

The Harcourt Herald

July, 2020

Coming Together During COVID-19

SPECIAL



ISSUE



Harcourt Memorial United Church

Guelph, Ontario

An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada

We are a people of God called together and sent forth by Christ to

Seek. Connect. Act

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

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

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

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

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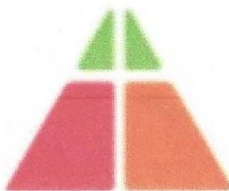
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The Ministers' Quill



The Third Question

by Rev. Jim Ball, Team Minister, Harcourt Memorial United Church



Photo by Vince Fleming. Source - Unsplash

I write in the wake of a recent and surprising American Supreme Court ruling that sided in favour of LGBTQ+ rights. I write while protests of concern for racial justice continue to grow and sweep the globe. And I write as the twin celebrations of Father's Day and National Indigenous People's Day approach. These are important and challenging times.

The Mishnah is the name the Jewish people give to the sixty-three-volume commentary on their written law, known as the Torah. The final volume of this commentary is entitled, "The Sayings of the Fathers." In the first chapter of this volume, we find the famous three questions offered by Rabbi Hillel. He says, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am 'I'? And if not now, when?" And there it is. The third question. In recent days, it has become the preeminent question in relation to indigenous, racial and LGBTQ+ justice, and indeed, to other important issues of fairness and inclusion too. If not now, when?

Johann Baptist Metz, in his book, "A Theology of the World" (1969: Herder & Herder), noted that ideas and attitudes gain real strength only when they are institutionalized. This is the good and the bad news. While we cannot legislate compassion, we can implement laws and programs to support vulnerable populations. And while we'd like to believe that we would never try to legislate hate, the *Indian Act* continues to exist, the legacy of residential school policy continues to haunt, and the legislation that made the sixties scoop possible,

though now struck down, continues to live on in the disproportionate removal of indigenous children from their homes. These laws and practices and the biases that gave rise to them, continue to have weight and force, negatively impacting our neighbours. Individually and together, we have work to do.

If I was one of those really ‘preachy’ preachers, I might say that it is time “we all came to Jesus” on the subject of prejudice and racism. I am not that kind of preacher and it is not my style to speak this way. But it is how I feel moved to speak today. It is time for us to come to Jesus on prejudice and racism. We may believe that Jesus is calling to us “softly and tenderly”. Or we may imagine him calling in a loud voice from the front of a parade of protest. Either way, he is calling. He is speaking to the piece in us that has been working on these issues intentionally for years. And he is speaking to that piece in us that has been avoiding the work for just as long.

A colleague in the United States has suggested that we have come to a point in our collective history where there is no Switzerland on the matter. There is no safe, neutral space to retreat to, where we might be shielded from accountability or responsibility. The moment for engagement is now and the options are binary. She writes:

“We have no middle ground here: we are either anti-racist, or we are racist. We are either actively working against racism, or we are complicit in upholding it. Being polite or “not political” is not an option. Either we believe we were all made in God's image, beloved by our Creator, and meant to see God in the face of one another (Genesis 1:27), or we believe whiteness is better than the rest. And if that's the case, I would just remind you that Jesus was a brown-skinned, Middle Eastern Jew” (Cameron Trimble).

I confess I grow uncomfortable when opinions balkanize, conflicts lose nuance and options become either/or. But I do not wish my disease with polarized analysis to become one more way I escape serious engagement with a matter I have both stake and power in. I am involved in black lives matter and indigenous rights and LGBTQ+ affirmation because I am part of society. I am involved in them because attending to the welfare of my neighbour is a central tenet of my faith. And I have power and responsibility in these matters because I have voice and vote. I, and we together, are in this, whether we imagine ourselves to be or not. So what is our next step? We need not let the magnitude of the issues overwhelm us. The necessary response is always the same: to do what we can and begin where we are. And not to stop until the people most affected by the injustice tell us that acceptance and equity and mutual respect have finally been achieved. That’s the whole of it.

In last month’s Harcourt Herald, I invited you to join me in August for a small but important study and conversation. The invitation was to recall your family stories of migration

and settlement, and to look at them in relation to the history of First Nations peoples in Canada. I hope this exploration together will proceed. But recent events have prompted today's piece of writing and my decision to include in this edition of the Herald a second, and very preliminary, set of questions to help us look more deeply at our lives.

This is personal work. The suggested questions represent only a starting place. I invite you to engage, wrestle, improve and add to them. Create your own process. Make notes. Keep a journal. Track your "aha" moments. The goal is greater clarity. For we cannot change what we do not see. So let this be a modest step toward seeing ourselves, and how we arrived at this place and time, more clearly. For if not now, when?

I wish you peace this summer. The kind of peace that is found in the eye of the storm and in the heart of meaningful struggle.

Note: The United Church of Christ in the United States has just released their curriculum, *"White Privilege: Let's talk. A Resource for Transformational Dialogue."*

A Very Brief Questionnaire

by Rev. Jim Ball, Harcourt United Church

Prejudice is personal. Racism is structural. This exercise focuses mostly on the personal.

1. What is your earliest memory of being aware that people of skin colour were different than your own existed in the world?
2. What did you hear while growing up about people who were racially/ethnically different than yourself?
3. What was your first friendship with a person of colour different than your own?
4. Who was the first person of colour different than your own to share a meal in your home?
5. What did you learn, or fail to learn, about prejudice and racism from your school/schoolbooks?
6. What percentage of the authors you presently read belong to racial/ethnic backgrounds different than your own? In what ways do you hear directly from people negatively impacted by racial inequity?
7. How racially diverse is your social circle? What factors have contributed to this?

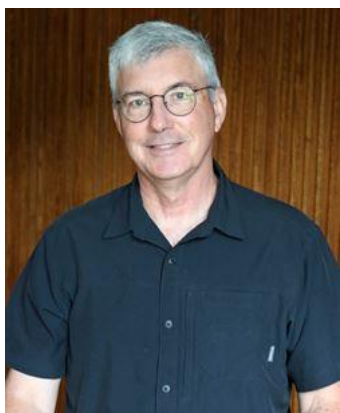
8. What percentage of your teachers, coaches and employers have been non-white or persons of colour different than your own? In what ways has this percentage shifted over time, and why?
9. In what ways have podcasts, lectures, workshops, retreats, books, questionnaires, courses or continuing education events concerning personal prejudice and racial inequality informed your understanding? What did you learn from these experiences about yourself? In what ways did they affect and change you?
10. How many letter writing-campaigns, public marches, protests, webinars, vigils, educational gatherings or public forums with politicians have you participated in for the purpose of expressing support for change to the policies and laws that impede racial justice? In what ways have these involvements impacted you?
11. What have you found helpful in your effort to transform attitudes and practices in yourself that were linked to racial prejudice? How are you continually challenging yourself to stay informed and engaged in the work?
12. What one new thing are you prepared to do this summer to advance the cause of racial justice? (Read a book, write a politician, participate in a webinar, have a conversation, ???)



Online Sunday Services & Virtual Groups

Harcourt Memorial United Church

Please note that due to the COVID- 19 outbreak, Sunday worship services in the church building are currently suspended and the Harcourt church building will remain closed until further notice. However, our office administrator continues to work from her home to respond to calls and e-mails during weekday office hours. Rev Jim Ball and Rev. Miriam Flynn can be contacted by e-mail or by leaving a message with the church office. Staff and lay volunteers continue to explore innovative ways to connect and extend care to our members and our neighbours. Please check the following links regularly for our: [CURRENT](#) weekly online worship service (recorded), for [PAST](#) services, and for [PRAYER](#) resources and updates about connecting with our community of faith. Our webpage is www.harcourtuc.ca. If you'd like to join some virtual groups please click [here](#) for our growing list of activities, and we encourage you to contact the Church office if you wish to participate. These are ways that we connect with others in a joyful, supportive and spiritual way.



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Join a Harcourt Church Virtual Group We'd love to see you! Check our [website](#) for a list of Harcourt groups that are meeting online. Contact office@harcourtuc.ca if you would like an invitation to a virtual group. If you are part of an open Harcourt group that is meeting virtually but is not yet on this list, please send the information to tech@harcourtuc.ca to be added.

Mindstretch: A Discussion Group with No Boundaries. Thursdays on at 8:45 am.

Progressive Christianity Conversation. Saturdays at 10 am.

Holy Listening Circle: Scripture, Prayer, Discussion. Sundays at 11 am.

Coffee and Chat. Every Sunday at noon.

[MANNA](#): All Ages Worship Experience. Every Sunday at 10:30 am.

[Harcourt Cares](#). Harcourt Facebook Group.

Dublin Street United Church

Please contact the church office to participate in Zoom activities at dublin@bellnet.ca

Online Services:

Can be viewed on Youtube at:

http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL4Vllp71qqWqnl10rCDPxA?view_as=subscriber

Other Activities:

Like everyone else, at Dublin we are trying to stay connected despite the distance between us. We have enjoyed playing bingo, enjoyed a scavenger hunt and have even shared some limericks and a poem or two at our Saturday Night ZOOM Socials. You will see the big smile on



Rev. Bruce's face in the picture. He had a clean sweep at the Bingo night winning all four rounds! On Sunday mornings we meet for a virtual Coffee Time to discuss our week and reflect on Rev. Bruce's sermon. Our Men's Coffee Club, Youth Group, Sunday School, Tru-Ki-Lo (United

Church Women), Choir, and Pastoral Care Team have also had virtual meetings. Behind the scenes newsletters and printed copies of our Rev. Bruce's sermons and "Let's Talk Tuesdays" e-blast have been sent to those without internet access. If you would like to join in one of our social events or receive our weekly e-blast, Please contact Anita Jarvis, Connection Coordinator at dublincvm@bellnet.ca or 519-821-0610 ext. 222

Three Willows United Church

During this challenging time, worship will be posted on the Church's YouTube channel. Please click [here](#) to connect. The church e-mails, mail, and voice mail will be monitored during the week. Please leave a message on the church voice mail if you are in need of anything. Rev. John & Rev. Mary continue to work from their homes and are available for pastoral care. The governing body is connecting with the congregation by e-mail updates and those who don't have e-mail will receive a phone call from the leadership.



Outdoor Labyrinth:

Our outdoor labyrinth is located on the north west side of the property. Walking a labyrinth can be calming and offer a level of focus that can be difficult to find in a busy life.

Other Activities:

Three Willows leadership continues to meet online with Zoom meetings. The Lent study group "*The Grace of Les Miserables*" also continues by Zoom. To book the labyrinth or to enquire about Zoom meetings, please contact the church office - 519-822-7690.



Rev. John Lawson, part-time minister at Three Willows United Church is retiring at the end of June. John has been a gift to the Guelph community with his strong outreach spirit. He has been an active part of Guelph United Ministry conversations and work over the past seven years. His wisdom and encouragement were vital. Blessings to you John as you enter the next chapter of your life.

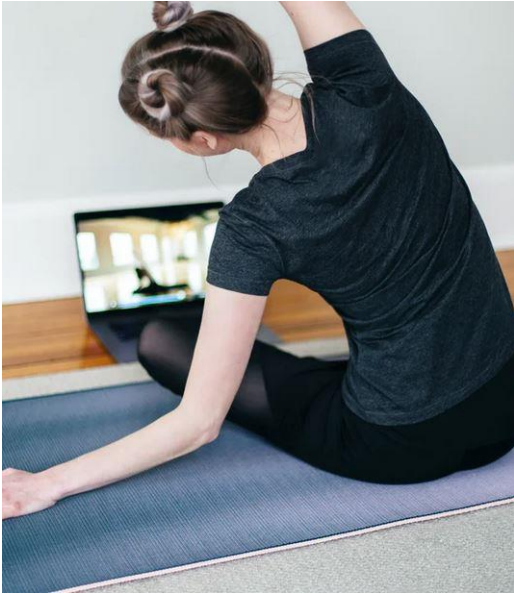
Trinity United Church

Sunday Church Service:

Recordings of Sunday Services are available to view online at

<https://www.guelphunited.org/trinity/sermons>

Other Activities:



Community Yoga for all ages will continue Sunday afternoons from 3:00 – 4:00 pm via Zoom with the first 15 minutes being a check-in and the class following from 3:15-4:00 pm. On your computer screen or tablet, you will be able to see our fun, knowledgeable, fantastic Yoga instructor! Pam will guide us through gentle Yoga moves. Every week is a little bit different, as we learn new techniques. Even if you are new to Yoga, it will not be intimidating. If you are interested in participating, email info@trinityunitedguelph.ca and we will send you an email with a link to join with us.

The Trinity **Therapeutic Touch** team is available to do distance TT and offer support to those who might benefit from it. Call the office, (519) 824-4800 x1, and leave a voicemail message. One of our TT practitioners will be in "touch".

Meditation at Trinity is continuing online. The first recording is available on the Trinity website now! You can access it from the banner on the home page of our website, or click on [this link](#). There will be a new meditation each week.

As this time of self-isolation continues, and we long to connect with friends and family, it seemed like a good time to create new ways of doing just that! **The Trinity Website has a new section, called “[For This Time](#).”** It has a drop-down menu, offering seven different opportunities to connect, share, reflect and laugh!

Ecumenical Campus Ministry (University of Guelph). Please contact <https://www.ecmguelph.org/contact> for more information about online programs and services or visit <https://www.ecmguelph.org/covid19> for a list of groups that are meeting online.



Cartoon by Roz Stephenson



Harcourt Council News

by Lorraine Holding, Council Chair

Summer's arrival and living through the global pandemic for over 100 days create another perspective of our experiences since mid-March.

We have learned techniques to stay safe and healthy. We have learned how to use new technologies to keep in touch and carry out our daily activities. We have experienced new ways to worship.

We have missed in-person connections. We have felt many emotions that grew from sadness, frustration, fear, isolation, happiness and celebration. We have remained an active community of faith, continuing to plan and make decisions based on the best available information. Council's two meetings in June focused on initial re-entry planning. The set of guiding principles outlines aspects for all of Harcourt to remember while plans and protocols are developed through the months ahead. In collaboration with the other Guelph United Ministries (GUM) partners, our Team Ministers and Director of Music Ministries will cover two Sundays for shared worship through the summer. On recommendation from the Re-entry Planning Group, Council decided that our indoor spaces will remain closed until September. We will continue to follow public health guidelines for the health and safety of all our staff, congregation, renters and the community at large. We will make more specific decisions through the summer.

Community outreach continues through providing access to fresh produce: The Communal Garden supplies Chalmers Community Services Centre; our parking lot is a short-term delivery point for a farmer during the closure of Guelph Farmers Market. As well, the parking lot provides outdoor space for Autism dog trainers until they can resume rental of the gym. Council approved a three-month extension of financial support from the Outreach Pillar to the Iraqi family in our midst.

Council has received Mary Harding's resignation as Umbrella Councillor for Christian Life. Keeping balance is important to Mary, combining commitments to family, work, church, and her studies within the Licenced Lay Worship Leader program. We thank Mary for her many gifts shared through word, music and care for others.

What role does this Umbrella Councillor have? Liaison with committees and teams related to Christian formation, MANNA, Spiritual Life and Worship, plus active participation on Harcourt's governing body are key responsibilities. If anyone feels called to join Council in this role, please contact me (councilchair@harcourtuc.ca).

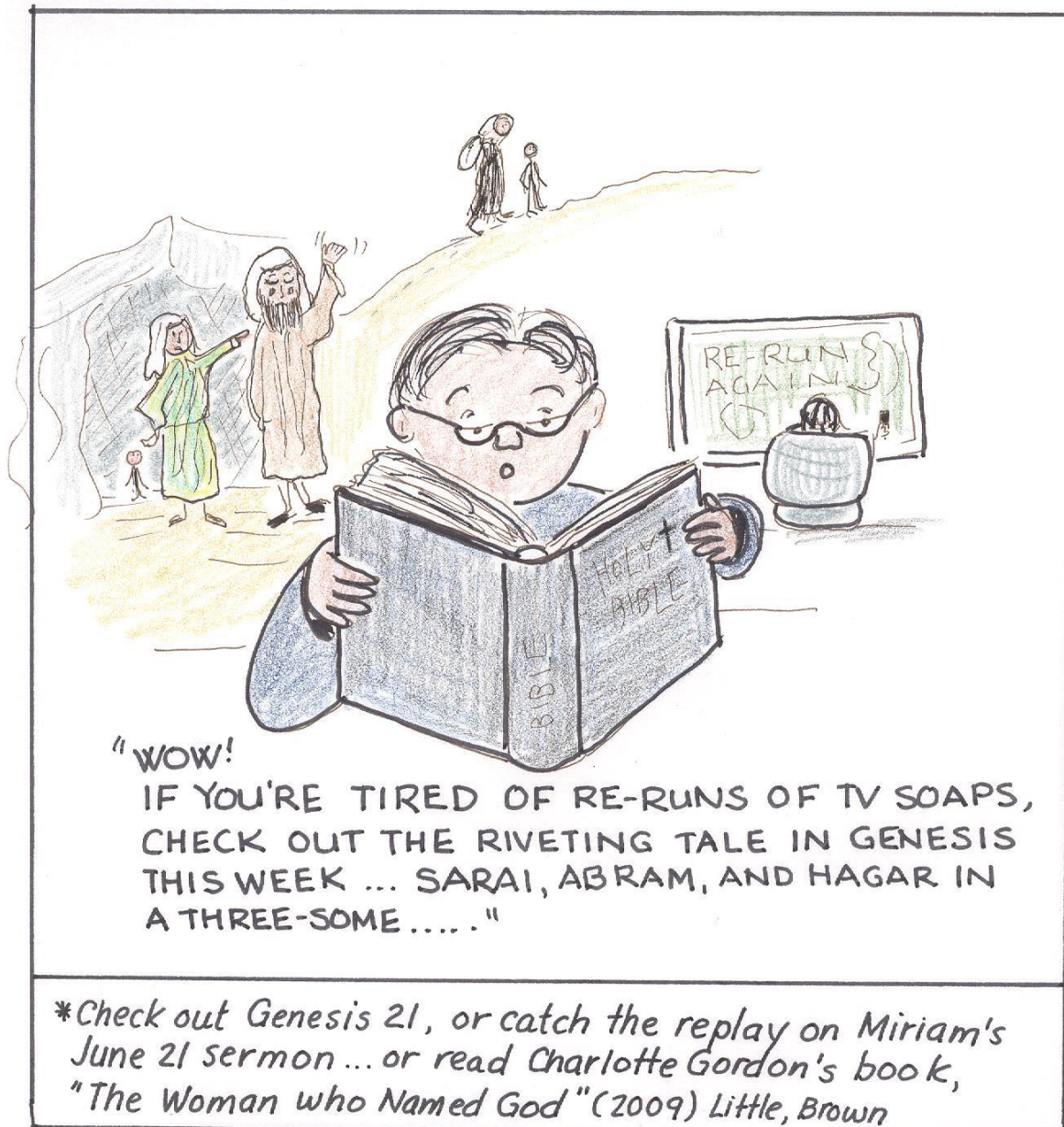
In the June issue of the Herald, I concluded with a series of 'perhaps' statements. They continue to be possibilities for our community of faith through the summer. May we continue to listen for the Spirit in all that we do. With faith and hope.

Harcourt Re-entry Guiding Principles

Accepted by Council on June 17, 2020

- We will continue to follow public health guidelines for the health and safety of all our staff, congregation, renters and the community at large.
- We will continue to evaluate our plans for re-entry, being sensitive to our changing community environment.
- We will explore/find ways to include vulnerable people who, for their own safety, may need to delay their re-entry into the building.
- We will be sensitive to people who, for whatever reason, may not have stayed connected. We will reach out to let them know we are here for them.
- We will take our time to carefully develop a plan and process for in-person worship gatherings.
- We will prepare our building and property to meet public health guidelines.
- We will collaborate with renters while they plan their re-entry to programs.
- We will collaborate with our GUM partners, aiming for a common approach.
- We acknowledge these impacts from living through the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - There will be no "going back" to exactly the way things were.

- Increased use of technology, the website, social media, print mailings and phone calls has helped to keep us connected. Alternative worship offerings have been appreciated.
- Financial givings and other sources of revenue have decreased.
- We acknowledge that approximately 500 people in Harcourt's updated directory are "the church". They have a variety of reasons for continuing to feel connected to Harcourt. Our new neighbourhood groups can be one of many ways to foster these connections.



Cartoon by Roz Stephenson

ABC News

(Anything But Corona!)

Guelph's Drive-in Live Music Event Coming Up

Buckle up in your seatbelts if you want to enjoy some live music. Guelph's first drive-in live music event is around the corner with local talent, food trucks and physical distancing. The event on July 16 is hosted by Royal City Studios and is in partnership with Music

Lives. <https://www.guelphtoday.com/coronavirus-covid-19-local-news/drive-in-concert-to-give-guelph-its-first-taste-of-live-music-in-a-while-2511999>

Province Announces Funding for New Accessible Bike Paths in Guelph

The first of two projects involves the expansion and enhancement of the cycling network in Guelph. Construction of new accessible bike paths and improvements to bike path intersections will improve safety for cyclists and provide direct access to the city's public transit system.

<https://www.news.ontario.ca/moi/en/2020/06/canada-and-ontario-support-improved-cycling-and-public-transit-infrastructure-for-guelph-residents.html>

Over 600 kg of food and \$7,500 in cash donated in just 90 minutes at Village by the Arboretum

Last Tuesday, June 16, the Village by the Arboretum Residents Association and social committee jointly held a "Hunger Hurts" one-day food drive in support of the Guelph Food Bank. Over 45 volunteers from the Village went porch to porch collecting non-perishable food items and money to donate to the food bank. Over 600 kg of food was collected in addition to \$7,500 in cash donations in just 90 minutes. <https://www.guelphtoday.com/helpers/neighbourhood-gets-together-to-help-guelph-food-bank-2452960>

YM/YWCA Launches Children's Outside Summer Programs

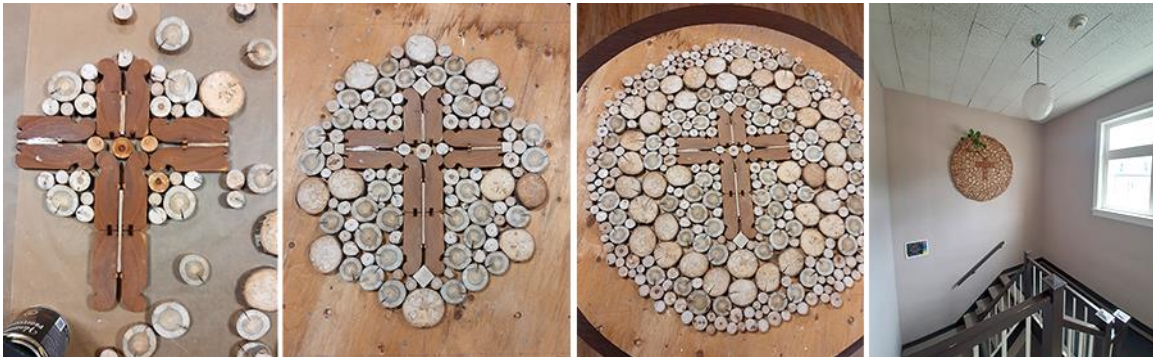
The centre launched its childcare and summer daycare program as part of Phase 2 of reopening the province and will be running two day-camps starting the week of July 6 in their outdoor Guelph Lake Conservation Area and their indoor centre on Woodland Glen Drive with reduced group sizes. The Y is also running an emergency childcare centre that will continue until June 26.

<https://www.guelphtoday.com/coronavirus-covid-19-local-news/ym-ywca-of-guelph-gearing-up-for-new-look-summer-camps-2448301>

A Dublin Detail...What/Where is This at Dublin?

submitted by Jennifer Pellegrino, Office Administrator, Dublin Street United Church

This is a weekly photo that our custodian Robert is sharing of a detail from Dublin United Church. Below is last week's photo: Taken in the stairwell leading up to the Harmony Room. Robert has created a beautiful piece of art that is now hanging in the stairwell from materials in and around Dublin. The cross was created from the leftover wood after a church pew repair. The wooden circles around the cross are from branches collected on church property after a spring wind storm and cut horizontally. Contact the Dublin United Church Office for more information.



COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Three Willows United Church Community Gardens



We have several garden plots on the church property that brings urban gardeners together. To request a garden plot contact the church office 519-822-7690.

Harcourt United Church Communal Gardens

by Jill Gill

After a cold intro to spring, the Harcourt Communal Garden was carefully prepared for planting by our volunteers. When the soil had warmed sufficiently, Lisa, Denya, Justine and Anna Sophia worked diligently to plant all the seeds and seedlings and the garden beds are growing with vigor. In fact, we have already picked about 50 lbs. of asparagus, rhubarb and lettuce greens.

All of the produce we harvest is donated to Chalmers Community Services Centre in downtown Guelph and helps to provide healthy, local vegetables, herbs and fruit for some of our community's most food-insecure citizens. This is our tenth season of growing vegetables. So far we have donated 5,447 lbs of edibles to Chalmers.

We hope to be able to celebrate this milestone year with some fun get-togethers later in the year – Covid-19 permitting.

Reach Down Deep into Your Pocket During COVID-19

by Arlene Davies-Fuhr, GUM Refugee Sponsorship Group

The GUM Refugee Sponsorship Group still needs to find \$1,075 to meet our commitment to Majd's sponsorship, which ends in August, 2020. Majd has been working very hard to find employment, but COVID-19 has made things much more difficult. We welcome employment leads (email bedoner@gmail.com) to pass to Majd, or any further financial help you can contribute. You can donate through your church or to <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/dublin-street-united-church/> (Please add "for GUM Refugee Fund" in comments section) Thank you so much for your support over the past year.



Can you help Majd Kabbani find a job? He has a Banking and Financial Sciences degree and training in communications and social media marketing. Majd is bilingual in English and Arabic. His four years of customer service experience included finance executive, marketing officer and underwriter. He's looking for work as a sales consultant in a car dealership, an underwriter assistant in an insurance company, or an administration officer/receptionist, or anything that uses his expertise. He is very grateful for any leads or suggestions. Contact [<majd.kabbani.88@gmail.com>](mailto:majd.kabbani.88@gmail.com)

Harcourt Directory Update

by Lynn Hancock, Umbrella Councillor for Stewardship

GREAT NEWS!!! After months of phone calls and emails, the Harcourt office directory is now more updated than it has been in 20 years. How is this possible with a new Church Administrator who was hired and had only been in the office for a matter of months before the church was locked? The answer is...volunteers! Volunteers willing to contact folks in their assigned neighbourhood group on behalf of Harcourt. Volunteers willing to contact people by phone or email and ask those wishing to remain on the directory to confirm name, address, phone number and email. In some cases, multiple attempts were made to reach out and connect. Who are these volunteers, these “heavenly” hosts? We can’t thank them enough!

Lisa Browning,
Pam MacInnes
Judy Cimino
Merrill Pierce
Carol Martin
Sharon Dills
Madeline Harrington
Barbara Friend
Deb Murray
Lorraine Dykman
Ann Middleton
Malcolm and Marta Coutts

Joan Charlebois
Marilyn Sears
Gretchen Ball
Joan Barham
Heather Sullivan
Elizabeth Bone
Linda Stockton
Lynn Hancock
Marnie Allen
Janet Webster
Bernie McNamee
Ben Fear

Report from the Harcourt Property Committee

by Dave Hume, Chair

There has been a surprising amount of activity in the last month, even with the church closed. Just this last week there was a cleanup of gardens, with appropriate distancing and trimming of the cedar hedge between Sarah Lowe’s house and the Harcourt gardens. Thanks to the volunteers who helped with both the gardens and the hedges. One of the vendors from the Guelph Farmer’s Market has started coming to our parking lot on Saturday mornings and on Mondays with strawberries. A group that trains dogs as companion animals for children and adults with autism meets in the parking lot too. There cannot be more than 9 handlers

and an instructor and they are to distance themselves from the volunteers working on the gardens producing food for Chalmers.

Last Tuesday there were carefully-conducted little graduation exercises for students in the Royal City Pre-School, also in the parking lot. We have increased David Kucherepa's hours so he can spend more time cutting grass and looking after the outside. Gary Parsons also has been a great help with lawn mowing.

One other surprise has been that I got a report that the water quality in the church was too high in lead content. Apparently, with essentially no water being used, the lead has accumulated in the pipes. Fortunately, all that is required is that the lines need to be run for a minute or so before the water is used for drinking. When we return to normal and water is used regularly, this problem will not occur.



Photo by Sarah Lowe

other Committees came to the same conclusion. Joan Barham and I meet with chairs or representatives of the other GUM (Guelph United Ministries) churches in Zoom meetings. One of the next steps will be to talk about re-opening, whether all the GUM churches do it in a similar way and pooling our ideas for the procedures that will be needed. Property really appreciates the expert guidance we are getting from Megan Ward.

The Property Committee had a lengthy discussion on June 9th about what will be required if and when we re-open. Property's recommendation was not to re-open the Sanctuary before September and

COMMUNITY

Lessons in the Weeds

by Lisa Browning, Harcourt United Church

My backyard is my sanctuary. It is filled with winding pathways, weaving their way through gardens. The birds love it, as it is one of the few backyards in my relatively new subdivision that has had any landscaping done ... and with my 13 bird feeders, I'll admit, I'm a little over the top!

Not only do I have a walk-out, but the yard slopes, to the back and to the right, which is why I decided to take all the grass out in the first place. "It will be a lot less work," I told myself, "not having to lug the lawn mower down the hill, and then manoeuvre the uneven ground." Ya, right.

It seems like the good weather came all of a sudden this year ... and with it, the weeds. I sat out on my deck last week, somewhat incredulous at how many weeds there were, and how quickly they grew. Bright and early Saturday morning, while the temperature was still cool, I grabbed my gardening gloves, yard waste bags and pruning shears, preparing to go to work.

In the moments of overwhelm that followed, it struck me that **this situation is a lot like life**. Sometimes, we become overwhelmed by problems ... the weeds in the garden of life. And if those problems are numerous or large, we don't know where to start, in order to free ourselves of them all.

Start with the Bigger Weeds First



In the mess that was my garden, I started with the bigger weeds first. I figured that, once I saw my way clear of those larger weeds, I'd be able to more freely move on to the smaller ones. Just like life.

An interesting thing happened, as I worked my way from garden to garden. I became more energized, more hopeful. I started to think that I just might be able to get this done after all. And so, I continued.

Once You Start, Keep Going!

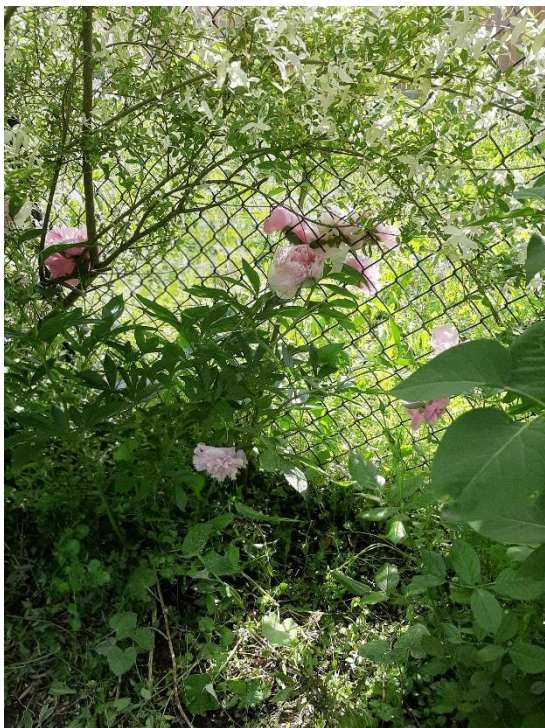
Garden by garden, weed by weed, I worked. Piles of weeds accumulated on my pathways, and when I had enough to fill a bag, I did just that.

As I continued to pull the weeds, I started to see the unobscured beauty of my gardens. Just like life.

That morning, I filled three bags in two hours. As the heat of the day bore down, I put my supplies away. In the early morning hours of Day 2, I began again.



Appreciate the Unexpected Gifts



In a corner garden, one of the last to be pruned, a dappled willow had taken over. As I methodically cut back the overgrown branches, I was surprised to find a pink peony bush that I didn't remember was there. I was so struck by its beauty, and its unexpected presence, that I sat still for a moment, taking it all in. I knew it was important to be still, and take it all in. Just like life.

Hard Work and Determination Pays Off

Five hours and 6-yard waste bags later, I sat down on my deck to enjoy a new view of my gardens. Despite feeling tired and worn out, I felt proud of my accomplishments ... of my perseverance and my vision. I smiled at St. Francis of Assisi, looking back at me from the centre garden.

There are definitely lessons in the weeds.

Did you know???

Guelph United Ministries (GUM) is made up of 4 Guelph United Churches (Harcourt, Dublin, Three Willows and Trinity), the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University of Guelph and the outreach ministry at Chalmers Community Services Centre. <https://www.guelphunited.org/>

Chalmers Community Service Centre: Business as Usual. Well... Not Quite.

by Peter Gill, Chalmers Community Service Centre

I don't suppose there is an organization across the globe that hasn't been challenged over the past 3+ months of this pandemic, and Chalmers is no exception.

In mid-March we closed both our downtown and west facilities to guests and immediately transitioned to a system of bagging all groceries, one for perishables and one for non-perishables. We had a schedule of volunteers who worked in teams and were assigned specific functions:

1. Portioning (cereal, rice, pasta, tea, milk powder)
2. Bagging (one for perishables – eggs, cheese, vegetable, fruit and one for non-perishables, canned veggies, pasta sauce, bread, etc.)
3. Distributing – greeting guests at the doors, asking how many in the family, handing out bags. Giving out diapers when asked.

Early on all volunteers 70 years and older were “benched” because of the potential coronavirus risk connected to seniors. For many of them Chalmers has become an important part of their life and how they contribute to the betterment of our community. However, younger volunteers have stepped up and the teams have remained mostly intact since the pandemic began.

Guest registration was put on hold – we could not safely perform this at close quarters and so every two-week access was cancelled which meant guests could come every week. We instituted a three-bag rule per family which we subsequently reduced that to two bags as we were running out of food (and still are on some days) far too quickly.

Fundraising events have been cancelled. Two were scheduled for the spring and it looks as though two that were going to happen in the fall may not take place. However, we have been incredibly fortunate to receive additional financial support from many individual donors – more than 100 first-time donors since March – as well as emergency funding from the United Way, Guelph Community Foundation and the United Church. All of which means that we are holding our own financially with the obvious worry that Covid-19 will continue to put added pressure on those who are food-insecure.

As always, Harcourt folk have been most generous and caring and for this Chalmers offers its heartfelt thanks.

Trinity United Church is Thinking of YOU, with LOVE:

A Report on Our Drive-by Visits on May 23, 2020

by Kathy Stephens, on behalf of Trinity United Church

On Saturday, May 23, 2020, Trinity United Church, Guelph, reached out to many older folks, who are isolating at home during COVID -19. We connected with 125 individuals through Drive-by Visits and posters saying

"Trinity is Thinking of You, With Love."

Our message was clear, as was the spirit of the day ... connecting safely, sharing a card and a gift, supporting each other and providing smiles and laughter!

We informed everyone to anticipate a SURPRISE on Saturday, between 10:30 and 11:30 am. "Please be at your window, driveway, entrance or front porch." ... and THEY were there!

We congregated in 6 groups of 3 cars, and respecting guidelines ... no more than 5 people in each group and Social Distancing, to prepare, in 3 locations, with staggered times. A total of 18 dedicated volunteers made this possible! Vehicles were decorated with streamers and balloons and hand-crafted signs ... *"Trinity is Thinking of YOU, with Love."*

We divided the visits into areas of Guelph, with each group driving by the residences of 8-15 individuals and families, visiting outside briefly, with folks at care facilities and at their own homes.

The gift Butterfly or windmill symbolized hope, renewal, and beauty for everyone, simply to say, *"We CARE!"*

We received the following incredible sentiments by phone calls, email and notes of thanks:

"Seeing the expressions on faces and the appreciation expressed by all who we visited was immeasurable!"

"Please convey my sincere thanks to all who took their time on Saturday to visit with such a lovely surprise! So much appreciated! The butterfly is a very special symbol in our family."

"The card is in our entrance to remind us of the unselfish love that will get us through any trials, if we keep our faith in the promises of God in our lives."

"It was so good to see familiar faces and to re-connect in this way even for a short time!"

"There were tears, distance hugs, smiles, waves, and laughter ... all saying Trinity Cares."

"It was great to be part of this Drive-by venture with y'all this morning! I appreciated your thoughtful card"

"It was a good thing to do. On our route, we had no traffic issues at all!"

"Through Kathy with the inspiration, and all who gave their time and creativity, Trinity Family and friends will remember this in such a positive way!"

"You made my day, Trinity! So special! Thank you!"

"I miss everyone at Trinity!"

"Trinity is special and I miss being there."

"I am really enjoying the services online on Sunday. Thank you!"

"Amazing! Thank you".

"I appreciate it so much!"

"It's so nice to get the service by mail as I don't have a computer."

"Dianne, Thank you, for a great, fun morning. Your preparation made the day for our group and it went perfectly!"

"When will Trinity open again? I miss seeing everyone so much."

"What a wonderful surprise! Such a fun day!"

"Trinity friends, you have no idea how much it meant to me to have you Drive-by today! I had made a sign! "Trinity Rocks!"... That means YOU! Blessings!"

"Thank you for this great idea!"

"It was a wonderful way to start the day!"

"Thank you for your visit this morning. What lovely weather! It is so nice that others care and we are all trying to support each other. Thanks so much. That was such a nice, happy thing to do! Thank you for thinking of us."

"Thank you. What a lovely gesture! You made my day! Stay safe and healthy!"

"This means Everything to me!"

From Ken Chupa, Chair of Trinity Council, "Thanks for all of your organizing of today's event. I saw how much people we visited appreciated seeing us and seeing that "Trinity is Thinking of them, with Love." And I am sure there are many stories from this morning!"

From Kathy & Bob Stephens,

"To everyone ... those who we visited, and to our Volunteers, Thank you! You Make a difference!"

Looking for a long peaceful local walk?

Check out the Guelph Mercury article: "Six days on the Guelph to Goderich rail trail" by Paul Boreham at <https://www.guelphmercury.com/news-story/7322950-six-days-on-the-guelph-to-goderich-rail-trail/>

From the Front Lines: Trinity United Members Report

Submitted with Permissions by Sharon Huska, Trinity United Church

Heather Lagassie is a 20 plus year employee with Zehrs, currently working as a cashier at the Zehrs on Imperial & Paisley Roads. Heather says that most customers are patient and respectful. She says the public is still learning about the virus and the "dos" and "don'ts". Every business has their own rules depending on their size and what they are selling. Heather says she feels safe, for the most part, as she feels her employer has put protocols in place to keep staff and customers safe.

Heather Martin works at the Homewood Health Centre here in Guelph as a nurse manager. During this pandemic she has spent a lot of time bringing information to front line nurses and supporting them through the stress of an ever-changing way of life at work. She has supported patients as well in understanding the rules and restrictions that they have put in place to keep us all safe. Patients are restricted to the property, can no longer have passes and, like staff, have to wear masks within the building. She has also had to learn how to do interviews by Skype and all meetings are now on the phone. We now move forward into phase two of re-opening of the economy in most of our province, however nothing is likely to change anytime soon at the Homewood so Heather will continue to offer messages and support ongoing. It has been stressful and trying at times, but she knows it is better stress than her peers at Guelph General Hospital would be going through. Heather takes the bus home but says it's not too stressful as the buses are really empty with much less riders than before the pandemic and pretty much everyone is wearing a mask. Riders are entering through the back door. The limit was ten riders. Buses were free since March but that got lifted last week. Signs are still posted to social distance.

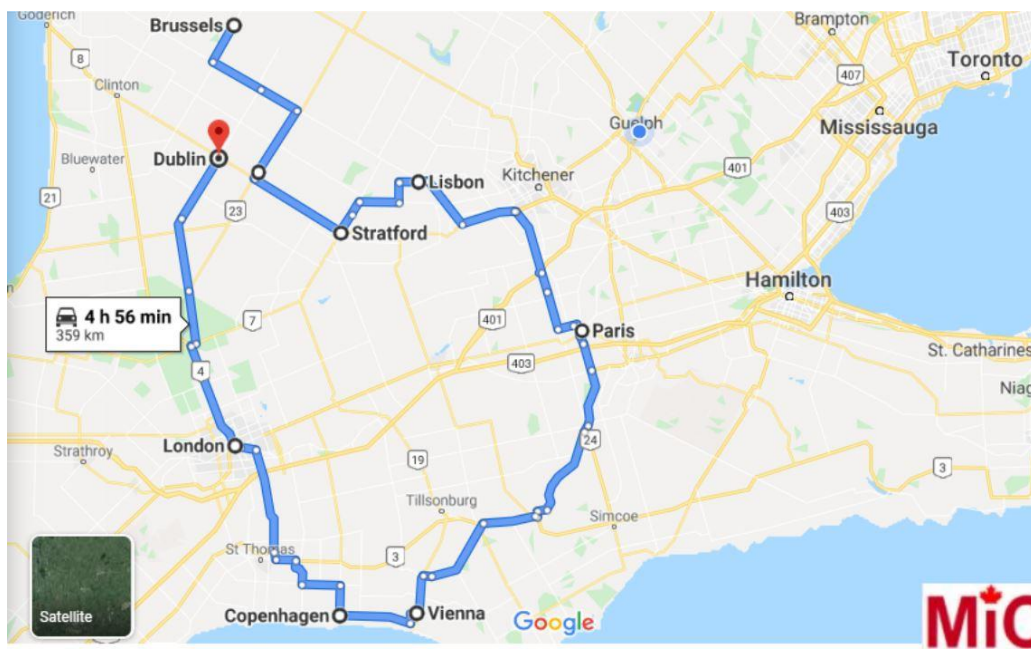
Ann Osborne. This time of quarantining and isolating has been, for me, about so much more than just staying safe and well. In my practice, I work with clients on the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of this time and help them to find not only strategies for coping but also meaning in their experiences.

The greatest concern I hear is, "How do I deal with the constant unknown? How do I find any modicum of control in a world that changes from moment to moment, and is not like anything that any of us have known?" Everyone responds to times like this in their own way. Some found it hardest at first and have now settled into a routine that they can live with. Others are finding it harder as time goes on. Even the gradual reopening feels rejuvenating to some and terrifying to others. Some have chosen to see this time as the perfect opportunity to work on the issues in their lives – some created by this virus, but some that are long-standing, and had just never been addressed because "there wasn't time". And some were excited to expand their understanding about topics that they have been interested in or curious about, because they now had time to do so. When the isolation first began, I had a bit of a lull in my schedule, as people thought that this would hopefully be over soon, and they would wait to see me when they could once more come to the office. When it became apparent that this was some way off, we adapted to phone or video chat sessions. So ... throughout this time, I have been very busy – an indication of the great impact that this time has had. At the same time, I have not had to wonder what to do with all the extra time – because there wasn't any! 😊

My hope is that humankind can remember and retain the experience of this time, and the ways it has called all of us to look at what truly matters, to help us create a better world as we move forward!

An Idea for Your Stay-Cation in Ontario This Summer.

Why Not Go to Europe?



YOUTH & FAMILIES

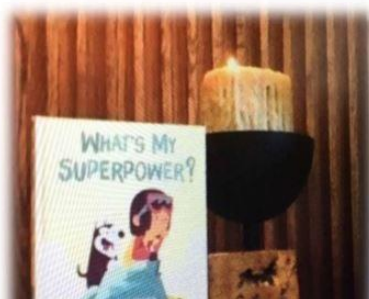
A MANNA Update from Harcourt United Church

by Laura Hofer, MANNA

For the past month at Manna we have learned even more new ways to be together while staying apart. A small team of Manna leaders began delivering things to Manna families each Saturday to use (or eat) during the Sunday service. We planted lettuce seed balls together, blew party blowers and waved pompoms for Pentecost, baked rainbow flag cookies to celebrate Pride and received homemade bread for communion. These deliveries were fun and built a little more community.

We have also heard the beautiful poetry of Heather Beamish, a story about gender identity read by our own Zoelle, Sage and Zeven Girard-Barrett and a story about finding our own superpowers!

Manna services will pause for the summer, but plans are in the works for a kids virtual meeting and a parent check-in since we're unable to enjoy our summer picnics.



Dublin Street United Church: Sunday School Organizing Team Thinks in Beautiful Colours!

Thanking our Sunday School Teachers during our online Sunday school Program, we share this from Donna Cowbrough who sits on our Sunday School Organizing Team. This was offered during prayer time.

The colours of the M&Ms signify:

Green for inspiration

Blue for patience

Orange for warmth and caring

Yellow for the way they make us smile

Red for the lives they have touched this year.

During Sunday school, Donna shared a Father's Day prayer in honour of the special day. She combined all of these objects within the prayer:

Life saver: for being a lifesaver

Marbles: for when they lose their marbles

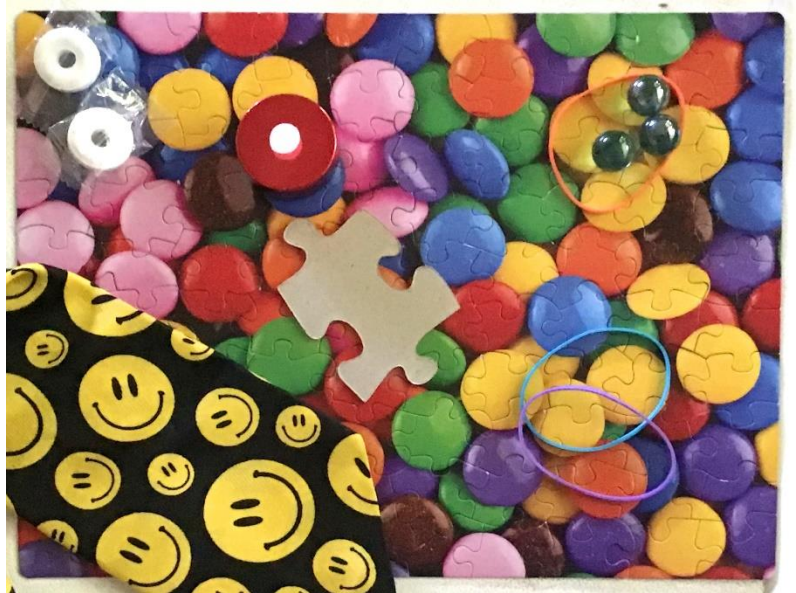
Puzzle piece: for being a part of our lives

Smarties: for their advice

Rubber band: for being flexible

Candle: for when they are burning it at both ends

Happy face: to keep smiling.



Learning how to pray:

Here Donna uses the building of the hamburger to help our kids learn to build a prayer.

Bottom bun represents Dear God.

Patty represents You are awesome because.....

Cheeses slice represents *Thank you for...*

Tomato represents *Please help*(name someone in need of help)

Onion represents *Please help me for...*

Pickle represents *Please forgive me for....*

Top bun represents *Amen*



Trinity United Church Keeps Families Connected to the Children's Program

Wendelin is staying connected to the families in our **Children's Program** and offering online programs Saturdays from 10:30-11:00 am for children 6 and under and Sundays at 4:15 pm for children age 7 and over. If you have not been part of the Children's Program on Sunday mornings but would like to be able to join in this program, please email Wendelin at childrensprogram@trinityunitedguelph.ca or call her at 519-824-4838. Activities are also being emailed each week. (Please check your "junk" folder for an email from Wendelin through her home email galatian@sentex.ca).

The Sunday School made & delivered cards to remind members that

"God is With Us, Rain or Shine"

Here's a note that one of our members sent to Paiton and the Sunday School class:

I have a very old bear and he has been sitting in my window for the whole isolation time, and he is so happy to share your card with all the people that walk by my house who want to spy something different! Thank you!



*Thank you to our Sunday School students
for bringing sunshine to our day!*



Child Care Centres Re-Open in Guelph

After the province of Ontario re-opened Child Care Centres as of June 12th, celebrations could begin. Below: Royal City Cooperative Preschool staff at Harcourt United Church celebrate their graduates (going into Kindergarten).



Photo by Sarah Lowe



HARCOURT HERALD PHOTO CONTEST

Love to take photos with your camera or phone?

Why not enter our Local Landscape photo contest!

Submit a maximum of 3 photos per person of landscapes in and around Guelph by e-mail attachment to theherald@harcourtuc.ca with the subject line HARCOURT PHOTO CONTEST by AUGUST 10TH, 2020 to enter. The Contest is only open to members of Harcourt Church (including MANNA) and not to the general public. Photos will be judged by people from outside of Harcourt and the top 3 winners will each **win a prize** and have their winning photo published in the September 2020 Harcourt Herald, put on the Church website and shown on the Church Information Screen once onsite services begin again. First prize will be worth **\$100** and two other similar prizes of \$50 each will be awarded. Photos should be original and not include people, but only landscapes. What are you waiting for...

Get Snapping!!

*Please remember to social distance. Organizers reserve the right to cancel the contest if they deem it to be necessary.

The Church Garden Corner

Harcourt's Peonies

by Sandy Middleton

In the garden, June is well known for its splendid displays of flowering perennials. In a casual stroll round Harcourt's gardens it is difficult to miss our showy display of these plants, e.g., iris (south wall of the sanctuary); columbine; (east wall of the sanctuary); blue crane's bill (east entrance), and peony (celebration garden). These plants have been contributed, over the years, by various individuals who have nurtured our gardens. But the peonies have a special significance as they were given to us by Rev. Monica Moore, as a gift from her garden, before she left ministry at Harcourt in 2009.



In 2009, I had responsibility for caring for our flower gardens. I well remember the day when Monica brought me 6, rather unpromising looking, bare peony roots and asked if I could find a place for them in the garden. Of course, I was delighted to accept them. Although she could not remember their colours, I assured her that they would eventually come into their own. Although peonies are beautiful plants and come in a wide variety of types and colours, they hate being moved, and often take several years to

adjust to their new surroundings before they bloom once again. This proved to be true for Monica's peonies.

Knowing of this possibility, I carefully selected a sunny spot in the bed by the shade structure in the Celebration Garden. I prepared the soil and planted the roots, taking care not to bury them too deeply. For the next few years they grew well, put on lots of vegetative growth, but produced no flowers. And so, I waited, often having to defend their existence to over-zealous weederers who did not recognise the plants for what they were.

However, the wait was well worth it. After some six years of flowerless existence, the large leafy plants produced blossom. Over the years since, the plants have continued to thrive. They are now luxuriant, and each June are heavily laden with fragrant red, white, and pink blossoms.

Thank you, Monica, for this lasting gift that each June brings beauty to the garden while reminding us of your ministry at Harcourt.

Elizabeth MacKinnon, 100 Years

by Anne Plaunt and Marion MacKinnon

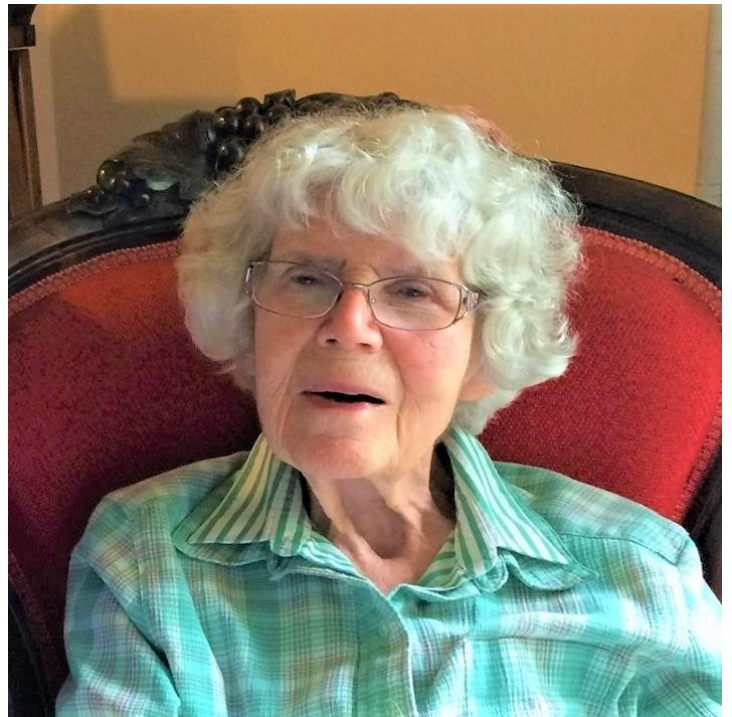
Editor's note: Elizabeth MacKinnon, long time member of Harcourt Church, recently passed away at the age of 100. This is a brief reflection on her life as told by her daughters.

Elizabeth Margaret Agnes Young MacKinnon – What made her the way she was?

A very caring person, wise, and blessed with a sense of humour, devoted to her family, her church, community, the world beyond.

Elizabeth was a daughter after four sons, for a homemaker Eva, 40, and a physician George, 50, who lectured at the University of Toronto in Medical Ethics and Internal Medicine. Eva, who had studied French and German at university, was deeply involved in church work at Bloor Street United, which the Young family attended. She also supported *The Church of All Nations* which held services in many languages. Elizabeth helped her mother. These experiences of religion guided Elizabeth in everything.

Her parents sent her to a progressive girls' camp, Oconto, where "Libby" (Elizabeth's nickname) became a counselor and lifeguard. She loved those times out in nature, guiding and caring for younger people.



Her brothers Douglas and Evan went into business. Her brothers Will and Wright became doctors. Elizabeth wanted to become a nurse. Her father suggested doing a B.A. first. His daughter agreed. Her arts degree included, significantly, psychology.

Marriage to Mundo MacKinnon and motherhood in wartime meant that “Liz” did not go into nursing. However, her medical interests informed her constant care of others. Murdo thought Liz most like her oldest brother Will who claimed, “I raised Elizabeth.” Will became a psychiatrist.



The family moved from Hyde Park village to Guelph in 1964, with John and Marion still in school. Anne and Catherine were away at college. Elizabeth, no longer a country church organist, now entertained University of Guelph and Spring Festival guests. She was shy but determined. They joined Harcourt, the church choir, and the university choir. The MacKinnons welcomed many, some for longer periods,

including a British high school student and a Japanese Rotary student. Marianna Revah-Barta had joined the family from Hungary in 1957. Murdo’s mother, Lilian Vaux MacKinnon, spent most of her final years in Elizabeth’s gentle care.

The family’s French improved in Trois Pistoles, Quebec. They treasured visits to relatives and friends in France, England and Scotland, especially John’s wedding to Cheryl of Bonnyrigg. Close to Elizabeth’s heart was choral singing, United Church Women (UCW), UNICEF, Guelph Telephone Distress Line, and fund-raising for medical causes. At Riverside Glen she continued her love of outreach and making friends. On entering Harcourt, Elizabeth always said: “I feel I’m coming home.”



Wendy Guilmette Our Harcourt Church Administrator

Submitted by Lynn Hancock

Wendy comes to Harcourt with a strong background in volunteer management, office administration and social work. She is graduate of both Waterloo University and Conestoga College.

Wendy has lived in Guelph for 30 years raising her children with her spouse Mike. She feels that life has given her many blessings; they are her grandchildren who are the keepers of her heart.

Another of her great joys are her 2 dogs, a silly black Labrador named Kaley and a Golden Retriever named Prada. You can often find her out for a walk enjoying the day with these two. She has lived and worked and volunteered in Guelph and through it all she has learned that people are her passion. Wendy is working from home at the moment, but monitoring the phones at Harcourt Church frequently. You can reach her at office@harcourtuc.ca or Tel: 519.824.4177.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Passing:



MACKINNON, Elizabeth Margaret Agnes (nee Young) died peacefully on May 13, 2020 in Guelph, Ontario after a full and satisfying life. Born in Toronto, Ontario, in 1919. Predeceased in 2012 by her husband of 70 years, Murdo MacKinnon. Loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She married Murdo in 1941, spending war years in Winnipeg, North Sydney, Halifax and St. John's. After the war, they enjoyed country life in Hyde Park (London), Ontario. The family moved to Guelph in 1964. Elizabeth loved music and travel, singing and organizing tours for the University of Guelph Choir. Elizabeth was a church organist and choir director in Hyde Park, UCW member, Scottish Country dancer, Harcourt Church choir member, telephone distress line volunteer, UNICEF organizer and more. She loved children, nature, canoeing at Belmont Lake, and her family, above all. We will remember Elizabeth for her humility, gentleness, humour and great generosity of

spirit, to family new and old, near and far. Donations in Elizabeth's memory may be made to Harcourt Memorial United Church in Guelph, UNICEF, University of Guelph, or University of Toronto. A memorial service for Elizabeth will be held at a later date.

Other Announcements:

Our new online Memorial Quilt commemorates the lives of beloved members of the Harcourt Community at a time when large physical celebrations of life are not possible. Please visit <https://www.harcourtuc.ca/services-celebrations/in-memoriam/>.

Behind the Scenes

Communication is the Key An Interview with Sharon Huska, Church Office Co-ordinator Trinity United Church

by Gillian Joseph



The world-wide pandemic has presented everyone with challenges and stretched resources as well as personal physical and mental wellness to the limit. We have heard wonderful stories about how people are *being* the church, how they are serving local needs and how people are being creative about finding new ways to gather and worship. We hear about the struggles of balancing the need to be good citizens with adhering to governmental guidelines. We hear about the joys and frustrations of trying to communicate and to care for one another. From her home office I spoke to Sharon Huska, Office Coordinator of Trinity United Church to learn about her experiences in this role during such a challenging time.

Sharon sees her role as Church Office Co-ordinator as being the communication *hub* of the Church. When people don't know who to contact, they contact the Church office first. From Sharon's perspective, COVID-19 has magnified both the importance of that role and the time and energy that it takes to successfully manage that hub. "Things that didn't use to take much time are now very time consuming" She says. "In the beginning it was energy zapping, mostly because it was a learning curve for everyone." She sometimes found it hard to deal

with people remotely. You can lose so much communication when you don't see someone's face or body language.

Like many other Churches, Trinity United began to use Zoom software for meetings and activities as the pandemic forced people inside. However, not everyone has found that transition to be easy. Sharon has been on hand by phone to help family members to be able to participate. She has had to develop the knack of providing simple instructions for activities that can sometimes be overwhelming for those who are not computer-savvy. "It's hard on everyone," says Sharon, "Everybody needs to be patient."

One of the tasks that demanded her attention at the outset was to look at the membership directory and to divide it into *calling* lists. Sharon was adamant that every member needed to be telephoned. "We are all experiencing this" she says. "Everyone needs to feel that they are supported. We are not just supporting shut-ins alone... in this pandemic everyone is a shut-in" she says.

Then there are the tasks that involve interaction with companies, people and services outside of the Church. Staff go into the Church to print the Ministers' messages, announcements and newsletters on the Church's own equipment and mails material out to those members who aren't on the internet. Staff are very limited when going into the Church and must let the custodian know when and where they'll be. They must be quick and go directly in to accomplish the task and then directly out, and not meet any other people while there.

One of the more pleasurable tasks for Sharon, though, is preparing the Church newsletter. Sharon had set a deadline for an issue of the newsletter one month after COVID-19 began to unfold, but the decision was made to hold off for a while after that. She has just now sent out a new issue – again emphasizing the importance of keeping people informed and connected. "Newsletters are really valuable for Church communication", she says "You get to know members in a deeper way through their contributions". Sharon really enjoys that.

She knows that there is a learning curve for everyone at the Church at this time. As the situation initially began to take hold, the Trinity United Church Council, which normally meets every couple of months, began to hold weekly meetings as they became overloaded with the challenges that presented themselves. Then, a few weeks later, Council began to meet every other week. Now, they are back to a monthly meeting as the new "normal" settles in.

One of the most heart wrenching things about her role is supporting families who have problems or losses. Rev. John Benham, the Trinity United Minister does a lot of grief support. But for many people there is delayed grief. Sharon says "It's very difficult when there are situations where you just can't be present". Some people want a Minister to be physically

there with them as their family member dies, or to be present to help the family with their grief, but this just isn't possible right now. Family members themselves are not able to be with loved ones who are suffering, and many find it hard not to be able to have physical contact with their loved ones who are well, let alone ill. Sharon believes that there will be a lot of grief that people are holding now that they will carry with them for a long time after this experience.

I ask her about what it's been like working at home and what it's been like for her family. She tells me that she and her husband have grown children who live far away, and it's hard not to see them. In particular, their son was supposed to be married in July. Yet, she says, everyone has helped out so it's been very positive.

Sharon tells me that on the day she left the Church office, she packed up her computer and emptied her filing cabinet into boxes. She's glad she did that...it has come in very handy. Her husband is also at home and, luckily for Sharon, he is very good with computers. She laughs and says "It's actually been a silver lining in this whole thing to have my own tech person in the house. My husband has reinstalled Windows and added a new hard drive!

However, Sharon thinks back to some of the challenges that other Church members faced in the beginning. She reflects on Trinity's meat pie fundraiser- Nearly one thousand meat pies were already baked for purchase. The pies had been made in February and March and all pies had been put in the freezer. A quick e-blast called people to the rescue and within 3 days over 600 pies were ordered. Cars arrived and pulled up at the Church back entrance, where frozen pies were loaded by volunteers into the trunks of cars and money was exchanged in an envelope. The power of effective communication!

I ask her if, after this crisis is all over, what would she do differently to prepare for another crisis down the road? Sharon tells me that some churches had plans for emergencies in place when COVID-19 hit, but Trinity did not. She found it stressful. The Church Council tried to rise to the challenge by making decisions by e-mail, but it was hard and time consuming. Sharon pushed for a Re-opening Committee so Trinity can have plans in place to overcome any obstacles. Yet she also acknowledges that it is difficult to prepare for a crisis when one doesn't know what the situation might be. "Sometimes, you just have to think on your feet", she says. But there are some fundamental preparations such as communication and decision-making policies that might make things less stressful next time. "Communication is vital to so much of what the church (or any organization) does", Sharon re-emphasizes. "Good communication is a good investment".

Have a great summer!
See you in September...