

The Harcourt Herald November 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

Conor Russell
Administrative & Technical
Coordinator

Ashley Kizis
Community Relations
Consultant

Lauren Martin
Rentals Coordinator

David Kucherepa
Custodian

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
A Note from Kate – Kate Ballagh-Steeper.....	4
Devotional for Advent 2023 – Kate Ballagh-Steeper.....	6
Council News - Kent Hoeg, Chair.....	7
A crossword puzzle.....	10
Generational Discovery Day by Pamela Girardi.....	12
From Manna this Fall by Pamela Girardi.....	13
Some reflections along life's journey.....	14
“Food for the Journey,” – Bill Lord, for the Spiritual Life Committee.....	14
What's It Like Being a Trustee? - Judy Cimino.....	15
What I gain, when I give of my time and talent - Carolyn Davidson.....	16
“Winds beneath our wings” – Dan Ganesh.....	17
Harcourt – Our home away from home – Marilyn and Mark Sears.....	18
When Service Brings Growth – Merrill Pierce.....	19
The Joys of Being Treasurer – Marilyn Troop Parr.....	20
Stewardship of the Gardens - Sarah Lowe.....	21
The Scary King - Ann Middleton.....	23
Welcome to Guelph Project – Arrival! - Peter Gill.....	23
Yummy Apple Cookies - Frank & Janet Webster.....	24
The Antique Sale Returns – J. Webster.....	25
An interview with Pamela Girardi - Judi Morris.....	26
History Corner, by Marilyn Whiteley.....	31
Seen, Heard, and Valued - Lisa Browning.....	34

From the Editor's Desk

Already November again. The days seem to be rushing by more and more quickly every year.

November has traditionally been the month of stewardship for the church, so let's us sit back and ponder what it has meant for us. Time and money are the most precious gifts we can give our community of faith, and, in this time of transition, Harcourt has benefited from the generosity of its members. The commitment of so many parishioners is overwhelming: even when most of us don't seem to be getting any younger...

And the Harcourt Herald itself shows the deep dedication to Harcourt and its community in the number of submissions we have received over the last three years and beyond. It takes effort and courage to write!

Thanks to all of you who, over the years, have submitted articles!



A Note from Kate – Kate Ballagh-Steeper

As I write this, the squirrels in the back yard are busy getting their stores of nuts and seeds ready for winter. It is amazing the spots that urban squirrels find to put their stash – flower pots, wheel wells, eaves troughs, under patio cushions. We humans have our banks and credit unions to keep our stash in. Not to mention all the many and varied investment tools that exist not just to store our savings but to grow them. Maybe a few have a mattress or two.



This issue of the Herald is about stewardship. In many ways our whole faith journey is about stewardship. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines it; “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care”. So from a faith perspective we think about the stewardship of creation, the stewardship of life, the stewardship of what has been entrusted to us by previous generations (ie., the church, our faith), the stewardship of our community of faith and the wider community, the stewardship of our relationships and so on. It isn't strictly an economic management but that is certainly part of it.

The squirrels plan for the future, by putting aside the nuts and seeds they will need down the road. The responsible stewardship of our faith community calls for us to also put aside resources for what we and future members will need down the road. We have benefited by the generosity of those who have preceded us. It has always amazed me when I think about the generations that built churches in Canada. Often the families that came together to build had little to spare – but together they were able to build churches big and small. Perhaps our dollars do not stretch as far as they did in previous generations, nonetheless, being good stewards is an opportunity to express our gratitude for what we have inherited and to ensure a future for others. And a strong community of faith, can be an amazing steward of the environment, of our neighbourhood, and of one another. Let's be more like squirrels – and share our resources for the future!

Peace,

Kate

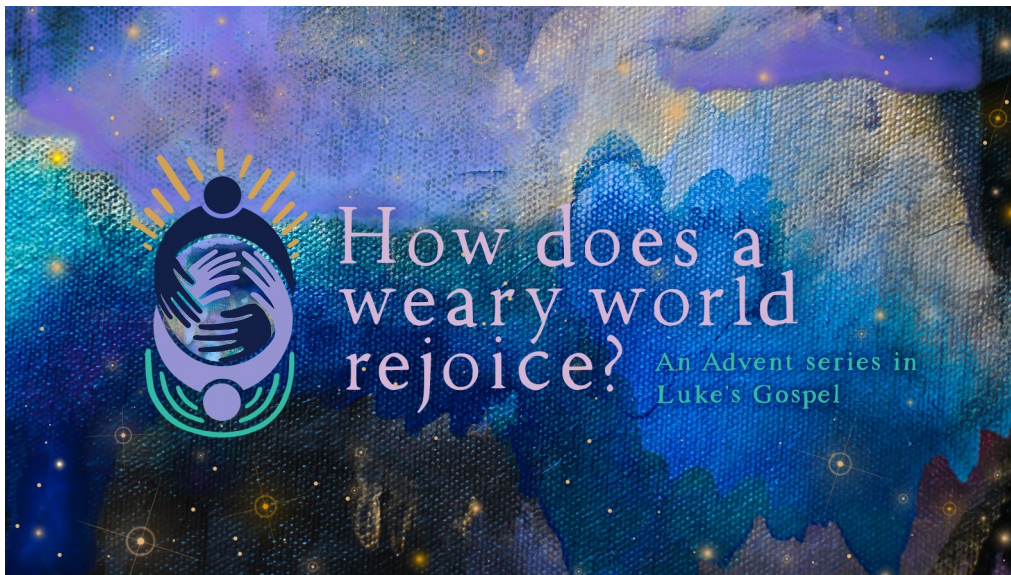
Devotional for Advent 2023 – Kate Ballagh-Steeper

Advent is always a season of opposites; light and dark, despair and hope, grief and rejoicing. This year, using the amazing resources of A Sanctified Art, we will journey in Advent with the theme, “A Weary World Rejoices”. A Sanctified Art, is a collective of women clergy and artists who have created thematic resources to guide our journey. In their words; “Each of us are called to be artists just as much as ministers; in order to faithfully offer our gifts to the church and world, we cannot set our creativity aside.” To find out more, read about this creative group at <https://sanctifiedart.org/about>

You will see art and images used in worship at both the Music and Message Service and at Manna.

We would like to send the devotional out electronically. Please feel free to share the following with your community via email or print communications: Our friends at A Sanctified Art have provided a special e-reader version of this year’s Advent devotional, which you can access on your computer and mobile devices:

<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/136123036/> In order to protect their work, please refrain from sharing this link or posting it on social media.



Council News - Kent Hoeg, Chair



Let me offer heartfelt blessings to all that are reading the Herald this month. Many have been asked to write articles this month about Stewardship and what we get from our own giving of time, talent, and money. Let me tell you, I sit in awe at Council meetings, witnessing firsthand the gracious gifts that our Council members give. They have such talent, and they willingly give so much of their time. Their comments and actions are with the congregation in mind. Though I give my sliver of small talent to Harcourt, it is those around me that motivate me. Thank you to all that give to Harcourt. Financial givings are vital to pay our bills. It is also our gifts of time, energy, enthusiasm, and talent that allow us to be Harcourt – a community that looks out for one another within the church, the community, and the world. Blessings!

Council Meeting of 10/18/23

Highlights include:

- Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization



Two Row Wampum - “In one row is a ship with our White Brothers’ ways; in the other a canoe with our ways. Each will travel down the river of life side by side. Neither will attempt to steer the other’s vessel.”

<https://www.onondaganation.org/culture/wampum/two-row-wampum-belt-guswenta/>

The National Indigenous Council has proposed that the church identify and remove any structural barriers that would prevent the development and sustaining of an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada.

This would acknowledge Indigenous peoples’ rights to their own spiritual identities and to self-determination.

All regional councils and pastoral charges are to vote on this motion. Not voting will count as a No.

There is much reading that can provide you background and more information. We encourage all of you to be informed and provide any feedback that you may have back to any Council member (my email address is hoeg@rogers.com).

At November's Council meeting we will cast our vote.

Here is a good sampling of readings available:

1. <https://generalcouncil44.ca/council/remit-1-establishing-autonomous-national-indigenous-organization>.
 2. [Study Guide](#) (8 pages) - includes the wording of the remit
 3. UCC Video (6 minutes in length) responding to questions about the Remit: <https://generalcouncil44.ca/news/responding-questions-about-remit-1-establishing-autonomous-indigenous-organization>
 4. Calls to the Church from the Caretakers of the Indigenous Circle (11 pages): https://generalcouncil44.ca/sites/default/files/2023-03/caretakers_indigenous_circle_calls-church.pdf
- **Record-keeping and Archiving.**
 - In September's Council Meeting, Carolyn Davidson graciously offered to develop a retention policy and begin the cleanup of our records.
 - This month Carolyn updated us on her progress.
 - Council passed a motion authorizing Carolyn to prepare specific documents for transfer to the United Church of Canada's Regional Council Archives. The full motion can be found in the October Council minutes.
 - **Budget**
 - It is expected that Finance will present a proposed 2024 budget at the November Council meeting.
 - We are expecting significant conversation around this!
 - **Shirzai Family**
 - We are all so pleased that the Shirzai family will be arriving in Guelph on October 26 and that the Harcourt and Trinity churches are supporting the family for the next year.
 - There continues to be a need for financial contributions. If you are able, send a donation with a note that it is for the Refugee/Outreach fund.

Financial Update

As of September 30, we show a surplus of \$8,000 (income over expenses). This of course is exciting news, but I will remind you that we would be in a deficit situation of over \$50,000 if not for two generous one-time contributions.

The hard work of our Community Hub and rental team have certainly paid off. We are at \$78,000 with 3 months of the year to go. Our full year budget was \$67,000 and we are double what we achieved last year at this time! Way to go!

Final word

Thank you to everyone at Harcourt. We appreciate all the gifts that you provide.

Respectfully, Kent Hoeg hoeg@rogers.com.

A Word of Thanks from the Harcourt Board of Trustees

Judy Cimino, Larry Smith, Dan Ganesh, Elizabeth Bone, Tammy teWinkel, Brian Magee

November 15th is National Philanthropy Day in Canada

We like to pause every November and show our appreciation for all the gifts Harcourt has received during the past year. These may be gifts of time or money, or gifts of friendship, leadership and vision.

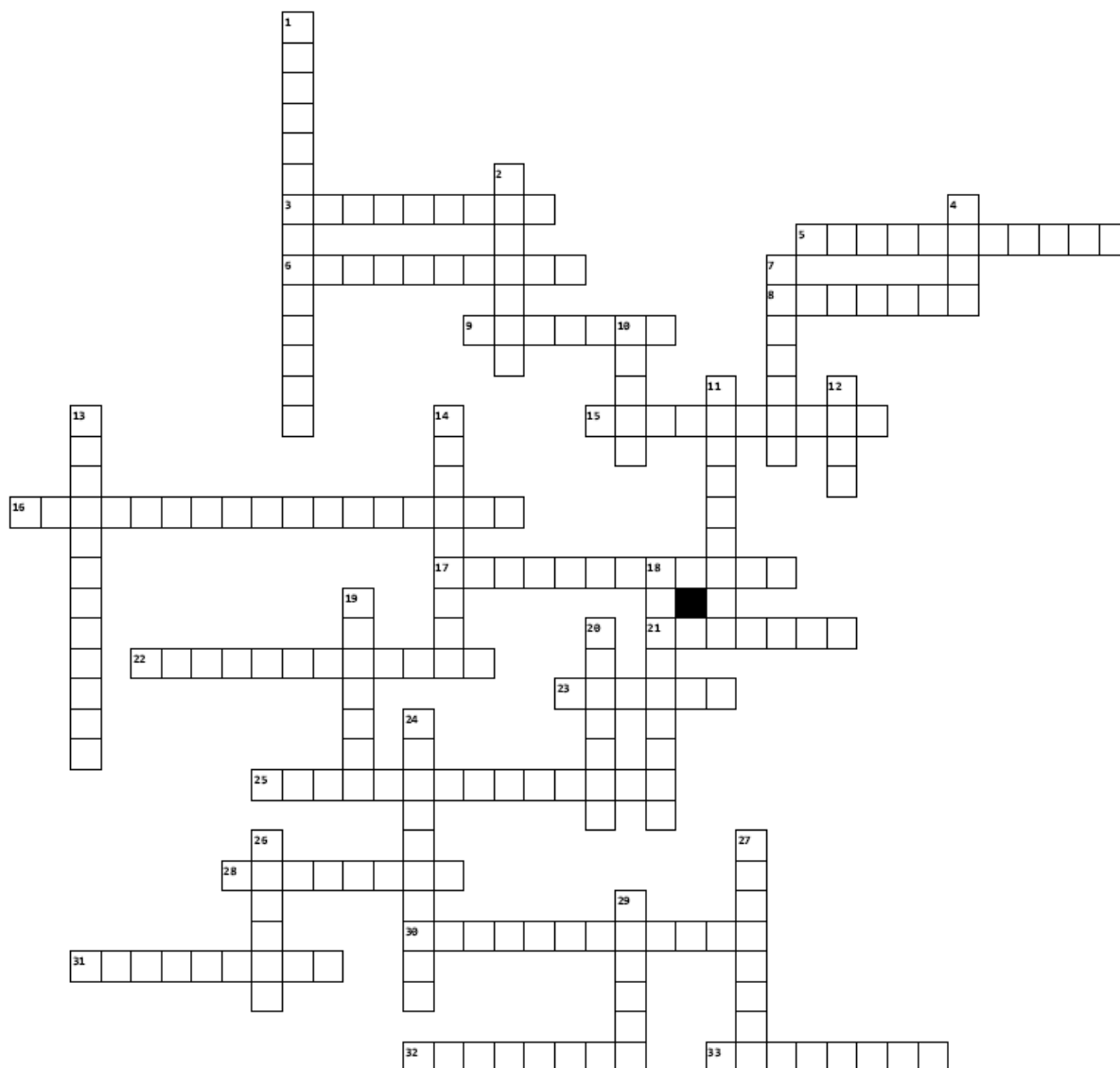
They say volunteers change the world, well here at Harcourt, they certainly change our community of faith and our community at large!

We want to thank our volunteers for your energy, enthusiasm and dedication. This includes regular engagements like: council, teams, committees, umbrella groups, visioning groups, champions and community hub co-ordinators. Other important commitments include: helping at Harcourt Café, moving chairs, knitting prayer shawls and many, many more. So many members have been generous with their monetary donations also. Recognition goes to all regular envelope and par donors and also your generous support of special appeals such as the Legacy Fund, food drives for Chalmers and supporting the Shirzai family.

The examples I have given only highlight a fraction of the volunteers and donors who make a difference in our community. The ripples that their efforts make have a massive impact. We are proud to commend and honour everyone for all you have given over the last year and express our deepest appreciation.

May God bless you all.

A crossword puzzle



The answer you will find in the December 2023 Herald

Across

- 3. people who are employed in a company or organization
- 5. act of keeping property or equipment in good condition
- 6. bulletin issued periodically to the members of an organization
- 8. reviewed for financial accuracy
- 9. document that maintains a record of a transaction between a buyer and seller
- 15. formal document detailing transfer of goods from one party to another (3 words)
- 16. graphic representation of the structure of an organization (2 words)
- 17. work of building or making something, especially buildings
- 21. notes taken to record meaningful discussions, decisions, and key takeaways from a meeting
- 22. historical record of the membership of the congregation (2 words)
- 23. placing of remains in a cemetery grounds or columbarium
- 25. printed guide to a liturgy, rite or ceremony (3 words)
- 28. legally recognized union between people called spouses
- 30. document that spells out an organization's financial condition and activities over the previous year (2 words)
- 31. person who takes minutes for a committee or board
- 32. binding agreement between two or more persons or parties
- 33. official list or record, for example of births, marriages, and deaths

Down

- 1. letters, especially official or business letters
- 2. planned assembly of people for a definite purpose
- 4. proof of ownership of property
- 7. rite of initiation into the Christian community, the church
- 10. person in charge of a meeting
- 11. service of Christian worship at which bread and wine are consecrated and shared
- 12. graphical representation of a building's design and construction
- 13. community of faith
- 14. relating to money or how money is managed
- 18. group of people chosen from a larger group to act on or consider matters of a particular kind
- 19. place in which records or historical documents are preserved
- 20. group of people responsible for overseeing the vision of the church and the work of all church committees
- 24. picture produced using a camera
- 26. document outlining policies and procedures
- 27. lien against property for the purpose of securing a loan
- 29. written or spoken account of a situation, event, etc.

Congregational Discovery Day by Pamela Girardi

This September we had a wonderful Discovery Day at Crieff. There were many choices of how to spend the day – some together as a group, in small groups, or off on our own. Greg Kennedy led a workshop on reupholstering psalms. Adam Bowman led us in bucket drumming. We shared communion and grapes and chips! We had a campfire. We enjoyed great weather, amazing food, and a beautiful land. And we really enjoyed being together!



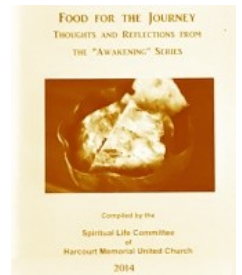
From Manna this Fall by Pamela Girardi



This fall at Manna

Some reflections along life's journey

“Food for the Journey,” – Bill Lord, for the Spiritual Life Committee



I remember the challenge put to me on a plane from Toronto to Vancouver, as I sat beside the head of stewardship for the United Church. He had just recruited me to take the place of someone who had to cancel out with short notice. I thought that I was to do a seminar on Saturday. As we chatted on the way out, he said, “oh and by the way, I’ve signed you up to preach on Sunday!” I responded why didn’t you give me some warning, so I could’ve brought some resources with me? His comment was you will know what to say! I delivered that sermon from some quickly created handwritten notes. I explained there are two parts to me, the generous part, and a conserving part. The challenge for me as a steward is to feed the generous part and control the conserving. After the sermon, many people came up and said that’s the first honest sermon I’ve ever heard about stewardship. That launched me on a journey of trying to discover the depth of what it means to be a good steward with gifts in my life.

The United Church theologian Douglas Hall wrote a book entitled **The Steward** in 1982. The biblical image of the steward is "highly provocative and even revolutionary." Scripture portrays the steward as **a caretaker and servant**. He draws attention to the history of the church that ever since the fourth century, its understanding and practice of stewardship have been distorted by its alliance with institutional power-a Christendom’s perspective.

In the second edition of this book in the early 2000, he shifts his attention to the stewardship of the environment and issues some apocalyptic warnings about the fate of the earth unless we heed the call to be stewards of the creation, it is a matter of life and death. What we believe and how we live matters.

There are two powerful words that keep surfacing in my attention: **reframe** and **awareness**. This is especially true when I pause and reflect on all life as gift. I wonder often about a reframing of the Christian Church as it seeks to repurpose itself in a “me first,” and digital world. What will it mean for a community of faithful to experiment with new ways of being present in a broken and deeply divided world?

I wonder what creative ways God will invite individuals in our day to be like John Wesley, who when nobody attended the worship services, went to the mine entrances to meet people. What are the new horizons opening for people to hear or see the unconditional love of God for this world, all its life and the environment? Our hope rests with a God of new beginnings. We say thanks for the gift of life- a life filled with new challenges and opportunities by the God of

Exodus, Exile and Resurrection. Maybe there is burning bush experience for us in the future. Get ready to remove your shoes, you will be standing on Holy Ground.

We can expect it from a God who makes all things new.

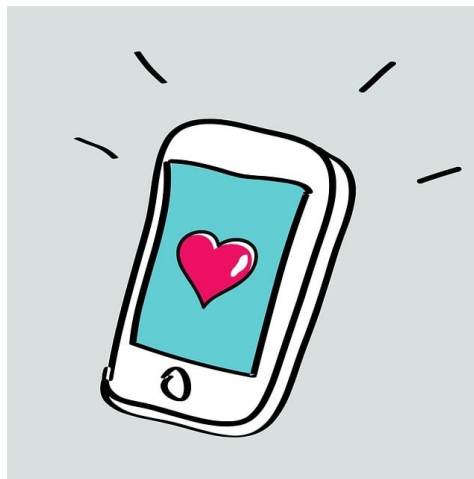
What's It Like Being a Trustee? - Judy Cimino

I would like to offer a few words about my positive experience as a member of the Board of Trustees. I became a member because someone reached out to me at just the right moment. My two children had started university and I was thinking “now that I have more free time maybe I should volunteer and give back to my community”. The very next day a friend from Harcourt who was retiring from the board called me and said he suggested my name and was I interested in this opportunity? It was definitely a sign!

When I started, I was not sure what I could offer, but then I found the board needed many different skills and opinions. Our abilities overlap and are complimentary. It has been such a rewarding experience.

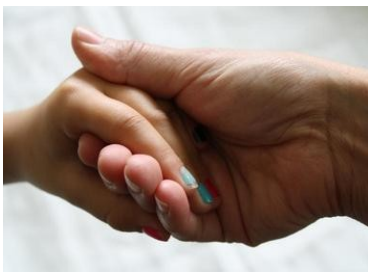
I have enjoyed my time on the board immensely and have never felt the commitment was too great. I have made many new friends and learned a lot about the inner workings of Harcourt. I have learned more about our history and traditions and even how to work the elevator!

The phone call that day caught me at a timely moment, and I am so glad they reached out. The opportunity to serve on the board of trustees has enriched my life and I have gained more than I have given.



What I gain, when I give of my time and talent - Carolyn Davidson

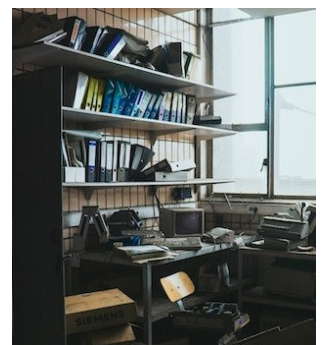
When I support the Harcourt community through my “time and talent”, I invariably find those experiences to be enriching in ways that exceed my efforts. Often the tasks are fun, or involve an activity that I already enjoy (here I’m thinking of the Quilting Group, the Harcourt Gardeners, and especially the Choir). Sometimes they bring the satisfaction of learning a new skill, or gaining new experience with an old one (I recently submitted a successful grant application on behalf of Harcourt, a first for me!) Most importantly, they allow me to make connections and build relationships with others across Harcourt’s various communities, either as part of a larger group or one-on-one (as in all of the above)!



When Lorraine Holding asked me in 2016 if I would take on the role of Secretary to Council, I didn’t hesitate. I knew that my previous work and volunteer experience prepared me to perform the core tasks of the role. I soon discovered that the joy of serving on Council is one of Harcourt’s best-kept secrets. Here I have found an inspiring circle of dedicated, wise and faithful leaders who, despite the challenges they have had to face in recent years, support one another even as they support Harcourt, and who have maintained their sense of humour. I highly recommend it!

Raising my hand (or sticking my neck out) to lead the implementation plan for flexible seating was *way* outside my comfort zone. I reluctantly admitted to myself that I had some of the skills for the task, but many aspects were completely new to me. As I waited in vain for “someone else” to volunteer to take this on, I was reminded of the title of a book about Moses by Jill Briscoe: “Here Am I. Send Aaron.” Thankfully, it was not a task I had to do by myself. As in the old folktale “Stone Soup”, many people came forward to offer their skills and support.

Which brings me to my latest project. I have recently volunteered to declutter the Archives cupboard in Room 301 (the room behind the balcony). My goals are to make room for the new work of Harcourt, whatever that may be, and to ensure that vital records are preserved by transferring them, as applicable, to the Regional Archives in Toronto. If you suspect that you may have unique/original documents in your possession as a result of your own work on behalf of Harcourt over the years, please feel free to get in touch with me. And for more on this theme, check out the crossword puzzle elsewhere in this newsletter.



“Winds beneath our wings” – Dan Ganesh

I was asked to write about my growth in Stewardship since I first joined Harcourt. However, as I reflect on Stewardship, the words of the song written by Larry Henley and Jeff Silbar, and sung beautifully by Bette Midler, resonate. I may be a figurehead in some respects in today's Harcourt community, but I see Stewardship in the light of both the small and large things done around me. These are acts driven by a kindness, respect and love of each other, and it is from this giving that reciprocity is generated, with the wind power to boost our wings.

So what are some examples? Tammy teWinkel grabbing Mike Peleschak's arm and leading him down the choir steps after service, Jon Welch who is the ultimate Scout and always, always ready to offer a hand, Jerry Daminato and Mark Sears and their ultimate attention in ensuring our irascible A-V system is functioning every Sunday, Carol and Lawrie Jones ensuring Harcourt Café is provided within a wonderful aura of hospitality, the image of Tony Wagner hidden behind a grocery cart laden with goods for those less fortunate than us, Larry Smith slipping money into Karyn Davies' hand to help with Chalmers' dinner, Peter and Jill Gill's amazing work with Chalmers, the Shirzai family, the Harcourt Garden and in doing so, acting as the stimulus for others to contribute, Steve Pierce quietly and diligently arranging chairs for the various activities in the Sanctuary and so much, much more that I cannot do justice to. I recall the words of one of my favourite anthems: *'Many grains of sand make the shoreline, many drops of water make the sea.'* These people and their acts are the winds beneath Harcourt's wings, and the reasons, I believe, for supporting Harcourt.



If you are so inclined, I'd really appreciate if you could provide some of your own examples, because I know that I have missed several (drdanns@gmail.com or better, include Marion Auger of the Herald).



As mentioned above, Stewardship for me is all about reciprocity rather than just giving. Another anthem (Reap what you sow) from Pepper Choplin expresses it best: *'What you sow with love, will surely bloom, and the fruits of the Spirit will come back to you, Come back to you, Do not tire from doing good, and Never look back...'*. But today, it seems that the reasons for sharing of one's time, skills and money must coincide with one's interests and values, and somehow must jive with those of the Harcourt Community. I think that is even more relevant for today's generation that it is for mine. It can, I feel, be a reason for a disconnect – away from the Bible and being 'God-centric', especially when it comes to the

financial realities of maintaining a functioning church – in the way we have traditionally defined the Church. Will there be an impact on Legacy giving? Likely yes. But in every challenge, there is an opportunity for an enhanced view of Stewardship. Can aspects of the Community Hub fall under that mantra?

Harcourt – Our home away from home – Marilyn and Mark Sears

How can we define a specific time when we have received more than we have given as a result of our many years of involvement at Harcourt Church? It is impossible, but I can share a bit of what our relationship with Harcourt has meant to us.

We both grew up in different Protestant churches and were active in youth groups in our teens. After we were married, we found a church nearby where we were invited to join a couples group that was led by a wonderful couple that was quite a bit older than us 20 somethings. They were quite formative as models of joyful people who live in the world as caring friends. Through this time, our faith grew as we shared fun and serious times together.

When we moved to Guelph, we were fortunate to find our house fairly close to the university where Mark worked as a professor and he could walk or ride his bike to work. Little did we know that it was also near Harcourt Church. But we really missed our church and friends at our former church. After about 1½ years, we found out that a new minister named John Buttars would be starting at Harcourt, so we decided to give it a try. That was the heyday in the 1970s when families, younger and older, were involved in churches. We had definitely found a new church home.

Through the next 47 years we have received so much in terms of friendship, growth in our faith, support and satisfaction. We have been richly rewarded through our participation, leadership opportunities, contributions, friendships, learnings, fun times and challenging times. Our involvement at Harcourt contributes to a deeper dimension than everyday activities, jobs and events as a result of the caring community and faith sharing. We have been attracted to folks with common values and stimulating interests and abilities that have stretched our understandings, abilities and interests. One example was our involvement in the musicals that we did at Harcourt. I have never been much of a singer, but decided to join the chorus of two of the musicals. When I told Mark, he decided that he could help with the stage sets and props. I think we surprised ourselves at what a great time that was and how much we grew in so many ways.

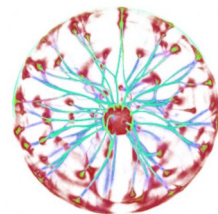


So when it comes to stewardship, we naturally feel that Harcourt is at the top of our priorities. We tend to 'Think globally and act locally' with our time, talents and finances. The Harcourt community has evolved immensely in the time we have been there and we have benefited immeasurably from our contributions and relationships.

When Service Brings Growth – Merrill Pierce

When Stephen and I were working full time and keeping up with two very busy children, we gave our time and money as we were able. I taught Sunday School for many years as that was one of my “talents”. As our children became adults, I had more time to give and joined committees, volunteered at events, worked the gardens, led youth groups, and always worked with the children as the concept of Sunday School evolved. The last evolution was the formation of Manna. I have been a lay leader since its beginnings. I continued these involvements after I retired and added volunteering at Chalmers Community Services Centre.

This sharing of my time, money and talents has helped me to grow in many ways. I have become a better listener. When I listen to the stories that others have to share, I am more compassionate and understanding; less judgmental. I am more patient with process in meetings or planning events. I used to want little discussion and then make a quick decision. That does not work when working with others on a committee or in a group. I am more tolerant of differences as a result of my involvement. Some people would add that they are glad that I have things to occupy my time as it takes up some of my energy.



The Joys of Being Treasurer – Marilyn Troop Parr

I became a co-treasurer for Harcourt in March of 2017, then assumed the role of treasurer once Covid came along in 2020. Before that, I had been the financial administrator for a non-profit organization related to the United Church.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being treasurer has been to get to know more of the people at Harcourt. This is especially true of people who give much of their time to make sure that Harcourt runs smoothly, whether in a paid or a volunteer capacity. While I could recognize a lot of faces in the congregation while I was sitting in the choir, I didn't always have an opportunity to meet people. As treasurer, it was essential that I find out who was in charge of the various committees to get approval for the expenses submitted for payment or to talk to people on the committees about these expenses. Seeing a lot of these people at the church during the week gave me a much better idea of just how dedicated so many of our church members are.

Being the treasurer has also make me aware of how much needs to be done at the church. There are the usual day-to-day activities and I see this most in the office involving both paid staff and volunteers. But because I see all of the bills that need to be paid, I am aware of the supplies needed and the repairs that have to be made. It's like our own homes, in that something is always breaking down! As a member of the congregation, I think I was only vaguely aware of all that is involved. Now I have a much better understanding of how our church operates.

Having been involved with two charitable organizations, I am especially aware of how important it is for all of us to continue to support the church both with our finances and with our time. I have learned that it takes all of us working together to keep the church going. I find it a wonderful feeling to know that I am contributing to the work of the church in some way and this, in turn, makes me feel connected to the church members and to the church itself. And I realize that it isn't the size of the contribution (money or volunteer work) I make that's important, it's the commitment itself.



Stewardship of the Gardens - Sarah Lowe

Coordinating the Harcourt Gardening team: efforts rewarded several times over!

I joined the Harcourt gardening team ten years ago, to help Ben Fear organize the group gardening sessions spring and fall. Since I live next door to Harcourt, he soon dreamed up the idea of a summer “weed and whine” session, where we retired to my deck for refreshments following a summer work party.

Gardening with others is a great example of reaping more than you sow!

Firstly, it is an excellent social time. What a great opportunity to get to know members of the Harcourt community better, sharing in a pleasant couple of hours’ work! It is truly heart warming to join small groups of volunteers gathering for a session or two each month, spring to fall. Some have been loyal members of the team for longer than I have. Others are new this year, allowing us to make an extra special effort to prune the shrubs and spruce up the flower beds. Each volunteer brings their unique expertise and enthusiasm. I can see why Ben’s family told us that working in the gardens was one of Ben’s favourite aspects of church life.

Second, it’s true that “if you build it, they will come”. It is most gratifying to see people from the congregation and community enjoying the gardens around the building, where we aim to have colour and beauty from early spring to late fall. In summer months, the chancel committee may gather a bouquet from the flower beds to decorate the Sunday services. And in all seasons of the year, birds and wildlife feed, nest and shelter in the perennial beds, shrubs and trees.

One hot summer, a young couple, expecting a baby, walked over to sit in the shade of the linden tree every afternoon, because their nearby apartment building had no air conditioning. People using the church building for services, meetings, rehearsals or concerts, spill outside for breaks. This year, children in the summer camp and the Montessori school take their lunch at the picnic tables, and work off their excess energy.

Coordinating the garden team has been most rewarding. However, 2023 has been my last year. I look forward to someone else stepping up: someone who loves gardening, but has better knees and a stronger back than I have. Whoever takes it on will have their efforts repaid several times over.



A few of the members of the gardening team in 2014 and 2023



The Scary King - Ann Middleton

[While this article had been scheduled for last month's Herald, it remains a fitting tribute to a kind soul who knew the value of stewardship in big and small ways. - Ed]

Mike Peleschak's death has left many of us at Harcourt mourning his larger-than-life presence. An active member of our community and formidable presence in the back row of the choir, Mike also played a role in the life of one little girl in our family.

Almost 20 years ago, Mike was King Herod in the Christmas pageant. As you know, he was an imposing figure, tall and solidly built with a wonderful voice. When this King Herod decreed in booming tones that he would kill all the newborn males in Bethlehem, he was seated on the outsize chair that has been part of Harcourt since the days of the Brooklyn mission. Sitting close to the front, all ears, our five-year-old granddaughter trembled.

She was so frightened that in subsequent weeks, even the big chair – at that time located behind the pulpit – would set her off. And Mike in the choir remained a very scary presence.

We thought that introducing her to Mike after church would show her what a sympathetic soul he was, but the fear remained, that is until Mike and Mary came up with a plan. They invited the three of us to their home. Although hesitant to go, Ailsa was won over by the promise of meeting the Peleschaks' Bernese mountain dogs. Once we were on the floor with Mike and those gentle giants, Ailsa's fear evaporated. She was enchanted.

Thank you Mike.

Welcome to Guelph Project – Arrival! - Peter Gill

By the time you read this Saliha and her family of 7 will have arrived in Canada on 26th October and should be settled into their new home on Jeffrey Drive in the east end. This location is great as it's on a bus route and only 6 minutes from her sister Sameen's house.

We've had a terrific response to the request for furniture and winter clothing although we have yet to sort through everything to make sure it all fits (the clothing, that is). We are in

need of more sheets and pillows for the beds which are mostly single although we have received one king and one queen.

We are committed to supporting the Shirzai family for one year at a cost of \$85,000 which for a family of seven, the youngest being 17, is still a modest amount; so we will need financial support to ensure we reach that target. So far Harcourt and Trinity have committed \$50,000 and we received earlier this year a donation from a Montreal family of an additional \$5,000 so we are asking the two congregations to donate at least \$15,000 each. Your financial support is greatly appreciated.

We trust at some point when the family has settled you will have a chance to meet and welcome them. In the meantime, if you wish to volunteer to help in various capacities – transportation, orientation, shopping, English conversation are just a few of the ways you can help.

Thanks as always,
Peter Gill, Jill Gill, Ilona Dobos, Ros Slater, Kate Ballagh-Steeper

Yummy Apple Cookies - Frank & Janet Webster

2 cups quick cooking rolled oats (500 mL)
1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour (we used all purpose) (375 mL)
2 tsp cinnamon (1 mL)
1 1/2 baking powder (7 mL)
1/2 tsp salt (2 mL)
2 eggs
1 cup milk (250 mL)
3/4 cup packed brown sugar 1(75 mL)
1/4 cup melted butter (60 mL)
1 tsp vanilla extract (5 mL)
1 1/2 cups finely chopped apples (about 1 large) (375 mL)



Preheat oven to 375 F (190C) with rack in top and bottom thirds of the oven. Butter 2 large baking sheets or line with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, whisk together oats, flour, cinnamon, baking powder and salt.

In another bowl, whisk together sugar, eggs, milk, butter and vanilla. Pour over dry ingredients and sprinkle with apples, stir until just blended.

Drop batter by 1/4 cup measure for each cookie onto prepared baking sheets at least 2 inches (5 cm) apart.

Bake for about 15 minute switching pans on racks halfway or until a tester inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Let cool on pans on racks to cool completely.

Variation: Reduce apples to 1 cup and add 1/2 cup chopped toasted hazelnuts, walnuts or pecans and 1/3 cup chopped dried cherries.

We used some of our home grown apples to try this recipe. We served them at the Cafe on October 22 and they all disappeared.

The Antique Sale Returns – J. Webster

In April 2023, Harcourt hosted a sale of vintage, collectibles and antiques in the gym. Before the sale ended that afternoon, many of the vendors wanted to know when the next sale would take place.



The Harcourt Board has agreed to another sale, to be held on Saturday, November 18, 2023. Proceeds will go to Harcourt.

Approximately a dozen vendors will be offering vintage tools, china, glassware, sewing notions, vintage Christmas items and more.

Again, adult admission will be \$3, with free admission for children.

A bake sale took place on the same date and we would like to offer it again. Unfortunately the Hoegs are not available on that date to run the bake sale but have offered their support, advice and files if anyone could take on this project.

The bake table was very popular and garnered many funds for Harcourt as well.

Watch for more details and feel free to contact me if you would like to help out or organize the Harcourt bakers!

Janet Webster (janetwebster717@gmail.com)

An interview with Pamela Girardi - Judi Morris



The idea of Manna was born in the living room of the Auger home. The then Christian Formation Committee discussed what was working with church school, and what could be different. It stemmed out of a desire to meet different needs. Jim Ball presented the idea of Manna to the Committee and they quickly found there was a lot of interest.

This concept was interesting to Pamela Girardi and her family. They participated right from the start and Pamela became hired as leader for this group. I interviewed Pamela on Zoom. You will read why Pamela is the perfect choice for this position. Her enthusiasm, upbeat personality and direction for Manna is a blessing to Harcourt.

Judi: Tell us about your family

Pamela: My wife, Colleen, and I got married at Harcourt. We have three children. Zoelle is 14 and just started high school this year. Sage is 11, and our youngest, Zeben, is 8. We are in a stage of life where there are a lot of great after school activities happening like soccer, gymnastics and music lessons. In our free time we really love to be outside, camping and exploring together. We also love to play board games and cook together.

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

Pamela: Colleen and I were looking for a church community when she moved here in 2005. We were looking for a space that we would raise a family in as LGBTQ folk. Harcourt was one of the first churches we went into. There was a baptism that Sunday and there were two moms having their child baptized. We felt a connection and kept coming. The more we got to know people, the more we were inspired, and Harcourt became our church community.

Judi: Where do you come from, Pamela?

Pamela: I grew up in Kitchener. I came to Guelph to study International Development. I loved the city, so I never left!

Judi: What was your religious upbringing and experience/s?

Pamela: I grew up in the Catholic church and went to Catholic elementary and high school. My family was very involved in our parishes. My church and school communities were so important in supporting my interests in social justice and spiritual life. I was interested in becoming a chaplain and studying religious studies. However, when I was a teenager the politics in the church excluding LGBTQ folks became a barrier to my full participation. So as a young adult, I sought out other spaces.

Judi: Still within the Catholic realm, or outside of that?

Pamela: I found communities that were often ecumenical, inclusive, and progressive. At the University of Guelph in ECM and faith-based social justice communities. Later we found ourselves here at Harcourt.

Judi: Your connection with Harcourt has become Manna. Has it always been Manna for you, or did you have other connections with Harcourt?

Pamela: When we started coming to Harcourt, we attended the 10:30 service. As we had children, they attended the Sunday School and the Godly Play programmes that were happening at the time. When we heard that there was going to be this new service for all ages – we were excited to try it. We wanted to worship together as a family with our young kids.

Judi: Eventually, you started working with Manna. Have you always been interested in a career as a minister or did you just happen to fall into it?

Pamela: I've always been interested in work in spiritual care, community building and social justice in a faith-based context. My work had been in faith-based social justice organizations. I

wasn't sure if, as an introvert, I would enjoy leading on a Sunday morning. After the first year of Manna they were looking for more volunteers to help lead the services. It was easier to imagine being up there while sharing leadership with others, so I joined. I quickly discovered how much I loved it!

I started working for Manna years later when the group grew into needing help with coordination and communications. As needs grew, I began to work more hours – supporting Sunday worship on a more regular basis.

Judi: What do we call you officially? Are you considered a minister?

Pamela: I am not an ordained minister. I do work in ministry as a congregational designated minister. My job title is MANNA Lead Coordinator/ Community Engagement Animator. That's a mouthful – so just call me Pamela 😊

Judi: At a typical Sunday with Manna I know, there's food, because when I made coffee for the 9:00 a.m. service & washed up after, it was always difficult to not help myself to the snacks waiting. I know that there are songs and prayers and videos and adults and children. Can you tell us about a typical Sunday? Or maybe there isn't a typical Sunday because you do a lot of things.

Pamela: A typical Sunday... well you're right... Sunday mornings at Manna can be quite creative and unique. When we are thinking of how to explore scripture and spiritual practice in a way that is all age friendly - it might lead to baking, being outside in a forest, creating art or poetry, having a discussion, meditating, playing games, doing a Gospel contemplation, planting trees, learning about a local organization ... We focus on choosing what will help us explore that teaching or that story together in an experiential way.

We tend to start each service with prayer, music and practices that repeat each week. We share concerns and celebrations. We have some pieces that come from the wisdom of Godly play – like our church year calendar. Each week we tend to tell the scripture story in a creative way – sometimes we capture the theme or meaning in a story from the library. We then we explore the story/theme/teaching through different activities – often there are a few activities to choose from to suit different personalities and interests. We finish with music, a blessing, and sometimes food. 😊

About once a month our whole service is related to social justice learning or action. For instance, in October we are heading to Bela Farms to pick carrots for the Good Food project.

Judi: So. What hope do you have for Harcourt and Manna?

Pamela: I hope that folks in Guelph that are looking for a community and service like Manna, will know that it exists and come try it out. And I hope that Manna keeps experimenting, listening, and growing together.

Judi: How can we promote that?

Pamela: Most of the new folks we have in Manna have come by word of mouth. Now we have a great new website, and so one of our tasks this year is to create more awareness that Manna exists. An important message is that Manna isn't just for families with young kids. It's for anyone who is interested in an experiential service.

Judi: Is there a book that you would like to recommend for people to read?

Pamela: Right now I am reading *After Jesus Before Christianity* (Erin Vearncombe, Brandon Scott, Hal Taussig). It's about the history of the first two centuries after Jesus' death and about the Jesus movements at that time. I am enjoying learning about the history of the early church - of small, diverse communities, about some of their commonalities. I think this history has much to offer us right now in this time.

The other book I go back to read again and again is *Braiding Sweet Grass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Judi: Any personal song/hymn?

Pamela: I love the hymn: "Show Us How to Love" by Mark A. Miller.

Judi: We are a few weeks away from Christmas. What are Manna's plans for Christmas?

Pamela: Our Advent theme this year is 'A Weary World Rejoices'. Weary feels like a good word right now – with all the conflict happening in our world, with how we might be feeling around climate change, and so many other issues personally and as a community.

The first week of Advent we will explore this theme. We tend to have a cedar advent spiral meditation with candles in the sanctuary as one of the choices that day – along with many others spread throughout the church.

On the second week of Advent, we have a guest, artist Sarah Fuller. Sarah will be sharing with us about her work in faith-based social justice communities and how her art weaves into that work.

On the third week of Advent, we tend to have lots of music shared by individuals and small groups woven into our service. If you have a song you want to sing/play - we'd love for you to come and share it!

Our fourth week will be our Christmas Eve pageant. For the last number of years, we had costumes ready for anyone who showed up that day who wanted to jump in and be a part of the story. No practice needed 😊 All ages welcome to join in of course 😊

Judi: What does Manna have for them for 2023 and 2024?

Pamela: That's a great question. We have neared the end of a fall programme and are facing the Christmas programme. There's a lot of energy in building our music programme. Once a month we have Manna Choir and that's musicians and singers who come together to practice before the service and then lead the service with Alison and Shannon Kingsbury. Other weeks of the month we have local artists that kind of rotate through and they come and help lead music at a service. People are interested in the choir and also having Sundays where individuals can sign up and share one piece of music.

Judi: There is so much more to Manna than is included in this interview. There is a strong outreach focus. Field trips to farms to gather produce for those in need, a walk through an ancient forest. Each week Manna's activities are posted in Harcourt's weekly update.

The removal of the pews and the change in time of Harcourt's regular Sunday service now makes it possible for anyone interested in finding out about Manna possible to attend both services.

Pamela Girardi, we thank you not only for the time out of your very busy schedule to participate in this interview, but for the leadership you provide to Manna, along with the leadership and creativity of so many Manna volunteers on the brainstorming and leadership groups.

Under your leadership, Manna has injected new life blood into the community of Harcourt Memorial United church.

History Corner, by Marilyn Whiteley



Harcourt's Ministers, Part 2

As Harcourt thrived, the work became too great for one minister. John Buttars needed help, and in 1978 Ken Jull assumed the position of half-time Pastoral Assistant. He was working part time at a church in Mississauga. Because he had weekend obligations there, he was available at Harcourt only during the middle of the week, doing pastoral visiting and also some teaching, especially with the Sunday school staff.

The situation did not work out well. Ken's unavailability on Sundays proved to be a significant barrier, and for Ken, the travel was burdensome. He tendered his resignation in April of 1979, to take effect on June 30. Harcourt's first experience with an additional minister on the staff had ended.

The experiment had ended, but the need was still there. And so a plan developed. The congregation extended to John an invitation to enter into an extended ministry, and he accepted the invitation, which included provision for a seven-month partially-paid leave. An interim minister would be hired for one year to cover the time of the study leave and then to serve along with John after his return. The person selected was Mort Paterson. He was a social activist with a strong interest in justice issues, and he brought his own concerns and his own style to Harcourt.



John and Mort worked together after John's return. Then it was time for another staff member. At first, the position was seen as an assistant minister, but that changed to be an associate minister, the two ministers to work together as a team. It was an idea that would take some working out.



Lori Edey was selected for the position. Although she had been a candidate for ordination, she was not proceeding with that, but came to Harcourt as a "Trained Lay Supply Minister" in the United Church. Lori's personality was effervescent and extraverted, quite different

from John's quieter nature. Lori and John shared in leading worship and worked to divide areas of responsibility. Lori worked a great deal with the children and youth; pastoral visiting also formed an important part of her ministry.

In June of 1989, many were surprised and disappointed to learn of Lori's resignation, to take effect at the beginning of October. Lori had been spending some time working at Homewood, and she was accepting a chaplaincy position there.

The Board recognized that it needed to take some time to decide what to do next. So Jean Wright was hired as an interim supply minister for the period from October 2, 1989 until June 30, 1990. She had received ordination in the Baptist Church in 1996. Jean was to work four-fifths time, or the equivalent of four days a week. She quickly felt accepted both by the staff and the members.



1999 Harvey & Jean Wright

Gradually during the months to come, a committee developed a new vision for Harcourt's ministry. It was to be a ministry shared between a Minister for Worship and Pastoral Care and a Minister for Christian Development and Outreach. A Pastoral Relations Committee was formed. After receiving applications and interviewing five applicants and inviting three for a second interview, the committee recommended Jean Wright for the position. She became Harcourt's Minister for Christian Development and Outreach, and in 1992 she was received into the Order of Ministry of the United Church of Canada.

Early in 1999, Jean Wright startled the congregation by announcing her intention to retire at the end of June. Marion Loree was hired as a half-time staff associate from September, 1999, through June of 2000. She was a student in the diaconal ministry program, and her home was in Guelph.



Monica Moore began her ministry in September of 2000. The roles of the two ministers had been redefined, so that she became the minister overseeing Christian development and pastoral care, and John the one with primary responsibility for worship and outreach. This was a further step toward a genuinely shared ministry, for the previous division could be seen to imply that Harcourt had a minister and an assistant, even though that had not been the intention of the descriptions.

In 2006, John Buttars retired after a remarkable thirty-year ministry at Harcourt. Monica remained while an interim minister shared the pastoral duties—an interval being needed after such a long ministry. Jim Ball arrived in September of 2008, and after he was well established in his new position, Monica Moore resigned and Wendy Brown joined Harcourt’s shared ministry in 2009.



Wendy & Tim

After Wendy left in 2016 to move to British Columbia, Miriam Flynn served as supply minister for a “bridging year,” while Harcourt went through a visioning process. Then in the summer of 2017, the “bridging year” ended and Harcourt welcomed Miriam to work on a more permanent basis.



Then in 2020 came the pandemic. The church doors closed and the flexible members of Harcourt had to devise new ways of worshipping and meeting together. Jim Ball resigned, and at the end of 2020, the congregation could only arrange a drive-by farewell to Jim and his wife, Anne, on a wintry day. Miriam remained as minister until leaving at the end of June, 2022. And Kate Ballagh-Steeper began her ministry at Harcourt at the beginning of that fall.

Is your head spinning from trying to keep track of all this? Mine is from writing it! Each of these ministers has made a unique contribution to the life of the Harcourt community, but to describe those contributions would have made this article much too long for me to write and for you to read. The account has also omitted the coming of Pamela Girardi in her vital role as Manna Lead Coordinator.

But in all this complicated narrative, I hope that something has become clear. When John Buttars began his ministry here at Harcourt, he became THE MINISTER. That was the pattern here and in most churches. Harcourt’s path toward a genuinely shared ministry was not always clear or straight, but it was a worthwhile journey.

And here’s a final reminder: The Herald proclaims (as our printed Sunday bulletins used to) “The Minister: The People with ...” and then the relevant names. Let us remember that, much as we value the leadership of those named as ministers, we are all to minister—to one another and to our needy world.

[Stewardship takes many forms... - Ed]



One day, about a month ago, I was driving home from Kitchener, and was stopped at a red light. On the raised divider to my left stood a young man holding a sign that said "Accepting all donations." I had no cash, but I did have a collection of McDonald's stamp cards ... the ones that can be redeemed for a coffee. I rolled down my window and asked him if he could use them. He gratefully accepted and said thank you, and in that moment we made an eye-to-eye connection.

When my daughter was about 12 years old, she contracted a very strange virus (and to this day we don't know what it was) which took away her ability to walk. She was in a wheelchair for about a week (and then the virus disappeared as suddenly as it had first appeared, and she was fine). But my point in bringing this up is to say that, while she was in that wheelchair, she was treated differently. She told me that people looked at her strangely, or didn't look at her at all.

Last week, a friend told me that he was trying out a motorized wheelchair he had purchased for his wife, out in his neighbourhood. "People did not make eye contact with me," he said.

Being seen, heard, and valued. Three things that I believe are crucial to our mental health and wellbeing ... and, as part of the ripple effect, our physical health as well. Growing up, I was not seen or heard. Valued? I'm not so sure about that either. I have told the story before ...



Growing up in a family of five, with an eleven year age difference between me and my sister, and fifteen years between me and my brother, I was often the "forgotten" one. When I was very little, my family would gather for Sunday dinner around our large formal dining room table. Because I was so small, in size and in voice, I was often unheard at that table of adults and teenagers. When dinner was finished, but conversation still continued, I would usually crawl under the dining room table, hoping against all hope that someone would notice that I was missing. No one ever did.

Those early years, and the struggles with feeling "good enough" that persisted well into my adulthood, were the catalyst for the work I do now. And they are the reason I have had so

many soul-to-soul connections with people who have struggled, or are still struggling, with fear, anger, or shame.

The snippet in italics above was taken from my piece in my first volume of empowerment stories, which I published in 2013. In that same volume were two other women, unknown to me before the publication process began. One of them lived in Barrie, and was first connected with me through Facebook. After the book was published, she drove down to an event in Cambridge, where I had a display table. "I am so excited to meet the woman who changed my life," she posted the day before. I was shocked. At that time, I had not yet become aware of the immense power of storytelling, and the incredible healing it provides to those who share their stories of triumph over adversity.

Earlier in 2013, I felt called to respond to a Facebook post by a woman living in Arizona. Through that connection, she too shared her story in the same anthology. Later, I asked her what I had done that made such a difference to her. Here, in part, is what she said:

"You read my post and felt a connection. Rather than ignore it, you reached out to me, you made a connection. You said that my words resonated with you and in that instant, by that simple action, I felt empowered and my story validated. At that particular moment in my life, having my thoughts and feelings validated was water in an Oasis...a life jacket in a turbulent sea.

Your invitation to participate in "Sharing" turned my tide. It gave me something to concentrate on, something positive in a negative world. It gave me hope.

I had no confidence in myself, but you did. You allowed me a forum to live a lifelong dream. You nurtured me to take the first step, to become a more authentic and better me. Most importantly, you allowed me to be able to live the dream at my ability, there were no demands, no rules, no criticisms, no judgment. Just give me your best work, and be your most authentic self, just be you...that's enough.

In a world where everyone has an angle, a scheme, an agenda, you did not. You reached out, to another soul, who was hurting. You extended a hand, and in one simple act...threw out a life line to a drowning soul. The book....that was just gravy....something additional to an already human experience.

Your work is important, but it isn't work as much as it is a calling. It's a calling to bring together the power, the strength and the healing of others, so that they can be all that they can be. You yourself struggle deeply with your own demons and issues, but gain strength by

and through the helping of others, and in that struggle you find yourself and your purpose. That's pretty darn inspiring and damn powerful."



On a daily basis, I am honoured by the trust that others put in me, and the vulnerability they show when they tell their stories of struggle. I regularly receive messages like the two I mentioned here ... and each one brings me to tears. My work is a blessing, and I receive far more than I give.

In the words of Anita Moorjani, "In the tapestry of life, we're all connected. Each one of us is a gift to those around us, helping each other be who we are, weaving a perfect picture together."

The connections can be more in-depth, such as sharing stories, or they can exist for just an instant in time, such as an exchange with a young man at a stop light. But for me, they are precious, priceless, and life-giving.

