

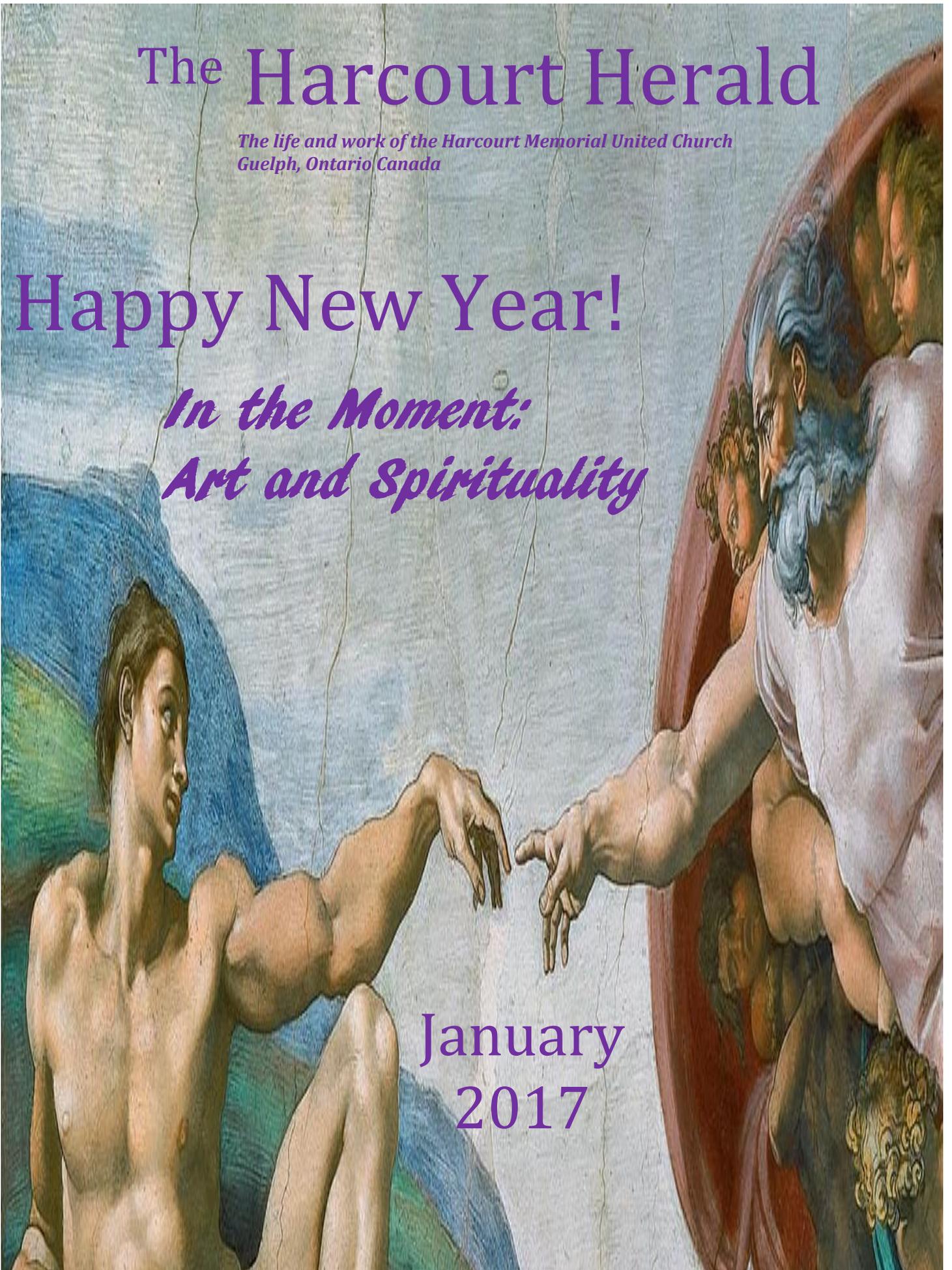
# The Harcourt Herald

*The life and work of the Harcourt Memorial United Church  
Guelph, Ontario Canada*

## Happy New Year!

*In the Moment:  
Art and Spirituality*

January  
2017



# 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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## **The Harcourt Herald**

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*by the*

*Communications Committee*

**Your contributions are welcome!**

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# The Ministers' Quill

by Jim Ball

I took this photo shortly before the temperatures dropped and the flakes of early winter fell. With the floodgates open we have entered the season of lower water and safer streams. As I write the river is covered by snow and ice.



Mallards, shivering in the cold, huddle together for warmth. They are a community of common care. Most of their migrating cousins have flown south. My neighbourhood is awash in toque-and-mit-wearing folk who are wrapped up against the elements. As they walk their heads and bodies bend in the direction of the winds that blow and bite. Occasionally, couples pause and hug by the bridge. So too do small groups. Like the Mallards below them. Together they take in the view and prize the moment. They do so in the warmth of each other's company. This is not a time or season for personal space. It is one for solidarity and common cause against the challenges that challenge us all. Oh, make no mistake. There remain occasions

for individual space and personal reflection. But the snow-bound season reminds us of mutual need and mutual care. It invites a fresh appreciation of deep values and of one another. For there is always much that we must decide alone. But our discerning and choosing is often made wiser and stronger by the thoughtful and compassionate accompaniment of the people who journey with us. Such others serve as mirror and friend on the long and winding path we share together. And we, for our part, do likewise for them. Mallards together. Weathering side by side what comes, until for all of us the snow and ice melt, and warmth and green return and the water levels rise.



by Lorraine Holding, Chair of Council

Happy New Year! As we begin 2017, we continue to look ahead to the hopes and dreams we envision as a Congregation. Our Harcourt 20/20 process now kicks into 'phase two'. Council met on Sunday, December 11 to focus on a short agenda prior to Christmas. We reflected on the hopes and concerns that grow out of the Joint Needs Assessment Report (JNA) which was strongly supported at the Congregational Meeting on November 23. The Writing Team of Peter Jackson, Jean Julian and Melissa Kwaitkowski worked carefully and thoroughly to reflect the many pieces of 'raw data' collected during 2016. We thank them for their commitment.

Our next step is the search for a second team minister to share equally with Jim. With gratitude, Council is pleased to introduce the Joint Search Committee: Dan Ganesh, Pamela Girardi-Barrett, Melissa Kwiatkowski, Kathy Magee and Jon Welch. They will be supported by Marilyn Sears (Ministry & Personnel Committee) and Bill Lord as consultants. Two representatives from Waterloo Presbytery will also join the committee. Other implementation plans that grow from the JNA will be developed during the months ahead. This will include continued work to discern how we allocate our resources across our three narratives. What does that mean? Watch for opportunities to engage in more conversation and input.

**January 29:** Ministry & Personnel Committee will host an information session focused on the staffing model that they propose.

**February 5:** Kent Hoeg will host an information session focused on the proposed 2017 budget. Council recommends that the Congregation approve it at the Annual Meeting.

**February 26:** Plan to attend the Annual Meeting for more Harcourt 20/20 discussion.

Another important task for January/February is recruitment of committed people for key leadership positions: Treasurer; Vice-Chair of Council; Umbrella Councilor for Congregational Life; Stewardship Committee Chair and members; other needs for committees to be confirmed. Please consider how YOU can offer your time and talents to these opportunities while learning more about Harcourt. Contact any member of Council or me to explore your interests. We encourage you to say "yes" to this invitation. The New Year is here. Guided by the Spirit, may we continue to share and serve as we strengthen this community we call Harcourt. With faith and hope.

# New to Harcourt? Welcome!

**Harcourt is a diverse community that welcomes everyone.**

Listen to what some people are saying about their experiences here. Press and hold the ctrl button on your computer and click your mouse on the photos to view the videos online.



To contact the Church:  
Office e-mail  
[office@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:office@harcourtuc.ca) or  
call 519 824-4177

Visit our webpage at  
[www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca)  
for information about  
services, supports, room  
rental, activities and  
outreach

# People are Talking About...



- **Santa Rests after Answering a Mammoth Amount of Fan Mail.**

Santa may be a very tired man these days, but he's probably exhausted for more reasons than just delivering presents. Since 1982, Santa's Post Office has employed mailroom elves from Canada, and he has received more than 20 million letters from children around the world. Canada Post volunteers donate over 200,000 hours of their time each year to help Santa respond to every letter that arrives on his doorstep.

<http://www.readersdigest.ca/travel/canada/13-things-you-didnt-know-about-christmas-canada/4/>

- **Olivia the Top Baby Girl's Name Across Canada.**

New statistics suggest that the name *Olivia* – which means the “olive tree” – is becoming increasingly popular. Olive trees are frequently mentioned in the Bible as an emblem of beauty, prosperity and religious privilege. For example, a dove from the ark brought an olive branch to Noah to tell him that the flood waters were declining on the earth. Gethsemane was the name of an olive garden at the foot of Mount Olives where Jesus would rest with his disciples, and where he was the night before his arrest.

<http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/olivia-is-top-girls-name-in-alberta-mirroring-trend-across-canada>

- **New Book about Faith and the Search for Meaning for Three Famous Canadian Painters.**

Herman Goodden talks about three Canadian painters in a new book called, *Three Artists: Kurelek, Chambers & Curnoe*. The book was commissioned by the Catholic Art Guild of London, Ont., to tell the stories of these three artists, their lives of faith and their search for meaning. <http://bcc.rcav.org/component/content/article/1-latest-news/6755-book-chronicles-artists-lives-of-faith-and-search-for-meaning>

- **Top Stories of 2016: Canadian Church Reviews the Issues.**

Assisted suicide, Refugees, Truth and Reconciliation, Transgender Issues: These are some of the Top Stories of 2016. <http://bcc.rcav.org/canadian/6757-canadas-2016-political-sphere-reviewed>



# Potluck and Games Night

**Saturday, January 21**

5:30-9pm in the Friendship Room

Bring a hot or cold entree or a dessert.

Cards and board games  
will be supplied  
or bring your favourite.



# Committee & Group News



*Graphic from Creative Commons*

## Small Groups for Winter 2017

by Andre Auger, for the Adult Faith Formation group

Since we started in the spring of 2013, Adult Faith Formation has offered 38 Small Groups on a wide range of topics relevant to growing in the Christian faith. We are in the process of getting our winter 2017 roster ready.

Here's what we have lined up for you this coming winter:

1. **Explorations in Progressive Christianity:** This group has been meeting for over 3 years, and is about to explore violence and the Bible with John Dominic Crossan. We meet every Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:30AM in Room 202-203, starting Sat. Jan 21st. Please join us!
2. **Spirituality in Music:** Returning for a second time, music scholar and choral director Gerald Neufeld will share some musical selections and invite us to engage in “audio divina” (holy listening), a form of meditation in which we pay attention to the feelings and images the music evokes in us. We are still working out details. As soon as we know them, we will let everyone know.
3. **Drama as a Spiritual Tool:** it's still in the early stages, but we are working with some of Harcourt's best-known and loved drama specialists to develop a Small Group which will explore in dramatic form some biblical characters. Again, as soon as we have details, we will let you know.
4. **Questions on the Christian Journey:** This is not a teaching course on a specific topic or theme nor will it use a specific teaching resource like a DVD or podcast. The small

group sessions (4 sessions - one meeting a month for 1 and 3/4 hours) will have a limit of 10 participants plus the leader. The group will offer a safe sacred space to explore your questions about the faith in our world of change. The first session will provide a process for the identification of the key questions that will be addressed, each in a separate session. Rev. Bill Lord, an experienced adult educator in the United Church, will be the leader. You can expect him to be a clarifier of thinking, feeling and acting but not an answer giver. This Small Group will start in February, and will require registration.

5. Finally, Arlene Davies-Fuhr will lead a small group in **Exploring the Psalms**, based on a book she wrote. This group will meet later in the season. The format will be an interactive exploration of some of the Psalms. Time and place to be announced.

## **Park’N Dance a Hot Topic at Caroline Harcourt Women’s Fellowship**

by Jean Hume

The Caroline Harcourt Fellowship Circle will meet at noon on January 9, 2017. Sarah Jane Burton, director of Park’N Dance will present an interactive program to demonstrate how the body reacts to music and will override the disabling movements of Parkinsons. Hear her story and the theories that are being tested on this phenomenon, a challenge to neurologists to understand. All are welcome and bring an interested friend. Don’t forget your bag lunch! Tea and goodies are always served.

## **The Gift**

by Edna Miller, Justice and Outreach

It was such a splendid train set. But you never got to play with it before it went off the tracks. What an exciting video game you were given, at least it looked to be. The donor was enjoying it, but you barely had a chance to try it. How about that cash gift from your Grandparents, supposedly deposited in your piggy bank, that your parents “borrowed” to pay off some Christmas bills, with its reimbursement still pending. Ever happen to you? It happened and continues to happen to our native people. The Haldimand Proclamation involving the Grand River is just one example. This treaty signed in 1784, after the American (revolutionary) War granted the Grand River and six miles on either side to the Six Nations. This was partly in compensation for the lands they lost south of the border as the Canada US border was defined and partly in recognition of the significant role they played as British allies in the war. It could even be claimed that we have retained our Canadian identity because of their contribution.

Within ten years the crown started to chip away at this grant when Lieutenant - Governor John Graves Simcoe reaffirmed this treaty but removed more than a quarter of the

territory at the headwaters of the Grand from the original treaty. Indian Agents were appointed by the Crown to oversee the remaining lands. These men proceeded to give the lands to their families and friends or to sell them in order to pay for their salaries. Within forty years, 90 percent of the grant had been given away until today only 5 percent remains in native hands. The Six Nations people were neither consulted nor informed of these transactions.

Monies actually raised by these sales or leases or from government reacquisition for roads and canal were supposed to be deposited in a 'Six Nations Trust Fund. Little of it actually made it into the Trust Fund. Furthermore, monies in the Trust Funds were not spent providing services to indigenous people but diverted to things like loans to universities, paying off Canada's war efforts and building much of Southern Ontario's infrastructure- roads, bridges, and municipal buildings. None of it has been repaid. Calculations of our outstanding debt are astronomical.

This is but one example of how we have treated our native peoples – a hard truth in our Truth and Reconciliation process. We have real cause to pray 'Forgive us our Debts'. If we pray seriously then our prayers turn to action as we support our brothers and sisters in their calls for justice, for equality of services and opportunity, for some degree of restitution. It is a very complex issue. Reconciliation is not going to be an easy process. With love and patience and God's help we hope it will be possible.

*P.S. Guelph, situated beyond the six mile limit was not part of this treaty. There is no known treaty for Guelph. Its history at the junction of the Speed and Eramosa rivers is as a 'Gathering Place', a trading centre for indigenous people's vast continental trading system. As such it was an important place for our Native peoples.*

Reference: The Canadian Encyclopedia (2013). Haldimand Proclamation. Ottawa: Mel Hurtig. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/haldimand-proclamation/>

## **New Year's Resolution**

by Ben Fear, Property Committee

“Careful there, I just washed the floor”! “Stomp that snow off outside PLEASE” ! “If I've asked you once, I've ask you a dozen times...”. Sounds like my mother talking to me years ago, but it's really a reminder from the Property Committee. Winter weather can be particularly harsh on floors, wood tiles, linoleum, carpet or even cement. All suffer in the winter time, whether it's by water from melting snow, or the sand or salt residue that is left when the snow dries - it all takes a toll. There are boot trays at each entrance and we kindly ask you to use them and keep them as orderly as possible, both for appearance's sake and also to make it easier to find your own when leaving. Thank you.

Now, let me cry on your shoulder. Back in the early spring of 2016, around the *Ides of March*, one really sloppy Sunday I decided to wear my rubber boots to church. We must have arrived early enough to obtain a parking spot closer to the front door than to the back because I removed my rubbers and carefully placed them on the boot tray in the cloak room. After church and after coffee, when I tried to put them back on, they were very tight... I mean finger scraping tight - unless you had a shoe horn. On closer examination I ascertained that they didn't have my brand on them. These were not my totes! These boots belonged to someone who wore smaller shoes than I who had inadvertently, I suppose, put on the wrong pair. So, since I had now put the smaller ones partially on, I decided I would wear them home and then next week I would bring them back and hopefully exchange them for my own well-used, but proper sized, pair, which would certainly have been returned because they would be far too large for anyone who wore the size I now had on! Well the next Sunday was cold but sunny and dry so I carried the wrong size rubbers to church... but no one else did. You know, I still have those totes. I bought a new pair that fit properly and so I plan to return the small pair to the church where they will be available to anyone who wants to keep their shoes dry.



This episode brought to mind a story about two young medical students who, during their coffee break, would attempt to diagnose any apparent ailment of every hospital visitor who passed their table. Sometimes it was easy: a bandage, a cane, crutches were obvious clues. But one day a gentleman passed by with no visible clues and yet he walked with great difficulty. He just shuffled his feet along the floor and very slowly proceeded with each step requiring much effort. One young diagnostician said "I think that gentleman has arthritis, probably the knees". The other young budding M.D. replied, "I think you're wrong. I think he has badly swollen hemorrhoids ". The first young intern said: "Wow that's a different diagnosis but I suppose we'll never really know". "Au contraire", said the second young Doctor. "We'll just ask him". They approached the gentleman and explained the situation. "I think you have osteoarthritis in your knees", said the one. "And I am certain that it's painful hemorrhoid's" said the other. "Will you tell us why it is so difficult for you to walk"? The subject under observation said: Well, neither one of you is right. I have neither of those conditions. My problem is loose rubbers".

The message here is to put your name on your boots, rubbers, overshoes, etc. because the lost and found box in the cloak room is already overflowing with sunglasses, gloves, scarves, umbrellas etc. If you are missing something, you just might have left it in church!

# The Path to Porcelain: Update on Sanctuary Level Washrooms

by Dave Hume, Chair of the Washroom Building Committee

During the last month, the Washroom Building Committee has provided the architect with all kinds of details, including brands and models of toilets, sinks, lighting fixtures, floor and wall tiles, baseboards, colours of tiles and wall paint, and even down to toilet seat colours and types of coat hooks. All that was an effort to have as few change orders as possible once the construction starts. All that is now in place. I expect the call for tenders will go out in the new year. Mr. Kihlanki, the architect, indicated there likely will be a 4-week period in which the contractors can prepare their bids. It also will be necessary, once the construction starts, to have a wall down the centre of the east end of the Greeting Place, so the construction work is isolated from the public. That will mean construction material will be on the lawn east of the sanctuary and the main entrance facing the street will be the construction entrance only. Therefore, for a



short time, the rear entrance on the lower, west side will have to become the accessible entrance and there will be able-bodied people helping to get physically-challenged people up the lift. We have discussed leaving the actual start of construction until after the Kiwani's Music Festival Competitions here, scheduled for April, has been completed.

Front cover: The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo (1511). Public Domain. Wikimedia Commons.



Come and join the **Manna** group for an afternoon of skating in the New Year! We are skating at the rink by the City Hall after lunch on January 8, 2017, around 2:00. There is a nice indoor place to put your skates on and warm up if you get chilled. We look forward to seeing you there!

Harcourt Office: will be closing at noon, Friday, December 23. The office will re-open Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at 9am. The Church: will be closed December 26 - January 2, except for Sunday, January 1.

# Our Community

## **All Things Christmas – It's a Wrap!**

by Janet Webster

Now that the calendar reads January 2017, it may be hard to think back to November 2016 but this is the first opportunity to let readers know the results of the most recent incarnation of the All Things Christmas sale. It is now the go-to fall sale for arrangements and greenery with a reputation for unique arrangements, fresh, local greens and friendly elves. A crowd of eager customers rushed inside when the doors opened at 9:30 and by 10:30 we wondered if our supplies would last. Lovely re-gifting treasures found discerning new owners. Although not a major source of revenue, this feature is certainly welcomed by certain visitors from the community and adds to the “bottom line”. The bake tables also did a roaring business satisfying all those with a sweet tooth or needing a jar of honey or homemade jam. A certain Reverend was first in line!!

In the Friendship Room, guests could choose a morning snack of muffins with coffee or a lunch of soup, cheese and bread. Many people took the opportunity to visit, relax and connect with others. Again, not a major source of income but certainly very important as a place for fellowship.

Each year we review our successes and weaknesses. There were certainly some glitches and we apologise for those. Judi and Bill Morris continue to donate cedar, red twig dogwood, berries and some poplar for elves to turn into reindeer. Other greenery came from eagle eyed types who knew of trees that were to be cut down and received permission to harvest boughs. Harcourt has become a niche provider of seasonal greenery. We are so fortunate to have the services of several talented designers along with a professional arranger who donates a day to oversee the production.

There are of course MANY who make this event successful. Tasks include: publicity, walkers who deliver flyers, sign painters, greens collectors, reindeer builders, bakers, preservers, soup makers, bough bundlers, bow makers, lunch room staff, provider of background music and the list goes on.

When the sale ended Saturday afternoon, receipts totalled \$5444.00 after expenses. Follow-up orders, and collection of IOUs added other funds so that we actually were able to add just over \$5700 to the Church budget. The team sees *All Things Christmas* as an opportunity to foster fun, fellowship, joy and financial gain for Harcourt. Please mark your calendars for next year's version of the *All Things Christmas* Sale. It will take place on Saturday November 25 with many opportunities for all Elves to participate in the exciting preparations on November 23 and 24. See you then!

## **Gift Cards Helped Those Who Really Needed It**

by Merrill Pierce

Thank you very much for your generous support of the gift cards for the Adopt-a-Family program that the Children's Foundation runs each Christmas. We collectively donated \$940 in 42 gift cards for the teens and young adults. The Children's Foundation appreciates our support each year. Your generosity helped to brighten Christmas for some teens and young adults.

## **Whassup at SNS?**

by Jill Gill, SNS Coordinator

Bravo and many thanks to all those at Harcourt who contributed by volunteering to serve, providing food or making cash donations towards December 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Night Supper at Royal City Church. For those who missed it, I wish you could all have been there to hear the resounding kudos about the food, fellowship and general good vibes all around the room. It was a definite success thanks to your continued generosity. So far in 2017, our dates to host the dinner are **April 22, June 10, September 9 and December 2**. I will keep you posted.

## **In Case you are Curious!! What happened with the Small Group that Met under the Title of: "Aging as a Spiritual Practice - Let's Talk!"**

by Marnie Allen and Stan Bunston

An email was sent to Andre Auger wondering what kind of support could be offered to our congregation experiencing the losses associated with a longer life now that some of us are well along in "the Second Half of Life". Andre contacted us, Marnie and Stan, both active Hospice Wellington Volunteers, and through discussions with the inquiring mind (our original emailer) and ourselves we developed the pilot run of what we believe is an important part of aging wisely and well. After all, we cannot stop time from moving

forward. It is to our advantage to go with the flow -- "like a river flows, carried by the surprise of its own unfolding". (A quote from one of our book resources.)

We had a full complement of 10 participants and ran the group for 6 weeks on Thursday mornings from 10:30 to noon in October and November/16. The content was based on three inspiring books, and more importantly the wisdom shared by the group. We believe that we can teach what we need to learn and it was a joy to learn from each other. If you know someone who was part of the group ask them about "5 - 3 - 1" as a Spiritual Practice. We have invited all attendees that would like to share a piece of their experience of our group to contribute and the following is what was offered:

"We are very glad we participated in this group."

"It was a pleasure to listen to the wisdom of others, to learn from them and feel supported."

"The handouts which we received were very helpful and gave me a chance to think about our weekly focus, plus a rich resource to refer back to."

"It gave me a chance to review my spiritual life and to consider the exciting opportunities there are for renewal."

"We not only learned, but enjoyed a few laughs. Laughter is good for the soul."

Reference: O'Donohue, J. (2014). *Fluent. Connemara Blues: Poems*. Dublin: HarperPerennial.

## **Magical Scenes**

by Jerry Daminato



Ever wonder how the manger suddenly appears in the Sanctuary at Christmas? Designed and painted by Elizabeth Bone (and Jerry helped too!) Originally displayed for one event, it has been re-erected each year at Christmas. It was painted on artist craft paper and meant as a "one off", however somehow it manages to remain together for another year.

2017 Offering Envelopes are available. Pick-up yours today in the Greeting Area! For those congregational members that are on PAR and would like a few extra envelopes for additional givings, or if you have any questions, please contact Heather Hoeg, 519.265.5956. Thank You!

# Announcements

## Passing:



**Young, Joan Laureen** (nee Buchanan) suddenly, on November 25, 2016. Beloved daughter of Cora and James (Jim) Buchanan. Loving wife of the late Clayton Miles (Bud) Young. Both Joan and Bud were former employees of CIBC. Joan loved the farm where she was raised in the Elia area of Toronto, the Buchanan and Sneider families were early settlers there. If desired, memorial donations to a charity of your choice would be appreciated. A tree will be planted in memory of Joan in the Wall-Custance Memorial Forest, University of Guelph Arboretum Dedication service, Sunday, September 17, 2017 at 2:30 p.m.

## Births:

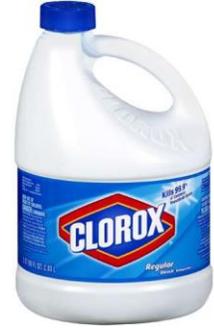
Slevin Gray, born Nov 23, 2016. A new great grandson for Rosalind Slater. Parents are Danielle and Gary Hanna.

Two grandsons this fall for Daniel Ashbourne and Lynda McTavish Ashbourne. Liam Daniel, son of Bryan and Lisa Ashbourne, born on Nov. 6th, and Aiden Harvey, son of Craig and Kim Ashbourne, born on Dec. 15th.

## A Prayer - Even Though I've Now Got Bleach All Over My Pants

by O.O. Mine

Used with permission



I've just wrapped up the last Christmas gift, swept the floor, put back the tape  
Picked up the paper and the ribbon and the scraps from under the cupboards  
As I wrapped and wrestled, you were there, God, you were there.

I'm up to my elbows now in chocolate covered plates and sticky fondue pots  
Half eaten apples and bananas – a process that started with food-filled fingers  
Turning into laughter, then dirty little hands on my clean white cupboards  
As I washed and scraped and laughed, you were there, God, you were there.

You are there for me in grand cathedrals and Christmas carillons  
But you are also there in the small pretty boxes that I create for my children to open.  
You are there in the suds and the taste of warm food and the smell of turkey  
And the tiny splash of bleach that ended up somewhere unintended.  
You are there in the big AND the small things of my life  
In the celebrations and the madness  
But also in the sighs, in the smiles, in the touch of baby lips on mine

You were there when I opened the gift of these lovely new pants last year  
And you were there when I ruined them today  
Never mind. Breathe into my soul, God  
Thank you for my life, heavenly father ... and for being there - always.

It's cheese and egg Sunday again on January 8. Share your blessings with the guests who come to Chalmers every week. Coolers will be ready to receive your gifts at the back of the sanctuary.

# Behind the Scenes

This month we have excerpts from the article entitled: ***The Relationship Between Spirituality and Artistic Expression: Cultivating the Capacity for Imagining***, by Christine Valters Paintner, Ph.D. as published in *Spirituality in Higher Education Magazine*, Volume 3 (2), 2007. Reprinted with permission of the author

[http://spirituality.ucla.edu/docs/newsletters/3/Paintner\\_Jan07.pdf](http://spirituality.ucla.edu/docs/newsletters/3/Paintner_Jan07.pdf)

*The heart of human identity is the capacity and desire for birthing. To be is to become creative and bring forth the beautiful.* John O'Donohue

How does one become creative? More particularly, how does one birth a life in creative and beautiful ways? What riches lie within the power of imagination and creative activity to nurture education? Freeing the imagination is at the heart of this potent process. One way we can practice freeing the imagination is by engaging in the practice of art-making. Unfortunately modern, Western culture has largely emphasized the verbal and analytic in our educational processes and has removed the creative arts from everyday experience by professionalizing them. Consumerism further places value only on art that sells, rendering the focus on art-as-product or commodity. Unless we have been trained as artists, too often we shy away from engaging in the arts. Yet the process of art-making itself can be a path of discovery.

Engaging in the arts as a spiritual practice means honoring the process of meaning making, of cultivating a relationship to mystery. Paolo Knill, one of the founders of expressive arts therapy says: "The practice of the arts, as disciplined rituals of play in painting, sculpting, acting, dancing, making music, writing, story-telling, is and always was a safe container, a secure vessel to meet existential themes, pathos and mystery." The arts do not provide linear explanations of how things function, but point to the complexities and ambiguities of living. They both reveal and conceal and invite us to rely more on intuition than on logic or reason.

When the goal is process over product, the arts can create a safe space for experimentation and for exploration of new possibilities. They also create a meditative space in which one is held in the present moment. The arts afford us insights into life and access to the movements of spirit in our lives that are not available through cognitive ways of knowing. We can suspend our judgments and embrace intuitive and image-centered ways of knowing. The arts not only transfigure the ordinary, but they also are integrative, uniting our intellects with our bodies, emotions, desires, and will. Since the arts are rooted in the existential capacity of the imagination to transcend literal reality, they present us with alternative ways of being and present insights only available through non-cognitive means. In art-making we have the freedom to reclaim our feelings, voice, and truth and give meaningful expression to our commitments, values, and ideas.

By giving attention to the process of art-making we may begin to notice stirrings within ourselves – resistance, insight, joy, sadness — all of which are food for self-insight and spiritual growth. By engaging neglected dimensions of ourselves, we begin to bring a holistic approach to our spirituality and reclaim the inner intelligences and wisdom that Rumi invites us to consider.

By making the arts a spiritual practice we discipline ourselves to make time for our relationship with the sacred or depth dimension through the conscious act of creating. We slowly learn to surrender to a process greater than ourselves and loosen our tight grip of control. We can cultivate a sense of spontaneity and playfulness that opens up our imaginations to new possibilities. Art-making encourages curiosity and wonder. The arts help to awaken us and enliven us. Engaging in creative acts is a vitalizing activity. The experience of being fully present has been described as being in a state of flow or altered awareness where our sense of time changes. We become lost and absorbed and yet are fully present to what we are doing.

The regular practice of art-making is a path of discovery and can help us to cultivate creative ways of being in the world. Ultimately, our greatest creative act is the living of our daily lives. Creativity is about making space and listening deeply to our lives and the world around us; seeing beneath the surface of things to the depth dimension of the world; opening ourselves to the newness that stirs there; developing a relationship to mystery; cultivating a sense of spontaneity and playfulness; and giving form in a loving and intentional way to our commitments. All of these processes contribute in significant ways to the creation of meaning in our lives.

In what ways do you tend to your own desire and capacity for birthing? Do you have practices that contribute to the cultivation of meaning and mystery in your life? Do you take time to simply play and be spontaneous? When do you feel most vital and fully alive? In what ways do you model a lived way of honoring the creative process? I encourage you to reflect on each of these questions and begin to make the changes that will open up new aspects of self, life, and creativity to you and those around you.

#### Endnotes

1. O'Donohue, John. *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004:142.
2. Knill, Paolo. "Soul Nourishment or the Intermodal Language of the Imagination." In *Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publications, 1999: 45. 10.

Christine Valters Paintner, Ph.D. is an adjunct instructor at Seattle University and the co-founder of The Creating Space, a non-profit dedicated to integrating spirituality and the arts. She also writes a blog on creativity and spirituality at <http://www.sacredartofliving.wordpress.com>.

## Harcourt Calendar – January 2017

Updated December 13, 2016—[www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca) for most up-to-date information

### **Sunday January 1**

#### **New Year's Day**

10:00am Worship Service [S]

### **Monday January 2**

Church and Office Closed

### **Tuesday January 3**

7:00pm Handbell Choir [M]

### **Wednesday January 4**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [F]

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

7:00pm Creative Intentions [C]

7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### **Thursday January 5**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]

7:00pm Sharing Evenings [F]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### **Saturday January 7**

1:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### **Sunday January 8**

9:00am Worship [C]

10:30am Worship [S]

10:30am "Manna" Service [G/F]

### **Monday January 9**

11:45am Caroline Harcourt Women's  
Fellowship [F]

7:00pm Scouts [G]

### **Tuesday January 10**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

6:45 Cubs [G]

7:00pm Handbell Choir [M]

### **Wednesday January 11**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [F]

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

6:30pm Guides [F]

6:45pm Beavers [G]

7:00pm Ministry & Personnel Committee [L]

7:00pm Property Committee [C]

7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### **Thursday January 12**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]

9:30am Stroke Recovery Executive [F]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### **Friday January 13**

7:00pm Junior Youth Group [G/F]

### **Sunday January 15**

9:00am Worship [C]

10:30am Worship [S]

10:30am "Manna" Service [G/F]

7:00pm High School Youth Group [202]

### **Monday January 16**

1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]

7:00pm Women's Spirituality [C]

7:00pm Scouts [G]

### **Tuesday January 17**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

11:30am Stroke Recovery Lunch [F]

6:45pm Cubs [G]

7:00pm Handbell Choir [M]

### **Wednesday January 18**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [F]

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

6:00pm Preschool Toy Wash [K]

6:30pm Guides [F]

6:45pm Beavers [G]

7:00pm Council Meeting [C]

### **Thursday January 19**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]

1:30pm Park'nDance [G/F]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### **Friday January 20**

7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### **Saturday January 21**

5:30pm Potluck and Games Night [F]

**Sunday January 22**

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

**Monday January 23**

9:30am Quilting Group [F]  
1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]  
7:00pm Scouts [G]

**Tuesday January 24**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings  
1:30pm GUM Pastoral Care Meeting [C]  
6:45pm Cubs [G]  
7:00pm Handbell Choir [M]

**Wednesday January 25**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [F]  
1:30pm Tai Chi [F]  
6:30pm Guides [F]  
6:45pm Beavers [G]  
7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

**Thursday January 26**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]  
1:30pm Park'nDance [G/F]  
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

**Friday January 27**

7:00pm Junior Youth Group [G/F]

**Saturday January 28**

2:00pm Rainbow Chorus Concert [S]  
7:30pm Rainbow Chorus Concert [S]

**Sunday January 29**

9:00am Worship [C]  
10:30am Worship [S]  
10:30am "Manna" Service [G/F]  
7:00pm High School Youth Group [202]

**Monday January 30**

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

**Tuesday January 31**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings  
6:45pm Cubs [G]  
7:00pm Shared Evenings [F]  
7:00pm Handbell Choir [M]



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**"Can't we outreach from in here?"**