

The Harcourt Herald

*The life and work of the Harcourt Memorial United Church
community, Guelph, Ontario
Summer 2016*

*You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring
whose waters never fail (Isaiah 58:11)*

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

Harcourt Memorial United Church

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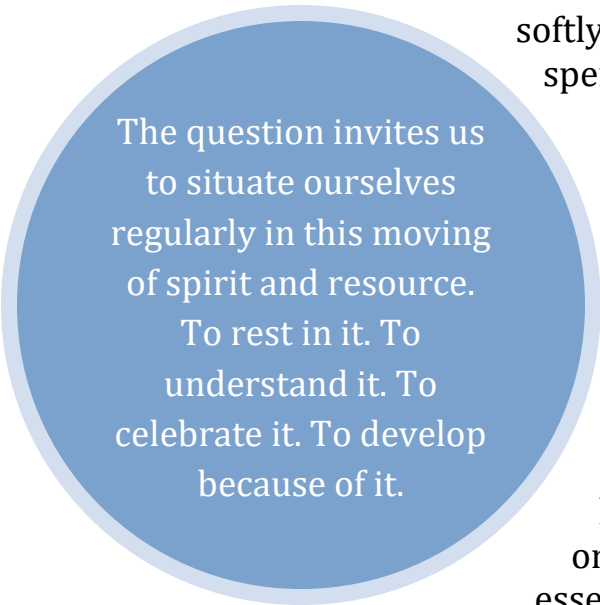


FROM THE MINISTERS' DESKS

by Jim Ball

Someone recently asked me what Harcourt's focusing question was. I assumed that the person was interested in learning something about the kind of spiritual vision that guided the members of our community. I could have pointed him to our statements - the ones that express our purpose, vision and mission. I could have directed them to our values - the ones that we have been leaning into more deeply in recent years as well as the more traditional denominational ones that we have long embraced and reflected. But he had asked about our focusing question. Not about our statements. How would you respond to his request? What question would you offer that begins to get at the heart of who we are and how we are, individually and together? After much soul searching, all that I could offer him was the question that works for me - the question that comes around like morning light and invites me to discern and choose afresh each day. What part of God's world needs me this day and what part of me needs God's world?

It is my suspicion that the people here are stirred and guided by this question or one like it. We listen to it in our morning routines - on our walk to school, on our drive to work and on our run at the gym. We listen to it as we swim at the pool and stroll through the nearby wood. We open ourselves to its whispers while reading a book in a favourite chair and while visiting with friends at a local coffee shop. We hear it speak softly in our sanctuary moments, both when they are spent alone and when shared with others.



The question invites us
to situate ourselves
regularly in this moving
of spirit and resource.
To rest in it. To
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because of it.

Always it reveals the faces and places of hurt and hope. Both within us and around us. Sometimes the challenge and gift it reveals are external, found in a grandchild, say, or in a guest at the Chalmers centre or in a section of the Speed River watershed - challenge and gift that call to us and ask for our commitment, competence and care. Sometimes what it reveals dwells within us - our mind's longing to learn, perhaps, or our hands need to work or our heart's hunger to heal. Always it points us to the essential, to what is needed, not wanted.

The question reminds us that we are part of an interdependent creation. We dwell in a world where energy and grace flow from the outside in and the inside out, ever seeking balance and wholeness. The question invites us to situate ourselves regularly in

this moving of spirit and resource. To rest in it. To understand it. To celebrate it. To develop because of it. And to align ourselves with it. It invites us to a journey of growth and learning, building community along the way that is welcoming, diverse and safe. It leads us into ever deeper lives of fairness and compassion, humility and respect, thoughtfulness and joy. It reminds us that people and places are never alone. This is true even when people stop listening and instead grow hard in their hurt and fear. It is true even when the exchange of resource and grace is allowed to slow. For even in such moments and places, the question does not go away. It continues to seek a hearing, turning over soil and hearts, making space for new beginnings.

This is who we are, then, and, with humility, seek more deeply to be - a people who live a question and desire to live it better. A community whose people are open. Ever listening and responding. Ever loving and being loved. While the Spirit's breath is with us.

Blessings!



COUNCIL NEWS

by Lorraine Holding, Chair of Council

Our Council meeting in May included significant focus on our Harcourt 20/20 project. We refreshed our knowledge about building an authentic community (check Our Vision Statement on page 2). We reviewed the purposes and process for our small conversation groups that will be held during June. We encourage as many as possible to participate! Your personal reflections and input are important to building community with people from across the Congregation. We will explore our rich diversity of life and ministry, and the 'glue' that connects each of us to Harcourt. Defining our identity is an important base to help create our future. Input gathered at these conversations will contribute to our discernment process from now to October.

Speaking of input, we thank the 127 participants who completed the IMNA Survey (Identity, Mission and Needs Analysis) during April. We received the data results (many graphs) on May 12. Our next step will be a 3-hour workshop facilitated by a United Church EDGE consultant to help us identify and interpret significant results. This will be another opportunity for Harcourt people to participate. Stay tuned for more details!

A second important item at our meeting was Council's approval of the Spiritual Life Committee's recommendation to appoint Kathy Magee and Peter Jackson as Covenanted Spiritual Companions. We congratulate them on their commitment to offer guidance to deepen the spiritual life of others. We are blessed to have them share their personal faith journeys in this role along with Andre Auger, Marion Auger, Stan Bunston and Maxine Lipinski. Their covenants with the Congregation will be affirmed on June 12.

To close our meeting, we acknowledged Wendy's conclusion of her ministry with us and voiced our personal appreciations for her leadership and spiritual gifts shared during the past seven years. We wish her and Tim all the best as they journey to British Columbia and explore new paths of ministry through retirement. We offer them blessings for good health and happiness from everyone at Harcourt.

Summer often means a slower pace, a time to re-charge. However, life at Harcourt is still active during July and August. I encourage everyone to reflect on, and participate in:

Harcourt 20/20

Our opportunities to chat with others and consider where the Spirit is leading us. We will have a busy fall as our discernment process continues. Blessings for a safe and relaxed summer.

There are three Sunday services

Chapel service (9 am)

The Chapel service features prayers, readings, singing, and a message. It is quiet and meditative. There is no choir or special children's program. Tea and coffee are served following the service, and some participants gather for additional guided reflection.

Sanctuary service (10:30 am)

The Sanctuary service closely follows the Chapel service, but also includes children's time, the Harcourt choir with piano and guitar accompaniment, and occasionally the handbell choir and flutes. **Nursery support is provided in the nursery from 10 a.m. until 12 noon.** Tea and coffee are served in the gym after the service.

MANNA (10:30 am)

Is a new, friendly, all-ages, interactive, alternative worship experience that involves hands-on activities and sharing. It takes place in the Friendship Room, also at 10:30 a.m.

Special schedules

Summer schedule: There is only one service at 10 a.m., held in the Sanctuary. Summer services begin the last Sunday in June and continue through to include the first Sunday in September. Nursery care is available.

Special events: There are also some special Sundays during the year, such as Easter Sunday, when the 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services are held together at 10 a.m.

Midweek services: There are other times and opportunities to come together in worship at Harcourt. These events take place seasonally. Visit our webpage at www.harcourtuc.ca for more information.



PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT...



- **The United Church of Canada appeal for Fort McMurray is growing.**

In an unprecedented evacuation order in Fort McMurray, Alberta, about 80,000 people have been ordered to leave the city. Alberta Premier Rachel Notley reported that 1,600 structures have been destroyed, and the fires are still not yet under control. The United Church of Canada appeal for Fort McMurray has so far received over \$66,000 for emergency relief, rebuilding, and rehabilitation. Those wishing to donate online are encouraged to visit

<https://www.gifttool.com/donations/Donate?ID=1955&AID=2274&PID=5197>

- **United Church calls on government to monitor Canadian mining companies overseas.**

The Canadian mining, oil and gas sector is a huge player internationally, with over 8,000 projects in over 100 countries. Yet there are virtually no regulations in Canada to prevent companies from taking advantage of weak environmental and labour laws in other countries, or to hold them accountable for violations of human rights. United Church partner the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA) is calling on the government to open Canada for justice to those alleging harm by Canadian mining companies overseas. This includes establishing an out-of-courts mechanism—a human rights Ombudsperson for the Canadian extractive sector. For more information and suggestions/guidelines for taking action, visit <http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/hold-canadian-extractive-companies-accountable>

- **Do you have a story about adoption to share?**

The Theology of Adoption Working Group of the United Church of Canada is seeking stories about adoption and forming families of choice. If you have been affected by adoption as an adoptee, parent, grandparent, family member, and/or in some other way, we invite you to tell your story. Responses will be received until **July 15, 2016**. Stories may be positive, negative, or mixed. Contributions can be spoken or written, in video, photograph, piece of art or music, and/or other forms of expression. These stories will inform the work of expressing a theology of adoption for the United Church. For more information visit <http://www.united-church.ca/news/inviting-your-stories-about-adoption>

COMMITTEE AND GROUP NEWS

Caroline Harcourt Women Take Action on “Sharing” Theme

by Ruth Tatham

The May meeting of the Caroline Harcourt Women’s Fellowship centred on “Sharing”. About 29 members were treated to an excellent talk by Bob Rutter, a local retired journalist who, after eight years on hemodialysis while waiting for a kidney transplant, received the surgery very successfully in September 2015. Today, he serves as the coordinator of the “Gift of Life” program for all the Lions Clubs in southwestern Ontario.

Mr. Rutter emphasized the huge need for more organ donors and told of the extensive usefulness of the gift of human organs and tissues in saving lives. We were amazed to learn that in one form or another the organization’s contacts include a donor aged 101 and also a recipient aged 93!!

The written permission for donation of human body parts in Ontario must be on file before death in order so that rapid medical action to use the tissue gift can happen. It is not enough to depend only upon consent on a card or a licence directive in one’s wallet or purse because of frequent delays or misplacements of such possessions. A central agency has a complete file of potential donors on file 24/7.



A bee and an ant sharing nectar

Any group who would like to hear Mr. Rutter speaker can contact him at 519-760-4069. Further information about the Lions Club organ donor program to save more lives in Ontario can register or check your status by visiting the following: www.beadonor.ca/a15lions (our area is Lions District A-15).

The theme of “sharing” was acted upon further during the meeting by the group’s decision to forward a donation immediately to the funding in support of Fort McMurray, Alberta, for relief after the devastating wildfire there.

The June 13 Caroline Harcourt group’s meeting will be a spring social in the Friendship Room of the Church. Please bring your own “brown bag” lunch then enjoy a gourmet dessert and program. All women welcome...we say grace at noon.

Photo by Bob Peterson from North Palm Beach, Florida, Planet Earth! [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons



Wrap Yourself in our Prayers

From the Prayer Shawl Circle

Please remember that Prayer Shawls are available year round - to be given to friends or family who you feel need your support and prayers.

Shawls may also be given in celebration - a special birthday or event in one's life. Anne Purkis in the church office or any member of the Prayer Shawl Circle will be glad to help. Contact Anne at office@harcourtuc.ca

Gardenerstake your places

by Ben Fear, Property Committee



May 7 was the was a busy day at Harcourt as work parties repaired The effects of the winter damage to the gardens and we thank all those who turned out to enjoy the spring sunshine. Unfortunately because of a failed experiment in the test of the density of the garden's topsoil,

one of the more important operations scheduled for the morning break-time did not take place. This was the consultation with the members and friends of Harcourt who annually maintain portions of our garden.

Since weather -wise we are soon into summer **we are asking the gardeners who have been responsible for allotted portions of the gardens if they will volunteer their services for yet another year for the same areas and of course at the same wages and under the same onerous restrictions.** If you are unable to garden with us this summer please advise us. OFFICE 519-824 4177 or Dave Hume 519 837 3895 or Ben Fear 519 767 9060.

Mindstretch at Work

by Peter Jackson

Over the past few weeks, Mindstretch has addressed questions such as:

- What if we saw the earth as part of the body of God, not as separate from God (who dwells elsewhere), but as the visible reality of the invisible God? (from theologian Sallie McFague)
- Some churches have a policy of fossil-fuel divestment. Is this a good idea or is there a better way to deal with climate change?
- In what ways have the deaths of parents or other close family members affected your understanding of the meaning of life and your relationship with God?

These questions emerge from our current source book Grounded by Diane Butler Bass. We expect to complete our conversations based on this book on June 23, and will then take a break for the summer.

On September 15, we will reconvene to begin addressing questions emerging from The Way Of The Wind: The Path and Practice of Evolutionary Christian Mysticism, by Bruce Sanguin, who had a 28-year career serving as an ordained minister in the United Church. “I am persuaded that the evolutionary process itself is a great tide of love and that each of us finds fulfillment as we allow ourselves to be swept up in its current,” he writes. “In so doing, we consciously participate in the perfection or the completion of Love. For me, Jesus’ core mission was to open our species up to a transformation of Love.”

Sanguin’s book promises to be provocative. Please consider reading it over the summer and coming to **Mindstretch on September 15, 8:45 AM in the chapel**. You will be welcomed.

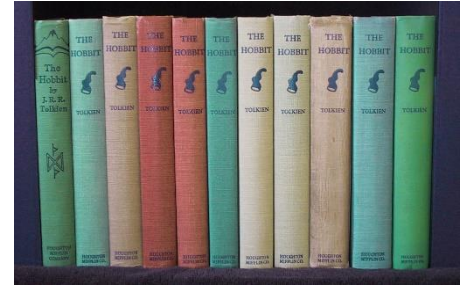


Summer: Time for Barefoot Reading! See the Harcourt Library for ideas.

by Mary-Lou Funston

I have tried to choose a wide range of possibilities for your reading pleasure this summer. Some is serious (but not too much!), most is lighter reading. I hope you will come into the Library and explore the shelves for yourself.

I will place all the recommended books on the stands on the top and bottom shelves rather than returning them to their places.



LIGHT READING FOR LAWN CHAIR OR BEACH

- * *Tea Time for the Traditionally Built* by Alexander McCall Smith

Another addition to the delightful series featuring Precious Ramotswe of Botswana. If you have not yet met Mma Ramotswe, I would highly recommend the whole series. They are good for the soul.

- * *The Chronicles of NOAH and her sisters* by Miriam Therese Winter

If Genesis and Exodus had been written by a woman, what would they be like?

- * *Letters from the Country* by Marsha Boulton

“What happens when a city woman takes up rural routes and becomes a shepherd?” Ms Boulton’s delightfully humorous account of her experiences of doing just that on a farm near Harriston.

SLIGHTLY MORE SERIOUS READING

- * *Jungle Pilot* by Russell T. Hitt

The story of martyr Nate Saint who, with 4 other missionaries, was killed in Ecuador.

- * *hugs for friends* by LeAnn Weiss

DEFINITELY MORE SERIOUS

- * *The Sacred Balance Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* by David Suzuki

As a Christian and a conservationist I found this book most helpful in understanding the balance between our dependency on Nature's gifts of earth, air, water, and fire and our deep need for love, for community and for spirituality.

- * *Qur'an in Conversation* by Michael Birkel

A collection of interviews with North American Muslim individuals as the speak about the Qur'an.

FOR THE TEENS AND TWEENS (if you can separate them from their phones)

- * *A Wind in the Door* by Madeleine L'Engle

The Murry kids' adventure into galactic space and then into a mitochondrion.

- * *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*

How one teen is rescued from a truly terrible summer camp and finds herself with an most unexpected mission.

AND FOR THE YOUNGER SET

- * *Animal Kingdom*

An Interactive exploration of many of earth's animal species.

- * *Me and Mr. Mah*

How Mr. Mah helps his young neighbour deal with the divorce of his parents through gardening and stories.

- * *Loon Summer*

How the loon family helps a girl and her dad deal with divorce.

- * *And God Created Squash*

The story of creation

- * *Grandad's Prayers of the Earth*

How the whole earth prays in everything it is.

Food for the Journey

The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola

by Andre Auger for the Spiritual Life Committee

Starting in September 2016 the Spiritual Life Committee will again be offering the **Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life**. This is a forty-week spiritual discipline which enables participants to deepen their relationship with Jesus and to discern where they are being called to serve.

The process is simple: each participant spends a minimum of half an hour a day praying with material provided by a spiritual director and then meets with their spiritual director once a week to review what is happening in his/her prayer life. There will also be occasional group get-togethers for community-building, support, learning and sharing.

The material used was originally developed by Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century, and has been adapted for an ecumenical context in our time by Harcourt's Lorraine Dykman and the Rev. David Howells. The Covenanted Spiritual Companions at Harcourt, as well as other trained spiritual directors from the Guelph community will lead the process and serve as spiritual directors. There is also an opportunity, for those who would prefer, to pray with material from a more evolutionary perspective based on the work of Teilhard de Chardin.

The program will run from September to roughly Easter 2017. To benefit from this intensive program you need to be comfortable with a regular spiritual discipline. It is helpful to have had experience with spiritual direction. The benefits of this spiritual discipline are many: a deeper relationship with God, a renewed sense of purpose, greater knowledge of scripture and many other blessings emerge from engaging in the Ignatian Exercises.

Not sure you can handle the discipline and the routine? Come and find out! Before the Exercises proper, we offer a series of preparatory weeks over the summer – known as the “Disposition Days” - during which you can try out the discipline and experience God's deep love for you. At the end of these “Days,” if you discern that this is not for you, you will at least have had a taste of an intentional spiritual practice. If you decide to continue, the Exercises proper would begin in mid-September.

Participation will be limited. If you are interested and would like further information, please speak to either Marion or Andre Auger. If you wish to apply for participation, please speak with Marion Auger (at 519-824-6329). We will accept applications until June 30. Application forms will be available from the Office. There is no fee for this, but participants are expected to offer an honorarium according to their ability to pay. Please speak to Marion about this.



COMMUNITY NEWS

- ✓ **Don't forget...June 5, 10:30:** A Celebratory Service with Communion, a closing ritual and farewell to Wendy, followed by a reception (with cake!) in the Gym.

The Struggle of Dreaming New Dreams

An excerpt from Wendy Brown's Easter Sermon

There is value in extending the boundaries of our hearts, minds and experiences, so that we might find our way to places we may never have considered going and into building relationships that, at first glance, we may not have thought possible. Through a simple story we are invited to consider how we encounter and identify God. And, in that, we cannot help consider how we identify ourselves and others.

The question of identity is one that lies at the heart of the reading from the Book of Acts that is before us today. We know that Luke, whose narrative this is, was writing sometime between the years 70 and 100 AD. He was writing in a period when the early Church was facing some of its greatest crises of identity.

The new emerging religious community that came to be called *Christianity* was struggling to make sense of just who and what it was and would be, particularly in relationship to Judaism. Would it remain just another sect within Judaism, so that the followers of Jesus would always and only be Jews...by birth and ancestry, by circumcision and the keeping of purity laws, among them those associated with food?

Such issues weren't problematic at first. Jesus was Jewish. His first followers were, too. But later more and more non-Jews, people like Cornelius, people who lived under the Jewish label of Gentiles, began to be drawn to the story and way of Jesus. They wanted to be baptised, as Cornelius and his household had been by Peter, and to be counted among the membership of the church communities that were rising up around the Mediterranean, primarily through the efforts of Paul.

So the question of identity kept rising up, too.

For a person to become a follower of Jesus, must he or she first adopt the identifying markers of Judaism? And if Gentiles were to come into the church without these rituals and rites of passages, has the Jesus community stopped being Jewish? Would it now have to transform into something new?

We could spend from now until next Sunday exploring all the ins and outs of all this. For today it is enough to know that this question of identity is inseparable from the story that the church would tell about Peter, and his very strange dream and his report to a head office gathering of the other apostles and disciples in Jerusalem.

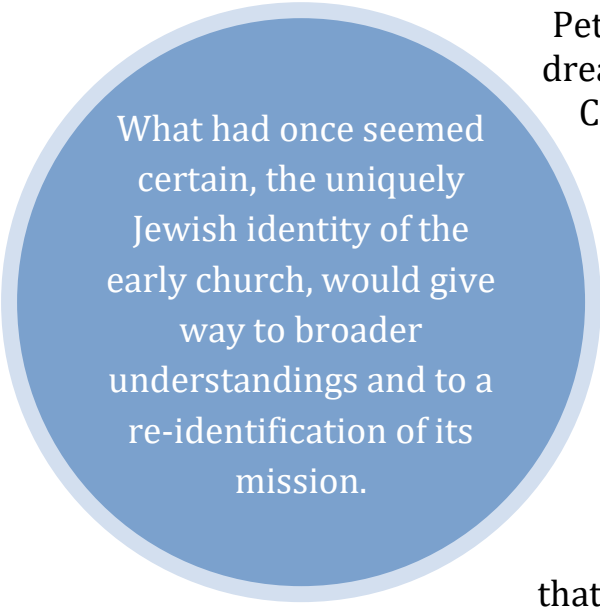
When Peter finds himself faced with a four-cornered sheet full of food that is tref, not kosher, unfit to be eaten or used according to Judaism's religious laws, he is facing a question of identity. Who is he? With whom will he eat? And whom shall he say is welcome at the table Jesus sets?

When he reflects on the fact that he had entered Cornelius's house, a Gentile's house, and shared a meal there – an act that definitely non-kosher!- and on the fact that he had actually baptised Cornelius and his household, what Peter is facing is a question of identity:

Who are we?

How wide is the community of God's people?

What boundaries need broadening so that all can find their place in it?



What had once seemed certain, the uniquely Jewish identity of the early church, would give way to broader understandings and to a re-identification of its mission.

Peter found himself facing a *tipping point moment*. His dream, and his story, reflects a tipping point moment in the Christian story. What had once seemed certain, the uniquely Jewish identity of the early church, would give way to broader understandings and to a re-identification of its mission. While maintaining the essence of its Jewish identity, a vision was found and a way was opened to encounter and include, to build relationships with and to be transformed by those who would never be, and never have to be, just like Peter.

Passing along the essence and ethics of the Jewish faith that found life in the essence and ethics of Jesus would prove to be enough. If it weren't for that, we probably wouldn't be here this morning. Most of us are most likely to be descendants of the Gentile world.

Like the early church we have our own identity work to do. Like Peter we have to ask hard questions about our traditions, our customs, the things we hold dear and that are core to our expression of faith, especially those that may be holding us back from the transformative, subversive work of the gospel. They are, at heart, questions of who's in and who's out. Questions about our willingness to go where we have not been before. And to be what we have not been before. The really hard questions come when we begin

asking whether some of the things that have given this congregation its identity in the past may actually have become barriers to our moving forward and outward. Where are, what are, the tipping point places for you – and for us?

Engaging such questions will be part of our Harcourt 20/20 visioning work. There will be times when that means listening closely to one another. There will be times when that will mean listening for the voices beyond our doors.

In all of this, may there be a deep listening for the answers to this question, “Where and in whom is God waiting to be found and what is God doing in the world, right here and right now?”

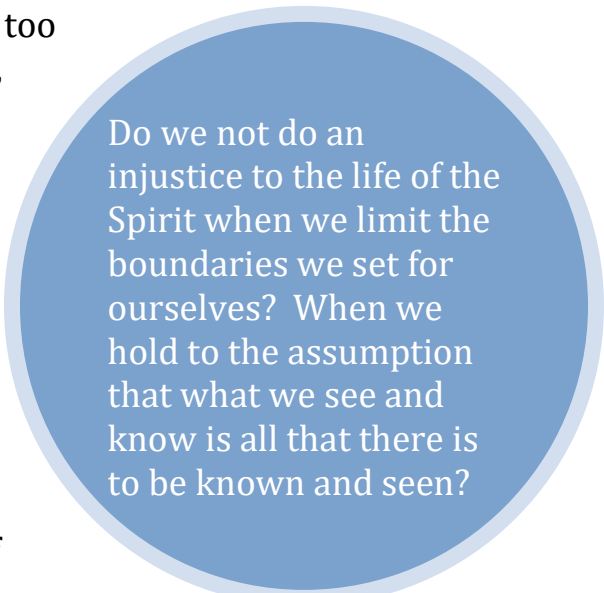
It’s easy to miss the movement of the Spirit when we wait for everything to fit into what we have identified as being important *for us*, when we wait for something to happen in our little corner of life, when the most important and transformational things may be happening over in a city like Joppa, over at Cornelius’ house.

One of my assignments when I was doing my theological studies was to dream my dream church. To describe my ideal Christian community, the kind of place in which I’d like to minister and to which I’d like to belong.

I wrote a rather long paper, waxing eloquently and with too many words, about a church with a mission of open hearts, open minds, open arms, open doors. I described a community where people of all gender identities and sexual orientations were welcome. Where justice was preached and outreach practiced. I painted a picture of a group of people for whom inclusive language was the norm and a place where all ages participated in what was going on. *I* went on and on. It was a fun essay to write. And it earned me an A!

When I got the paper back, I turned from my mark to my professor’s attached sheets of comments. At the end of her very generous words, she wrote this:

“What a wonderful church you have imagined. It sounds like a remarkably hospitable, inclusive and concerned-for-the-world kind of place. But was there any racial diversity? Were people who lived on the margins of life active there? Was it a community who expected people to come and be like them or was it wanting to grow and adapt with each new outward encounter waiting and working to be transformed?”



Do we not do an injustice to the life of the Spirit when we limit the boundaries we set for ourselves? When we hold to the assumption that what we see and know is all that there is to be known and seen?

When we describe the church, when we are the church, as both the story of Peter and my professor remind us, we can't just describe and be the people who are already there. Do we not do an injustice to the life of the Spirit when we limit the boundaries we set for ourselves? When we hold to the assumption that what we see and know is all that there is to be known and seen?

Whenever we are feeling certain who the church is and just who it is for, it's probably time to dream some new dreams. If we're lucky, a four-corned sheet will waft down from the sky and lead us there.

Amen.

Wassup at Saturday Night Supper?

by Jill Gill

Our next opportunity to host the SNS will be **June 11**. This follows very soon after our previous date, but I was asked to switch evenings with another church. As usual we will require 12 volunteers to prepare and serve dinner and many folks to provide food. We will serve pasta casserole (recipe provided on the Harcourt website), Caesar salad, cheese, pickles, assorted fruit pies, vanilla ice cream, juice, milk and coffee.

There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Greeting Place where you can indicate where you'd like to help. Alternately, you can volunteer online via Sign Up Genius. Go to the Harcourt website, click on "Connect with Community" and scroll down to "Saturday Night Suppers" and then "Sign Up Online".

Volunteers and food should be at Royal City Church, 50 Quebec Street (backdoor entrance), by 5 p.m. Volunteers will be need until approximately 8 p.m.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of an important aspect of Harcourt's outreach to vulnerable folks in our community. For further details contact Jill Gill at peter.gill@sympatico.ca

P.S. Since there won't be another Harcourt Herald until September, please mark September 3 in your calendar as Harcourt's next date to host Saturday Night Supper. (You're correct – Labour Day Weekend). I'll be reminding you once again in July!

It's Never Too Early to Think of Christmas – Even In The Spring!

by Janet Webster

LOOKING AHEAD! It seems strange to be thinking about Advent just as we are all preparing to enjoy summer, but....Please mark **November 26 2016** on your calendars.

Yes, *All Things Christmas* at Harcourt is returning. This is a wonderful way to socialize, release your inner creative spirit, welcome the larger community AND raise significant funds. Consider setting aside time on November 24, 25 for set-up of the space and creating beautiful arrangements (with help if necessary) and/or Saturday November 26th to work in the kitchen, or assist customers etc. etc.

If seasonal decorations either indoor, outdoor or as gifts are in your plans, please consider ordering them from the team. As you enjoy the sunshine you may want to set aside some preserves for the Bake Table! Or... if you come across containers suitable for arrangements, or garden material that will dry well for use in those arrangements, please think of the sale. For more information, please contact Ann Middleton, Lisa McTaggart, Jean Julian, Janet Webster or the Harcourt office. Thanks, from the "All Things Christmas" Crew!

Harcourt Communal Garden

by Jill Gill

Harcourt's hugely successfully communal vegetable garden began its sixth growing season with a work 'party' along with volunteers from the Guelph Community Orchard Project and the Harcourt Property Committee. We did a spring clean-up, weeded the vegetable and herb beds and planted an early crop of greens. In the previous five years, we have harvested 3333.6 lbs of fresh, organic vegetables, herbs and fruit - all donated to the food pantry at Chalmers Community Services Centre (CCSC).

At our planning meeting in early April we had several folks volunteer for maintenance and harvesting in the communal garden (approx. 2-3 hours, once or



twice per month from June-October); however, we would like to encourage more participants. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please contact Jill Gill at peter.gill@sympatico.ca for more details.

Save the Date: The Harcourt Communal Garden will be taking part in **Transition Guelph's Urban Food Working Group's 'Urban Farm Tour' again this year on Saturday, July 16th from 1-4 p.m.** We will have a work 'party' and a workshop on 'Extending the Growing Season' led by a Master Gardener, David Fields from 2-3 p.m. Everyone welcome.

An Invitation to a Church Spring Picnic!

by Merrill Pierce

The Manna community would like to invite the whole congregation to a picnic on the church side garden **following the 10:00 service on June 26th.** Please bring a lawn chair and enough lunch for yourself or your family. Drinks and treats will be provided. We look forward to enjoying a meal together before we all scatter during the summer months.

As well, we want to invite you to two other picnics during the summer. **We will meet in Royal City Park at 11:15 on Sunday, July 17th and August 21st.** Please bring your lawn chairs and your own lunch. It will be a great opportunity to stay connected over the summer months, not to mention the chance to walk across the street for an ice-cream cone at the Boathouse! Mark the dates on your calendars.

Checkout the Changes at Chalmers (try to say that fast!)

by Peter Gill

Probably most of you know by now that Chalmers is acquiring space in the old Acker's furniture store - #42 Carden Street. Chalmers' entrance to the building by the way will be off Macdonell Street so we are applying for a numbered address in Macdonnell.

Possession of the building took place on 15th April and demolition work has been underway for a couple of weeks. There is a lot of work to do – installing a new elevator, new heating/air conditioning, new electrical systems, accessible washrooms and more.

Chalmers is paying \$525,000 into the total cost of the building. Legacy monies allowed us to pay \$200,000 upfront and the balance of the funds will be raised via a capital

campaign. We have accepted a bridging loan of \$325,000 from the General Council of the United Church so we can meet scheduled renovation payments between June and the end of the year.

The lead investor in this exciting project is 10 Carden (10C), a not-for-profit social enterprise which primarily offers rental space to a variety of organizations in Guelph, including the Guelph Arts Council, the University of Guelph, Immigrant Services and the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition. As owners of the building, Chalmers and 10C have formed a new corporation called 42 Carden Shared Services.

We at Chalmers feel exceptionally fortunate that we are able to enter into an agreement with 10C, an organization committed to enhancing the cultural and social life of the city. We believe that the new space will offer Chalmers increased visibility in the community and the opportunity to strengthen and expand our programmes.

Over the next few weeks, Chalmers will be formulating its strategy before launching the capital campaign. We thank the people of Harcourt for their support as we move forward.





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Goodbye / Hello

by Jim Ball

I am not sure why I live with a sense of relative stability. I do not know why I rest in the feeling that things more or less stay the same, that there is a consistency and predictability to life and its rhythms, and a dependability about the community that accompanies me and others through time. Whether large or small, I imagine that some form of these supports will always be there. And that I will always be connected to them. Maybe this sense of stability is a defence mechanism. Maybe this conviction of dependable sameness is a thing that protects me from all of the change that does come, and from all of the loss that is present in the fictions I tell myself about things seldom changing.

As I enter my ninth year at Harcourt, I tell myself that I have been part of the same staff team for the better part of a decade. From the outside, many people think that is so. But I also know another truth. It is a truth about change. For in my time here, Alison and Darko and I have said goodbye to Monica, Ilona, Cindy, Joanne, Kyla, Lori, Jerry, Dylan and now, Wendy. Every staff change created a new staff team. The dynamics of each circle were unique. Each circle had its own "feel." Each called for fresh learning and sharing among us, and each required new forms and percentages of give and take.

We told ourselves that it was the same Harcourt we were serving. But that too was only part of the truth. We have presided over more than eighty funerals in that time. We have said goodbye to just as many friends and acquaintances who have moved away. Still others, who were once near the centre of Harcourt's life, have moved to the margins. They remain a loved and vital part of us, though are now less visible. In the same period, new people have joined us and have found their way into the rhythm of our life.

The names and faces of Council and committee members have also changed over the years. The responsibilities haven't changed much. But each circle has been different in feel and skill set. Each one has demonstrated a similar dedication to our community and ministry. But each has done so in their own way. The choir too is always changing. We speak of the "Harcourt Choir" as though it is a single entity. But it is a different choir every Sunday. The mix of choristers within it is constantly changing week by week. That there up is consistent excellence from this ever changing group is a testament to Alison's leadership and to each member's dedication to learn and serve and share.

Goodbyes are hard. They usually involve loss and grief and not a little change. I will very much miss my colleague Wendy. In her time here she strengthened me, the staff team and the whole congregation. Her gifts and skills and personality seasoned our life and the community beyond our walls. We will be different without her. No amount of talk about sameness will keep us from the feelings that will come because of her retirement and moving. But then the gift of a real goodbye - one that involves taking the time to acknowledge what was present and valued and what is now gone and missed - is the space it opens in us for a real hello. We welcome soon into our community and staff team the gifts and skills and energies of Miriam Flynn, who comes to us with much affirmation and hope. In personality, she will be different. We will all experience shift in this change, even as other pieces of our life will continue to feel similar to what we have long known. I am confident that Miriam will receive a warm and honest welcome from us. I say this because I know that we will have done our work. We will have looked the truth of change in the face. We will have done what is always difficult, which is to grieve what we are missing. And because we will have done these things, our hearts will be ready and open again to the gift of the new. Blessings!



The Gift

Winning Entry of the First Environmental Poetry Contest
The Guelph Tribune
August, 1990
Used with permission

I saw him lift the wrapper from the lawn
And look into the wind from where it came
Then with a sigh that heaved his twelve year chest
He pocketed the wrapper in his vest

I saw him run his fingers through the stream
While letting rushing water ripple through
Then stare in puzzlement upon his hand
All coated with greasy, dirty band

I watched him gathering snowflakes in a cloth
To study how their crystal beauty formed
Then in his shock he brought them quickly back
To show me melting snowflakes turning black

In innocence he doesn't understand
Why those who do, destroy the gift we have
How anyone could simply turn their head
And pass the world to him dried up and dead

And so he tries to make me tell him why
An answer I myself will never know
But something I can help him understand
To ease his mind as he becomes a man

Together we write letters of concern
We look at ways to save and clean and grow
And he begins to see just what it takes
The difference that one child's effort makes

I saw him planting pine trees in the woods
With tender care he patted down the soil
And as the wind blew, pine scent filled the air
A gift from nature to a boy who cared.

Kids Adventure Day Camp

Make our world a better place
Ready Set GO!



Cost for the week: \$100/week Grades 2-7 9am - 4pm



This environment based day camp is an action-packed week for children and young teens. Trained staff and volunteers will lead programming inspired by The GO Project along with traditional camp

experiences like games, crafts, delicious food, singing, and lots of fun! Children's Adventure Campers will do their part to make our world a better place. Ecological clean-ups, team-building activities, growing and

sharing food, and other environmental projects and activities will spark their imaginations and give campers the confidence to change the world one small step at a time.

**Summer
2016**

HARCOURT MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH

JULY 25-29, 2016

Confidential Financial Assistance Available. Contact: mpierce@sympatico.ca

For more information or to register visit www.thegoproject.ca



MINUTES FOR MISSION

Heart Gardens

On Sunday, May 26, 2015, congregations all over Canada created Heart Gardens to honour the memory of Aboriginal children who died in the residential schools over the 120 years the schools existed. Over 2,000 Heart Gardens were created.

Faith United Church in Kingston, Ontario, was one of those congregations. Faith United is entering its 25th year. It began its ministry through a Mission & Service-funded mission support grant. The congregation gathers in the small theatre of La Salle Secondary School every Sunday morning and was able to plant their garden on the school grounds.

The hearts were made over two Sundays and symbolized Faith United's deepest hope and prayer that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will allow truths to be spoken, and healing and a new relationship to begin between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this land.

The congregation sent one heart made by their youngest member to Ottawa to be part of the Heart Garden planted on the lawn of Rideau Hall, the Governor General's residence.

"The heart has an image of an alien because the artist said we should be nice to everyone, including aliens!" says the Rev. Nan Hudson.

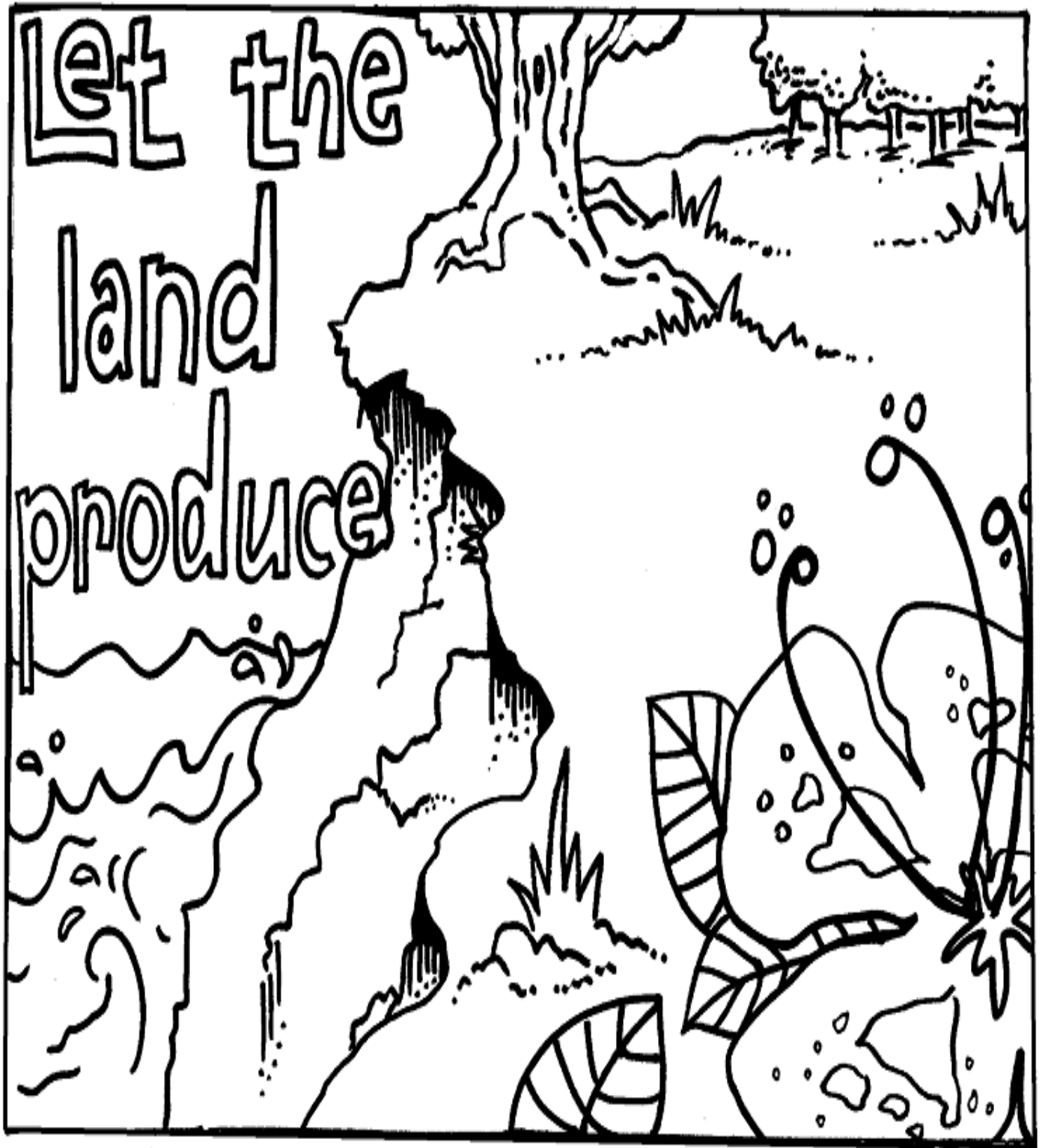
We are thankful for our gifts for Mission & Service that support congregations in transition or in remote locations so faith can be shared and grown!

Please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith.

Loving God, we are called to be your colours in the world, to walk with each other, to share in love through our gifts for Mission & Service. Guide us to shine brightly in the world. Amen



Please mark the date in your calendar
for the bi-annual Harcourt Congregation Retreat
September 16 to 18, 2016
at Loyola House.



Mandy Groce '10

<http://ministry-to-children.com>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Weddings:

Julie Henshaw and Philip Lawrence on May 7, 2016

Other Announcements:

- Dear Five Oaks Friends. It is with great sadness, the Board of Five Oaks share with you the announcement that **Five Oaks will cease operations effective November 15th 2016**. Although we know it is difficult to celebrate during times of sadness, we invite all that hold Five Oaks near and dear to their hearts to do just that. Celebrate all that you have received from your time here, rejoice in the friendships and spiritual family you have formed through this incredible ministry. Give thanks to Bev Oaten for founding such a sacred place and most of all, honour Five Oaks in all its glory. We hope you will join us to share stories, feelings and memories of one of the Five Oaks Community Gathering Events being planned for the near future.
- **Rainbow Chorus Concert & Auction.** June 4, 2016 - Starts: 7:30 PM at Harcourt.

Christ appearing to Mary as a gardener





Riddle

Q: What garden flower is on everyone's face?

A: Tulips

Behind the Scenes

Echoes of Eden: Gardening as a Spiritual Discipline

by Brandon Rhodes

from Restoring Eden, Christians for Environmental Stewardship

<http://restoringeden.org/connect/CreationVoice/EchoesofEden/view>

Used with permission

“...or speak to the earth, and it will teach you.” -- Job 12:8

Gardening in my experience has been a deeply spiritual practice. It is a way of engaging God’s creation in a personal and intimate way that I have found to be first of all frustrating, then humbling, next centering, now rewarding, and finally (if I succeed) delicious. All throughout, I experience gardening as an other-minded discipline.

It is frustrating in the first place because when I first begin a garden I realize that I have little idea of where to begin. The networks of life and matter and sunshine and water that produce plants are something that even in my third year of gardening are still ungraspable. I observe that the soil has a much longer history that I do and, although usually just “dirt”, is in truth just as complicated as the broccoli and tomatoes and lettuce I hope it will produce. Like knowing how to best love another human, I am frustrated at once that I do not have all the answers for what this soil needs.

Physically starting a new garden only compounds the frustration, as it requires considerable labor. As if it weren’t enough that I feel nearly humiliated before the land’s complexity, I now must clumsily go about hoping that many hours spent bent over a shovel, hoe, and rake will actually satisfy this thing. Callused hands and an aching back often seem like the only products of my first days in gardening. Like loving a child or sibling through a rebellious state, I have to trust that all this hard work will in the end bear fruit, because at the start the garden only looks like couple rows of upturned soil! At this early stage I find it silly that such work – tending and keeping a garden – was humanity’s first vocation, way back in Eden.

As I set to the more delicate work of fertilizing, mulching, and seeding the soil, my hesitant frustration gives way to humility. I do my best to apply my nascent knowledge of what plants and soil need to thrive, knowing that God made the business of both far grander than I used to give it credit. Leaning over the rows and gingerly dropping tiny lettuce seeds every couple inches and gently patting a bit of living earth over each, I gasp at how fragile God’s creation really is. If I put even a quarter-inch too much soil over these

seeds, they may never sprout. And if they do not receive my daily affection in the form of watering, especially in these early days, they will quickly perish. It is astonishing that every meal I have ever enjoyed came from such delicate, miraculous, and yet utterly plain circumstances as this. Then again, "From dust we came..."; indeed, I am only alive now because I have eaten so many things which came out of dirt.[1]

As the plants grow, I know that my job was to continue in my care and tending to the soil itself. It is, of course, what keeps the plants thriving. And those plants, in the end, are what permit me to live: they feed and nourish me. Thus in order to receive life and service from the soil, I must immediately humble myself and serve *it*. How oddly beatific.

Gardening shows me that my life is inextricably bound to the life of the land. If I abuse the land in my garden, I am also abusing myself.

My times in the garden also bring some spiritual centering to every day. During the warmer months I am outside by 7:30 every morning to water and inspect the plots. I find it to be a delightful quiet time that allows me to pray without succumbing to the wanderings that my mind is so prone to otherwise. I immediately am re-enveloped in humility before God as Creator as I dutifully inspect the health of the soil, the strength and color of my tomato plants, and do my best to let them tell me what they need. I see that every plant and every plot is different, and each needs love in different ways. If, in the Christian vernacular, people have "love languages," then my times with the plants and God show me that they have love languages, too.

As my squash plants' blooms re-open at the return of the morning sun, so also my heart merrily and reverently greets my Lord in heaven with prayer and praise. I am sometimes contentedly quiet before Him as I go about my verdant chores, and at other times I am grinning boyishly about how good a job God did in making these silly little plants. At other times I am praying in the more regular sense. Sometimes I even spend time reading my Bible in the middle of my potato patch! I wonder if those old claims that plants which are prayed near grow better, is actually true.

I also get in the habit of checking on the plants first thing after returning home. Does anyone need water? Have the beans' young tendrils grasped the trellis yet? My mind is flooded with sweet concern. Affection for these fragile lives and faith that the season will produce its fruits keep me busy in these ways, and give me tastes of what it may be like as a father some day. I consider often if this steady care isn't too far from how the Lord looks after and cares for us.

These daily disciplines, I find, help orient me toward my Creator and reminds me of my status as His creature. I am beginning to understand why God gave us gardening as our first vocation.

It didn't take long before I found this hobby to be immensely rewarding. Seeing these wee plants go from seed to sprout and into ripe maturity warms my heart and much improves the aesthetics of my backyard. I gaze at the varied and colorful rows with a similar quiet glee that my artist friends take in their work.

I am also rewarded with unexpected encounters with other critters in my garden. Various bird chirp about me in the mornings and evenings, while ants and slugs occasion my strawberry patch. When I'm not looking, raccoons steal my radishes and deer graze on my lettuce. Another time, I find a cat enjoying the warmth provided beneath my cloches.

Tending the garden also becomes a corporate discipline. Because the garden is adjacent to several Christian community houses, many of our neighbors will see me in our garden and come help weed or inspect. The crops were chosen according to what they all would enjoy, so as harvest time dawns, the garden becomes an excuse for me to greet them with an armful of carrots, lettuce, or tomatoes. Serving the food, too, becomes an occasion to invite friends over. And so, the fruits of the garden become a catalyst for bringing our fellowship closer to one another, to God, and to God's creation.

Finally, of course, my garden is delicious. I am reminded that all good things come from God as I revel in the impeccable flavors which only vegetables *this* fresh can provide. The freshness and quality of homegrown produce is particularly evident in the basil, radishes, potatoes, broccoli, and tomatoes. *Thank you, God, that you made food so good, and that you provided for this garden and this land. Thank you for letting me help you in making these tasty foods. You did good, God. No wonder this was our first job!*

This entire discipline of cultivating life in little places has kept me constantly other-minded. It has left no room for self-absorption, save the ongoing tempo of humility that I encountered from the start. From being sensitive to the needs of the soil's life, to letting others direct what crops are grown, to beholding that these plants point to the Lord, to joining them in praising God: the gardener's attention is rarely inward.

I see in the end that this is a spiritual discipline whose other-centeredness is not merely about inner peace and hearing from God and "warm fuzzies." It is a discipline of the faith that works in the world for good. By enjoying the literal fruits of my own labor, I am choosing a way of feeding myself and using land which stands in dazzling contrast to the putrid neglect and creation-destroying ways of modern industrial agriculture. And so I rest contented that our restoring this tiny bit of Eden both enriched my relationship with God *and* made His world a better place.

[1] Barbara Kingsolver, in the forward to *The Essential Agrarian Reader*, (University of Kentucky Press, 2004), xii.



Presents...

Out of the Closet



Songs and stories from the Rainbow Chorus closet

Sunday May 29th 2016, 2:00pm

Fundraising for Center Wellington Refugee Network

Faith Lutheran Church, 290 Belsyde Ave E, Fergus

Saturday June 4th 2016, 7:30pm

Concert & Silent Auction

Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave, Guelph

Advance Tickets - \$15.00

Available from chorus members or on-line at
www.rainbowchorus.ca and www.eventbrite.ca

At the Door:

Adult Tickets - \$20.00

Student/Senior - \$15.00

Child (6-12 years) - \$5.00

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Harcourt Calendar – June 2016

Updated May 19, 2016—www.harcourtuc.ca for most up-to-date information

Wednesday June 1

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]
6:30pm Guides [F]
6:45pm Spiritual Life Meeting [C]
7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Dress Rehearsal [S]
7:30pm Flute Choir [M]

Thursday June 2

8:45am Mindstretch [C]
9:30am Stroke Recovery Executive [F]
6:30pm Zumba [G]
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

Friday June 3

9:30am Collective Kitchen [K]
7:00pm Youth Group [off-site]

Saturday June 4

7:30pm Rainbow Chorus Concert [S] [G]

Sunday June 5

9:00am Worship [C]
10:30am Worship [S] A celebratory service with communion, ritual and farewell to Wendy.
10:30am “Manna” Service [F]
A reception, in the gym, following the 10:30 services.

Monday June 6

1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]
7:00pm Scouts [G]

Tuesday June 7

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings
1:30pm Spiritual Companions [C]
7:00pm Property Committee [C]

Wednesday June 8

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]
6:30pm Guides [F]
7:00pm Ministry & Personnel Committee [L]
7:30pm Flute Choir [M]

Thursday June 9

8:45am Mindstretch [C]
6:30pm Zumba [G]
7:30pm Finance Committee [O]
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

Friday June 10

3:30pm Wedding Rehearsal [S]

Saturday June 11

4:30pm Wedding [S]

Sunday June 12

9:00am Worship [C]
10:30am Worship [S]
10:30am “Manna” Service [G/F]

Monday June 13

11:45am Caroline Harcourt Women’s Fellowship [F]
7:00pm Creative Intentions [C]
7:00pm Scouts [G]

Tuesday June 14

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings
7:00pm Worship Committee [C]

Wednesday June 15

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]
7:00pm Council Meeting [C]
7:30pm Flute Choir [M]

Thursday June 16

8:45am Mindstretch [C]
6:30pm Zumba [G]
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

Friday June 17

Youth Group Offsite

Saturday June 18

No events

Sunday June 19

9:00am Worship [C]
10:30am Worship [S]
10:30am “Manna” Service [F]

Monday June 20

1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]

7pm Women's Spirituality [C]

Tuesday June 21

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

11:30am Stroke Recovery Lunch [G]

Wednesday June 22

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

5:30pm Rainbow Chorus AGM [F][K]

7:30pm Flute Choir [M]

Thursday June 23

8:45am Mindstretch [C]

6:30pm Zumba [G]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

Friday June 24

No events

Saturday June 25

No events

Sunday June 26

10:00am Worship [S]

Monday June 27

1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]

6:00pm ARCH Men's Group [202]

Tuesday June 28

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

Wednesday June 29

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

7:30pm Flute Choir [M]

Thursday June 30

6:30pm Zumba [G]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

Friday July 1

Church/Office closed

**Monday July 4**

Church and Office open