share knowledge, so no expertise in veg gardening is necessary - just an openness to getting your hands dirty!

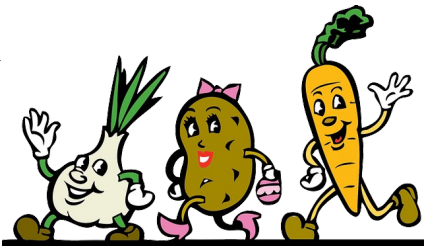
If this sounds like a project you'd like to take part in, contact me, Jill Gill, at peter.gill@sympatico.ca



Chalmers Survey – How are we doing? ~ Peter Gill

The Research Shop is part of the university's Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI), an organization which brings together community and campus skills and resources to advance community-identified research goals.

In February the Research Shop published a study about the Chalmers food pantry and its impact on our community. The Shop compiled the findings of 101 surveys from Chalmers' guests together with those of 3 focus groups (2 in English, 1 in Arabic).



Here are a few highlights from the report:

Quantitative

85% of respondents felt that Chalmers supported them in feeling healthy and happy.

15% indicated that they felt little or no support from Chalmers in feeling healthy and happy.

78% of respondents indicated that Chalmers helped them **a lot** with groceries and

16% indicated that Chalmers helped them a little.

6% did not respond to the question.

Guests prepared diverse foods at home, with many participants indicating that they enjoyed foods from North America, Central Africa and Western Asia. 86% of guests indicated that they liked most or all of the food available at Chalmers although a small percentage indicated that they only enjoyed some of the food.

Qualitative

One theme from the focus groups was praise for the kindness and generosity of Chalmers volunteers. “It feels like home” and volunteers “will always smile at you and treat you like family”. “At first I was stressed to come here and having to ask for help. It was a hard thing to overcome but now it’s nothing. This has to do with the sense of safety with the volunteers”



Health and Well-Being

Several participants specified that it is the fruits and vegetables that promote health the most, and one guest said they appreciate that Chalmers does not offer unhealthy food such as sweets and candies. Several guests in the focus groups mentioned that the Chalmers food programme reduces their stress level by providing a reliable source of food. One guest said “We definitely feel less stress since Chalmers takes away some of the stress and financial burden that we have, especially that we care and pay for a large number of kids”.

Overall the report is very positive in regards to Chalmers’ impact on the lives of its guests.

There were areas of potential growth identified:

- Increased availability of foods to fit diverse health needs e.g. more gluten-free, lactose-free products.
 - Increased availability of foods to meet diverse cultural needs, including Halal, Kosher, vegan.
 - Increased attention to those who do not have access to kitchen space, such as people experiencing homelessness.
 - Implement educational programmes on nutrition, budgeting and/or finance.
- (peter.gillccsc@gmail.com)



Guelph Seminar presents: ~ John Buttars and John Lawson



The Guelph Seminar is a collective of individuals who are committed to bringing speakers of note and encouraging conversations on significant topics that are open, engaging and respectful. It has sponsored a host of events since 1997 but has been less active recently.

Jean Vanier was a highly trusted Canadian religious leader known world-wide through his founding of L'Arche in 1964 for persons with intellectual disabilities. He died in May 2019 and soon after there were revelations that he sexually abused a number of women over many years. The news was devastating to many but L'Arche as an organization responded to the news forthrightly which may shed light on how trust can be rebuilt.

Broken Trust/Rebuilding Trust

Jean Vanier as a Case Study

A lecture and reflection by

Dr. Michael W. Higgins



Documentarian, Biographer, Columnist and Scholar

Date : Tuesday, 9 May 2023


Time: 7PM – 8:30PM

Place: Harcourt United Church
87 Dean Ave. Guelph

Admission: \$10.00 (Ticket at Door)



Sponsored by
ECM & Guelph Seminar



over a dozen books, columnist with various newspapers including most recently The Globe and Mail and a scholar having taught and worked as an administrator at a number of universities. He has written a biography on Jean Vanier as well as on Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton.

Encapsulating the Spiritual Exercises: facilitated by Bernie Carroll, SJ & André Auger



This retreat will give a taste of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, following the flow of their original design, touching on key meditations/contemplations, and providing an overview of the process as Teilhard de Chardin might have presented them. It will offer a contemporary, evolutionary perspective on how the Holy Trinity's purpose in becoming incarnate in Jesus

Christ encompasses the entire evolving universe and its aim is to bring creation (along with all of us) back to God, fully conscious of our divine origin and divine destiny.

This is a guided retreat with time for silence, meditation/contemplation, spiritual direction depending on availability. Participants should bring a copy of Louis Savary's *The New Spiritual Exercises*, In the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Paulist Press 2010. It is available in bookstores, on the internet and at Loyola House.

An Interview with Ashley Kizis ~ Judi Morris

When we heard the word "Stewardship" in the United Church, we clenched our teeth and awaited information about a need the church had and how we could all participate financially to see it gets done.

The dictionary on my Mac says that "Stewardship" is the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property: It doesn't refer to money at all.

Miriam Webster dictionary tells us when *stewardship* first appeared in English during the Middle Ages, it functioned as a job description, denoting the office of a steward or manager of a large household. In recent years, the long-established "management" sense of *stewardship* has evolved a positive meaning, "careful and responsible management."

Ashley Kizis has recently stepped forward to accept the volunteer position of Umbrella Counsellor for Stewardship. That's a big title that carries hope for the future of Harcourt with it. I took her out for a cart ride with me and Tickle to find out more about Ashley and this position.

I found Ashley to be a determined, dedicated, and an inspirational visionary, holding many skills to see this job through and I believe you will agree. She is open ... willing to talk ... and listen, as you will read in her responses. Ashley wants to speak to and listen to you Don't be shy ... strike up a conversation with her ... she is here for Harcourt, she is here for us.

Judi: Ashley, we always like to know about you and your family.



Ashley: I have lived in Guelph from age 5 until attending Western University for Media, Information and Technoculture, with a Certification in Writing (similar to a minor). I am a lifelong learner though, so I have completed several professional development certifications

throughout my career. My first full-time job was for CityTV Calgary in broadcasting. I moved over to the business-side in Marketing, then Business Development, and most recently, I took the leap into entrepreneurship full-time as an inclusive children's puzzle maker. Everyone is welcome to add me to their contacts on LinkedIn if you are curious!

I live with my husband Jeff and son Ethan, who is 7.

Judi: How long have you been coming to Harcourt and what brought you here?

Ashley: Since 2018, I believe. A contact recommended Manna to us. Jeff and I each felt spirituality was missing in our lives; however, we were searching for a community for our son that hit all the right notes – a place where children are encouraged to be themselves. To move. To speak and join in. To find their understanding of God through inquiry and discovery. It is so much more than what many Sunday Schools offers. The adults also have their spiritual buckets filled too, right alongside the kids.

Ethan now happily bounces into the church, excited to see all of his friends he has made here. Jeff loves to grab a coffee at the Harcourt Café, and chat with someone new each week. I don't seem to get as far myself; I find myself in the coat room area, meeting at least two new folks each week. I try not to be late for Manna; however, the conversations are just so good! Please stop me and introduce yourself. We all really feel at home at Harcourt.

Judi: For those much like myself, can you explain what the Stewardship Umbrella Councillor is, what it is meant to accomplish, and your role with it?

Ashley: I noticed this role was vacant for some time, and I have a lot of skills from my career in business that I thought would be helpful and quite applicable. So, I connected with [Previous Chair of Council] Lorraine [Holding] to learn more. My motivation is to offer my skills and experience to the Harcourt community in areas where I can be of help, stewardship included. I do not feel that I have the secret to stewardship. I am just learning, and I love to learn. However, I do believe we, together, hold the key to stewardship. My understanding is that stewardship is about discipleship – gifting of our time, talents, and/or financial gifts. What I am learning is that working together, can only serve to make this stronger!

This role works with both the stewardship team and finance team.

Judi: What do you hope to do with it and how is it going for you?

Ashley: I am very glad that a wonderful group has come forward to join the UCC's Stewardship Course together. We are halfway through the course and are really putting our best effort

forth! Not all communities of faith complete their “homework” you see ... but our Harcourt is very diligent 😊

From these sessions, the group has started to create and revise an actions items list of what we might need to undertake first. We are evaluating what our (currently) small group can undertake along with our other responsibilities at Harcourt, and of course, personally.

Judi: What do you need from Harcourt and the congregation to accomplish the goals of this?

Ashley: Well, my hope is that folks will reach out to me and let me know what they are interested in participating in. I am happy to come up with ideas and help guide initiatives; however, it takes a village, as they say. If I come up with an idea, but no one is interested in volunteering for it, it certainly isn't worth doing, is it? I really want to know what will be engaging and rewarding for Harcourt members to be a part of. What do folks have energy for? Interest in? There are roles that are vacant that all tie into the greater concept of stewardship that could be done on one's own time, and one's own pace. Let's chat.

Judi: Ashley asked me if I did any volunteering. A direct question to the interviewer. I said no at first, but after some thought (*she did give me somewhat of a pause expecting a better response*), I recalled that I did the tea for the 9:00 a.m. service, I do help with the Herald and I told her that I created the idea of All Things Christmas sale with Janet Webster, that we once successfully ran ... After I gave the history of ATC, thinking out of the box, Ashley responded.

Ashley: Workshops and markets have really made a comeback post-lockdown, so there may be good reason for a group to investigate this. That said, the first step is to see what people want to be a part of. I love the coffee house idea I heard so much about too. Ultimately, coming together to work as a team and enjoy ourselves, is a great outcome for community building as we explore the stewardship side of Harcourt's “next near steps”.

Judi: Ashley, I thank you for this interview and especially for your stepping up and taking on the position of Umbrella Counsellor for Stewardship. As a Harcourt member for over 40 years, many of us are no longer capable to do for Harcourt what you are doing with this position. Indeed you are a blessing to us.

A reminder to each and every one of you. Ashley invites us to chat with her ... her invitation is genuine.

“Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord!” ~ Marilyn Whiteley

History Corner

In the History Corner of the March *Herald*, you saw a photo of worship in the Martin Avenue building. Rev. William Rose was presiding at worship. What else did you notice? Yes, there was a choir! The choir that we enjoy in our services of Music and Message today is part of a long Harcourt tradition.

In October of 1955, a quartet of two men and two women sang at the first Sunday service held at the Brooklyn Mission. But within the next week, a choir was formed. Ethel MacKinnon was its first director, followed by Eugene Gattinger, and by the time the photo in the March *Herald* was taken, choir members were wearing gowns for the Sunday services, a common practice for church choirs at the time.

In 1959, three years after the Brooklyn Mission had become Harcourt Memorial United Church, Eugene took a one-year leave of absence, and Blair MacNeill agreed to fill the gap temporarily. In 1962, the Gattingers moved to Newfoundland. Blair again accepted a “temporary” position, and Gerry Roffey was hired as organist.



The original choir gowns had collars for the women. Customs changed over time. When I joined the choir in the fall of 1967, women wore mortarboards. We processed in at the beginning of the service and out at the end, and I never knew why we needed to look like an academic procession! I was relieved when that headgear was given up: I found the hats uncomfortable. Collars gave way to V-shaped stoles, as seen if you look carefully in the photo taken in the Dean Avenue sanctuary during Advent in 1986. They were gold on one side for ordinary wear and ivory on the other for special Sundays.



Gerry Roffey resigned as organist in 1972, and during the next years others, including Leone Sutor, held that position. In 1978, Bob Miller, a music student at the university, became Harcourt’s organist. There were other changes. Blair resigned from his “temporary” position in 1975, and for one



year Jean Livingstone directed the choir. Then Blair was prevailed upon to return. He resigned again five years later in 1981, and Bob Miller, the organist, became Director of Music. He served in that position for five years, and then in 1986 Alison MacNeill began her remarkable tenure.



For years, the choir rehearsed in the choir loft, but 1986 addition to the church brought a new space for the music program: a music room that could be used for rehearsals and an office for the Director of Music. The office had shelves for the library of choral music, and the music room offered hanging space for the gowns, which had hung in closet off the room at the top of the stairs to the balcony. It was all a great improvement.

Gradually things changed ... new choir gowns ... no stoles ... eventually no choir gowns, but choir members dressed in clothes of their own choosing, just like members of the congregation. And that is appropriate. The choir might sing an anthem during the service, but it is not meant to be a performance for entertainment. The choir's anthem is intended to be part of the worship experience, for music can often reach its hearers in ways that words alone cannot. And the choir is present to help lead in worship. In addition to any special music that it may present, the choir leads the congregation in hymns and responses and thus encourages and enriches the congregation's participation in worship.



In recent months, Alison and Shannon Kingsbury have joined together to lead a Manna choir once a month. Harcourt's choral tradition is expanding!

So let us say thank you to Alison and to all the choir members, many of whom have not simply for years but for decades helped Harcourt to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord"!

The Dew of Little Things ~ Lisa Browning



When I moved to Guelph in 1990, one of the first things I did was start searching for a church home. Every Sunday, I went to a different church – sometimes United, sometimes Anglican

– hoping to find a good fit for me. My two criteria: relevant and inspirational sermons, and amazing music. Harcourt was, if memory serves, the fourth church I visited ... and after listening to John Buttars preach one of the powerful and inspirational sermons that he was so well-known for, and hearing our incredible choir, I never left! Harcourt very quickly became like a second home for me, and its members a second family.

As I thought about what has brought me joy over my years at Harcourt, a number of memories came to mind. Even the act of remembering brings me joy now.

I very quickly became involved in putting together the Harcourt Herald, and served as Editor for over ten years. (Interesting little bit of trivia that I suspect not many know: I was the one who changed the name of the publication, formerly known only as the Harcourt Newsletter, to the Harcourt Herald.) Those years using my editing/publishing skills putting together stories and information from members and friends of Harcourt were most definitely joy-filled.

As a member of the Fellowship & Communications (FAC) Committee, I initiated a children's birthday card program. Sunday School children designed cards, and I mailed them to children in our Sunday School program for their birthday each year. Nothing brings more joy than children's artwork!

I coordinated the annual Family Christmas Dinner for about ten years as well. A lot of work, but a LOT of joy. I'll never forget Tom Moseley, who was my "potato guy" ... peeling pounds and pounds of potatoes in the kitchen each year ... and beyond happy doing it!

In addition to Tom, I connected with some other amazing people as a result of my work with the FAC Committee. I fondly remember those who are no longer with us in this world, and what stands out most for me:

Murdo MacKinnon – an exhaustive list of activities and accomplishments!

Bruce McCallum – dry, witty sense of humour that always caught me by surprise

Deane Sherman – caring and kind; a surrogate father figure for me

Fran Mathieson – always laughing, supportive, and full of JOY

I also remember Audrey Madigan, who worked in the church office when I first joined Harcourt. Her compassion and generosity have never been forgotten.

And of course no list of remembrances would be complete without Darko Cikovic and Cynthia Moseley. I treasure each and every interaction and conversation, short or long, I had with both of them.

What do the years 2003, 2006, 2007 and 2011 have in common? In each of those years, Harcourt put on a stage production ...

2003: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

2006: Fiddler on the Roof

2007: Guelph Cares (a fundraiser for Anne-Marie Zajdlik's Masai for Africa campaign)

2011: Godspell



Always a behind-the-scenes type of girl, I was honoured to work on the promotion for each of these events. (See posters below.) Music feeds the soul. Giving back warms the heart. And the productions were phenomenal!

Unless I was away, I was always in church on Sunday morning. When my marriage ended, I went through a rather dark period, and wasn't attending services regularly. I will never forget the day I got a phone call from John Buttars. "I haven't seen you in church for a couple of weeks. Is everything okay?" The fact that he not only noticed I was missing, but also took the time to call and check on me, was another source of heartwarming sustenance.

Years later, when I had just extricated myself from a very abusive relationship, I received a prayer shawl from Harcourt. Another source of sustenance and healing. I remember that feeling, every time I look at that shawl.

For me, connection is not only a source of joy; it is vitally important to our self-esteem and sense of overall wellbeing. Harcourt has provided that connection for me, for over 30 years. And I am eternally grateful.

**"For in the dew of little things,
the heart finds its morning and is refreshed."
~ Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet***

What it Means to be a Community ~ Kathy Magee

As a Covenanted Spiritual Companion, I have the privilege of accompanying people on their spiritual journey, exploring what it means to be God's beloved, and how to share that gift with the world. One of my directees recently shared a poem that was inspired by attending Forest Church on a recent Sunday. It is a beautiful depiction of what it means to be part of community. It describes so eloquently the interconnectedness and importance of the support and nurturance we provide for one another. She has agreed that I may share it with our Harcourt communities of faith.

Support ~ Nicole De Francesco

A grove of trees
deciduous
standing in the distance
A smallish cluster.
But on closer inspection,
a community.
For in this grove
there are trees
of at least 2 species,
and shrubs,
and to my delight,
a baby evergreen
nestled in the understory!
But what caught
my attention
were the leaning trees the
limbs that had broken off,
or the trees,
young or old,
that had tilted and sloped to one side,
and had found support,
leaning,
against another
healthy tree.
Support.
A tree still rooted,
its trunk



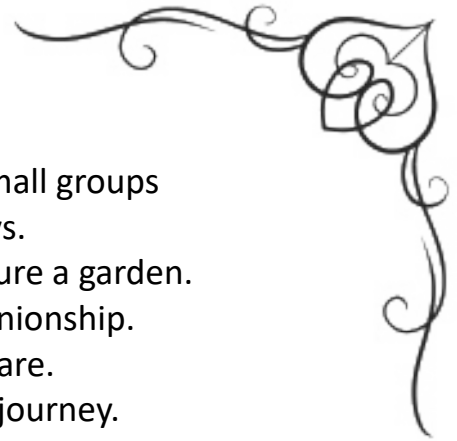
30 or 40 or 50 degrees
to the side,
still living,
still breathing,
resting against a nearby tree
that supported it,
that held it up,
that kept it from being completely bent over
and uprooted.
Supported.
That is what a community does.
When one cannot cope
When one's energies
are not sufficient
When the winds of life are too strong
for us to stand straight;
we lean on another.
That is community.
Community is a group of living beings
that support each other.
In the forest,
the community is made of
mycorrhizal fungi,
soil microorganisms,
insects,
animals,
birds,
plants - shrubs, trees, flowers.
And in the strongest
communities,
there is an abundance of diversity
in each of these living beings.
And so it is in human
communities:
the greater the diversity,
the more strengths we have
to overcome our weaknesses.
For a community
is not just a collection of individuals.
A community is a whole.

It is made of individuals
who
together
make up one unified
greater thing.
An ecosystem
is a community.
A country, a region, a town,
can be a community
or not.
A church
can be a community
or not
As can a school, a place of employment, or a sports team.
Look at what nature teaches us:
When one is weak,
another supports it.
When one becomes too sick
or when one's time has passed,
it reintegrates with the earth
to give back
to the community
that supported it.
And then,
in the underbrush,
amongst the twigs of shrubs
and the snow
and decaying-leaf-covered ground,
I find a
coniferous sapling...
small,
its vibrant green needles
contrasting
with the brown
and the snow.
What a marvelous sight!
The beauty of life!
The beauty of community!
It yells out,
"YOU ARE NOT ALONE!"

"YOU ARE NEVER ALONE!"
May we always remember that.
Amen.
Sunday, March 26, 2023

HARCOURT - Arlene Davies-Fuhr

Here we are as we worship, sing, and explore together in small groups
Always working to better our community in a variety of ways.
Ready and willing to shlep chairs, attend a meeting, or nurture a garden.
Caring and compassionate. Count on us if you need companionship.
Open and accepting, we welcome and embrace you as you are.
Understanding and patient we are curious about your life's journey.
Reaching out to others at Chalmers and beyond, as we
Try to be Christ's hands and feet in this world.



Life Events:

Passages



Howard Nodwell
12 October 1928 – 15 April, 2023

