

# The **Harcourt Herald**

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

**March, 2020**



**The Church and  
Coronavirus.  
What Can be Done?**

Harcourt  
Celebrates  
Twins for  
Fuad and  
Kashan!

Awards and Recognition  
for Harcourtians

...and Much, Much more

# 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

87 Dean Avenue, Guelph, Ontario N1G 1L3

#### Office Hours:

Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 3:30pm

E-mail: [Office@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:Office@harcourtuc.ca)

Web: [www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca)

**Ministers:** The People, with  
Reverend Miriam Flynn (ext. 222)

[Miriam@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:Miriam@harcourtuc.ca)

Reverend Jim Ball (ext. 223)

[Jim@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:Jim@harcourtuc.ca)

Director of Music Ministry:

Alison MacNeil (ext. 225)  
[Alison@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:Alison@harcourtuc.ca)

Church Administrator: Wendy Guilmette  
Worship, Communication & Technical  
Support: Shaina Ensing

Custodian: David Kucherepa

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*Your contributions are welcome!*

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Editor: Gillian Joseph  
[theherald@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:theherald@harcourtuc.ca)



## The Church Quill

*Nora Sanders, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada.*

“High alert but low risk.” If you are like most Canadians, you are concerned about the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) but life is continuing as normal.

As of February 16, 358 potential cases had been investigated in Canada, with only eight actual cases identified. As of February 18, 43 Canadians on board a cruise ship off Japan have also been confirmed as infected. Quarantine arrangements have been imposed on those returning from either Wuhan or the cruise ship, and voluntary quarantine is encouraged for others travelling back from China.

That’s fine for us, but for our partners in China, and for pretty well everyone in China, nothing is normal right now. As of February 18, the total number of confirmed cases in China now stands at 72,532 and the death toll at 1,871. Millions are affected by quarantine or restrictions in movement.

Let me share a little of what we are hearing from our Christian partners in China.

Some who were Commissioners at the 43rd General Council will remember meeting Rev. Kan Baoping, who was one of the global guests at our gathering. Rev. Kan was at that time the President and General Secretary of the China Christian Council, and he is now serving with the National Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which is the affiliated Protestant social service organization. He knows Canada well, having been a student of Douglas John Hall in Montreal some years ago, and he warmly hosted our United Church delegation when we visited China in 2016.

When I reached out to Rev. Kan last week by email, he responded, letting me know that he is deeply immersed in the efforts of the China Christian Council and National Three-Self Patriotic Movement to provide medical supplies and support for the epidemic region, Hubei province. In words reminiscent of the words of the Apostle Paul, he asked for continuous prayers, adding that “your prayer will give us strength and support our spirit in combatting against the virus.”



I wanted to share that with you, friends across the United Church, because I know that many of you will want to join in those prayers, asking for God's abounding love and mercy for the people of China.

The United Church is helping in a modest financial way too, working through the American Baptist International Ministries to send medical supplies. The Amity Foundation, another of our partners in China, has provided [updates on this work](#).

By the way, if you have been following the [blog posts of Kelsi James](#), our young overseas personnel with the Amity Foundation, she is back in Canada now, sooner than expected. Even though she was not in the Wuhan area, it seemed appropriate to bring her home at this time.

In the recent Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we were reminded of the worldwide network of love and support of which we are part. Our prayers can mean so much to those facing this time of trouble.



*Park n' Dance at Harcourt Church*

# Three Welcoming Sunday Services

Except for special services, we offer three distinct Sunday morning services: At 9am in the Chapel, at 10:30am in the Sanctuary and MANNA service at 10:30am in the Friendship Room.

**Chapel service 9:00 a.m.** The Chapel service features prayers, readings, singing, and a message. It is quiet and meditative. There is no choir or special children's program. Tea and coffee are served following the service, and some participants gather for additional guided reflection.

**Sanctuary service 10:30 a.m.** The Sanctuary service closely follows the Chapel service, but also includes the Harcourt choir with piano and guitar accompaniment, and occasionally the handbell choir and flutes. **Nursery support is provided in the nursery from 10am until 12 noon.** Tea and coffee are served in the gym after the service.

**MANNA 10:30 a.m. downstairs in the Friendship Room** Is a new, friendly, all-ages, interactive, alternative worship experience that involves hands-on activities and sharing.

Check out the website for more information: [www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca)



**ARE YOU NEW TO HARCOURT????**

PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE  
AT [OFFICE@HARCOURTUC.CA](mailto:OFFICE@HARCOURTUC.CA) FOR A  
SPECIAL WELCOME!!

# Council News

by Lorraine Holding, Chair of Council

Council's February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting focused on Ministry & Personnel Committee items and our plans for the Annual Meeting.

We approved the revised Church Administrator job description for immediate recruitment. We considered a draft job description for a Night Lock Up Team to cover tasks previously carried out by Darko. We acknowledged the appointment of David Kucherepa to a six-month contract as Custodian. We welcomed the news that the church office will be open Monday to Friday, beginning in March.

We continued to plan for the March 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting. It will provide the opportunity to share hopes for Harcourt's future, listen to the Spirit, and guide priorities for this year. Our decision to hold a second Congregational Meeting to discuss and vote on the 2020 budget is intended to provide 'think time' about the future that Harcourt desires. **Please join us on Sunday, March 29 following the 10:30am services.** Watch for more details.

We recognized and said 'thank you' to Kent Hoeg for his eight years as Umbrella Councillor for Stewardship. Kent's ability to analyze and think about the 'bigger picture' will be greatly missed on Council. Later this spring, he will also complete twelve years on Finance Committee and nine as Committee Chair. His ability to present a narrative budget each year and report on Harcourt's financial status has been valued.

Stewardship of time, energy and talents is important. Leadership on Council and other committees/teams always shifts a bit when the List is presented at the Annual Meeting for approval. We thank all who accept many roles. We thank those who have chosen to 'take a break' and we encourage others to 'step up'. What commitment will YOU make to Harcourt this year? With faith and hope.



# COMMITTEE AND GROUP NEWS

## Hot Topic “Food Insecurity” – Harcourt Men’s Group

by Bill Lord

The next meeting of the Harcourt Men’s Group will be **Wednesday, March 11th**. Our speaker this month will be Peter Gill, an active member of the choir, volunteer and former board chair at Chalmers Community Services. His topic will be "*Food Insecurity in Guelph - an Update*". 'Research shows that people who live with food insecurity represent approximately 15% of the population of Guelph'--greater than the provincial average. **Why is this and what can we do about it?** All men and women, as was the case with our recent past meetings, are welcome and encouraged to attend. Coffee and tea will be ready at 7:45 a.m., the meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m.

In your date book please record the date of April 8, 2020 for our next meeting. The speaker will be Gerald Neufeld and his topic will be “*A Life with Music: Challenges, Rewards and the Gift of Community*”.

## There’s a Judas in the Garden!

by Ben Fear, Property Committee

The Judas Tree, or to give it its botanical name *Cercis Siliquastrum*, is a small deciduous tree, a native of southern Europe or western Asia and it is noted for its display of pink blossoms in the spring time. Siliquastrum is a Greek word meaning pod. The flowers attract bees which as they gather nectar from the blooms pick up pollen from the stamens and carry it to the next plant. The name Judas Tree has been corrupted from the French name *Arbre de Judee* meaning Tree of Judea. Judea refers to the hilly region which together with Samaria form the annexed part of Palestine called the West Bank. It is an administrative part of Israel although the UN consider it held by Israel under military occupation.

In Israel the tree is a protected plant. There is a myth that Judas Iscariot hanged himself from one of the many trees of this species and that following this episode the blossoms turned from white to red. Alternatively, a second myth which has been proved to be false, has it that since the red blossoms appear before the leaves, the brilliant colour attracts insects, including

the bees and because of some narcotic present in the blossoms the bees drop dead on the ground among the red petals. The myth is used as a story to show what happens when you yield to temptation.

Here, in the Harcourt United Church Memorial Garden you have the opportunity to view the Judas Tree for yourself, for as the photo shows, we have two of them. We call them REDBUDS. They were donated to Harcourt by the late Henry Koch, horticulturist at the University of Guelph Arboretum. The trees were propagated from seeds pods from the Arboretum by Henry , who after being told that the two purchased by the church had died. Henry explained that the trees that had succumbed probably had been imported from a nursery in a different growing zone hence where not inured to the colder climate here in Guelph. Henry being Henry accepted our thanks as full payment.

Unless we are the recipients of some sunny warm weather Harcourt's Judas Trees will not be in bloom on Saturday May 2 . which is the proposed date to remove the remaining signs if winter from the Memorial Gardens. However, we expect some Fall planted tulips and our usual fine display of daffodils to provide photo fodder for the Face Book fans . Later when the Red buds are in full glory why not plan a family photo in our garden. It might not be a bad idea to have the whole congregation photographed out in our garden. A poet named George Peele (Public Domain), years ago, wrote a few lines that said "*May is not the month of love, for May is full of flowers. April is the month of love, 'cause love is full of showers*". Personally, I think he was all wet.

## **Medically Assisted Dying: Next Speaker for Caroline Harcourt Women's Fellowship**

by Jean Hume

Everyone is welcome to attend the Caroline Harcourt Women's Fellowship meeting on Monday **March 9th at noon**. The Rev. Don Johns is our guest speaker. The title of his talk is "A Gentle Death- reflections on the current state of Medically Assisted Dying". (MAiD). Come, bring your bag lunch and join us. Tea and treats will be served.



## A Letter from the Čiković Family

Writing a thank you letter to the congregation of Harcourt has deemed itself to be a challenging task. To thank everyone for their generosity during Darko's time of need, and then later, in ours, seems just so very minimal with respect to all of what we are grateful for.

When Amila came to Canada with Mia as just a baby, Harcourt was one of the first safe havens she experienced. With overwhelming generosity to take in a complete stranger and her baby from multiple members of the congregation, it was clear from the get-go that the Harcourt community was amazing in ways unlike any other. When Darko later came to Canada, he wasn't only given an opportunity of employment through Harcourt, but he was given the chance to be a part of a community that later became a second home.

Over the years, Harcourt has shown our family so much love and friendship and we are so thankful. From helping us take a trip back to Sarajevo, welcoming us to services and events and always, always, always lending a helping hand and friendship in various capacities.

When Darko became ill, the church congregation made sure to let him know that they were thinking of him, praying for him and were willing to offer as much support possible. Immediately a team worked to help with meal preparations or volunteered to drive him to the various appointments we anticipated him to have. He rested with the prayer shawl given to him, and took time to carefully read each note and e-mail. He struggled to build the energy to say thank you and we all hoped he would be able to do it individually and personally once he regained his strength.

To no surprise, Darko's passing takes a heavy toll on our hearts and our ability to focus enough to get through the day. We thank you Harcourt for your patience. We are so grateful for the love and support we received through meal preparations, endless hugs and phone calls checking in. We thank you for your overwhelming donations and gifts of generosity.

Thank you for the blessings you bestowed on our family and in our lives. Harcourt, and its congregation in entirety, will forever hold a special spot in our heart.

Love, The Čiković family

## **Harcourt Office Hours are Changing**

Submitted by Shaina Ensing

The Harcourt Church Office hours are changing as of March 1<sup>st</sup>. The hours will now be Monday to **Friday, 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 3:30pm**. These hours have been slightly shortened to allow for Office Administrator Wendy to come in 5 days a week instead of 4.

## **A Saturday Night Supper of Kindness**

by Karyn Davies

On Saturday February 1,2020, a group of dedicated Harcourt volunteers served food and fellowship at Royal City Mission in downtown Guelph. Seventy- eight guests enjoyed a hot meal and conversation on a cold winter night. Harcourt served 115 plates of food to this group during the course of the evening. Thanks to all the team members who helped out with this much needed outreach.

Leftover food (if there is any) is donated to the life centre for Monday or given to the Welcome Inn drop-in centre. Thank you to everyone who donated food, baked casseroles, and served! Your help is much appreciated. Our upcoming dates to serve are May 2, 2020, Oct. 10,2020, and Dec.5, 2020. Looking forward to another successful supper! If you can help out, please contact the Church Office.

## **Lay Down a Garment this Palm Sunday**

by Peter Gill

2020 marks the 8<sup>th</sup> year that Harcourt has recognized Palm Sunday as the day we donate articles of clothing which go to guests at Chalmers. Matthew chapter 21 refers to “ a very great multitude spread their garments in the way” as Jesus was entering Jerusalem. So we invite



you bring a gently used item of **spring** or **summer** clothing to any of the three services on 5<sup>th</sup> April. If you prefer, we will have available small clothing cut-outs which can be put on the offering plate - a small cash donation to Chalmers would be much appreciated as you enter the church. Clothing is increasingly becoming an issue in our disposable, consumerist society as so much now finds its way into landfill. At Chalmers, Respect and Dignity are our watchwords in relation to guests. We appreciate all donations and want to emphasize that good second-hand clothing fulfills a basic need for those living with scarcity but also helps in a small way to mitigate some of our 'throw away' culture.

## **No Kidding...It's Twins!!!**

by Jill Gill

You may recall meeting Fuad and Kashan Ali and their two young daughters, Maili and Mena. They are refugees in Guelph from Kurdistan and have been generously supported by Harcourt with monthly financial assistance while they await their Permanent Residence status. I'm pleased to let you know that they have had confirmation of 'Approval-in-Principle' and are now waiting for final status approval which may still take many months.

The exciting news for the family is that **Kashan is expecting twin boys** who will be delivered by Caesarian Section on April 23, 2020 at McMaster.

As you might imagine the addition of two baby boys will necessitate acquiring many items for their care and safety. Firstly, they will need two infant car seats (ideally the sort that will fit into a double stroller). And a double stroller to accommodate both babies and car seats. If you happen to know of a source for these that are second-hand, we would appreciate hearing from you. Since their daughters were born outside of Canada, they didn't bring any baby supplies with them and will have to start from scratch.

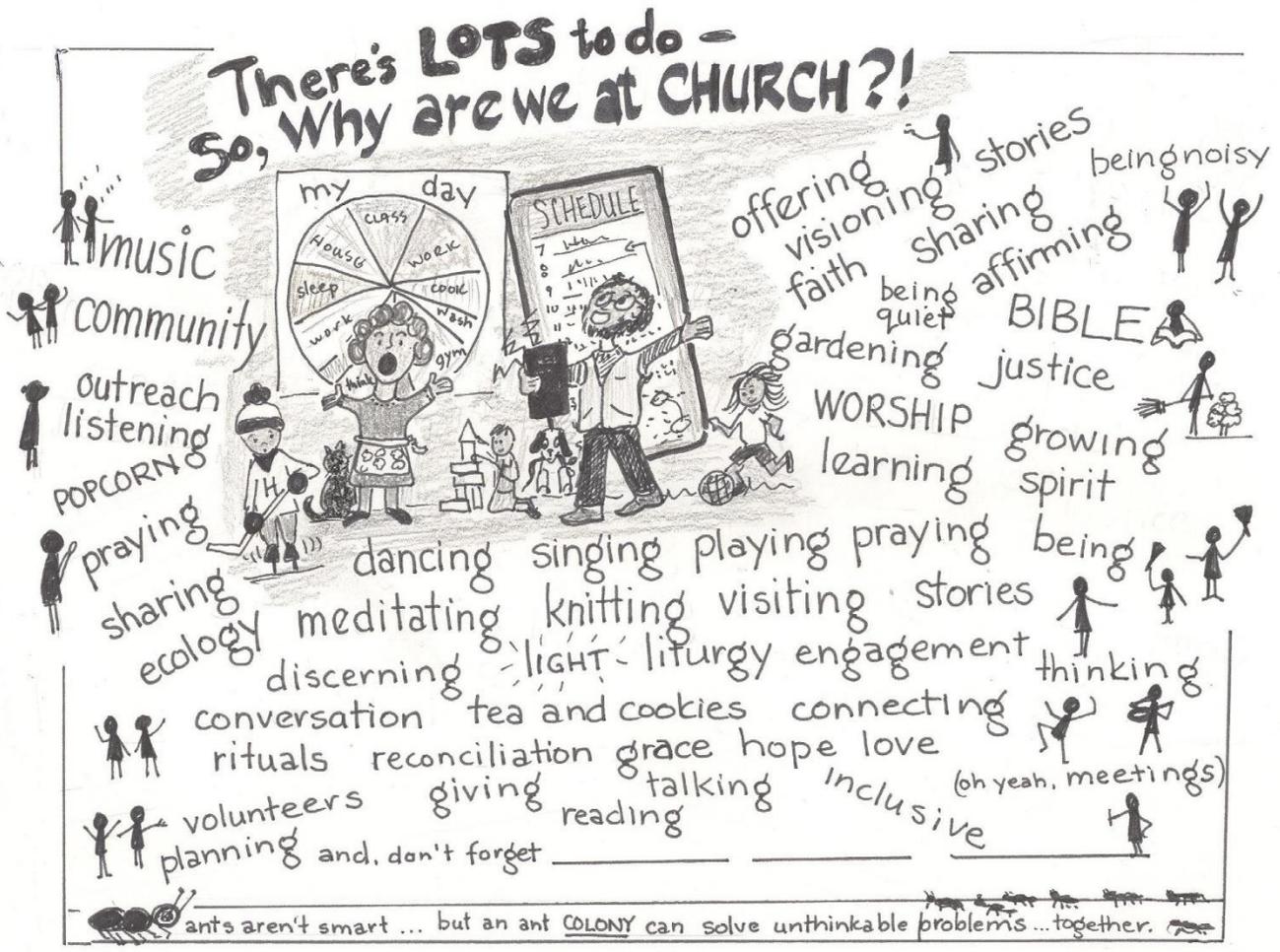
A group of us at Harcourt are planning a '**Baby Shower**' for the family which will take place from **12-2 p.m. on Sunday, March 22 in the Friendship Room**, following the 10:30 a.m. service. Our hope is that if you would like to donate a cash gift, it can be used to buy large items, hopefully second-hand to lessen the expense and be more eco-friendly. There are also many small necessities they will need, such as disposable diapers, diaper cream, receiving blankets/swaddles, bouncy chairs, sleepers, onesies, thermometer, baby wash (fragrance-free)/shampoo (fragrance-free), vitamin D, wash cloths/towels, baby bath tub, blankets, diaper bag, change pad, etc. etc. etc. A list will be available in the narthex before and after the 10:30 a.m. service on March 8 and 15, which you can consult for inspiration.

Since this will take place over the lunch hour, we would gratefully receive donations of sandwiches and squares or cookies for folks to enjoy while they are at the celebration. A sign-up sheet for these items will also be available between services.

Thank you for your support.

For more details, please speak to Jill Gill, Anne Parsons, Mary Harding or Jean Jackson.

P.S. At last Friday's visit to McMaster both babies were growing normally and doing well.



Cartoon by Roz Stephenson

## Welcome David! Property Committee Update

by Dave Hume, Chair Property Committee

Lots of good news! David Kucherepa has settled in very nicely as the new custodian. I have been struck by some coincidences. When David interviewed for the position, the interviewers got to meet David's daughter and his wife. His daughter is 2 and her name is Mia.



When Darko arrived he also had a 2-year-old daughter named Mia. Later I also learned that David's wife works at the University of Guelph with Kent Hoeg. David previously worked in the Parks and Recreation Department with the City of Guelph. He brings to his new role experience in cleaning, snow removal, grounds care and maintenance. David began working at Harcourt in early 2020 and is at the church Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm.

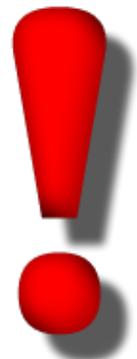
Yesterday David reported there was some water on the floor in the boiler room. It turned out that, with the blowing snow, some of the small flakes were getting down a vent from the roof all the way to the boiler room before they melted, so the situation was not a real problem. Last Thursday was a mild day and the daffodils outside the east window of the Friendship Room were about 10 cm above the ground (and then were quickly back under a snow drift this last weekend of February). I can't wait for spring. I am also sure the University Rowing Club, who do early morning snow shoveling, would like to see winter end too.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee have put together job descriptions for people to do evening lockups and occasional cleanups and bathroom checking if we have concerts or big events on weekends. That way, the church will be ready for Sunday morning services without overtime costs. I want to thank all the people who have pitched in to have those tasks done over the last 2 months.

## Are YOU Ready???

by Joan Barham, Harcourt Emergency Response Team

In response to the increasing numbers of critical weather and other climate-change induced events, in Canada, the Harcourt Council recently approved the formation of the Harcourt Emergency Response Team. The Team will examine the potential role for Harcourt should a critical emergency event develop in Guelph. The



Team will collaborate with the City of Guelph, Emergency Services, Administration and Emergency Preparedness Deputy Chief, Dave Elloway.

The Team has had two meetings with Dave to clarify a role for Harcourt as a community group and partner with the City's Emergency Services.

A key role identified is Harcourt's capacity to keep its congregation members safe in an emergency. This role supports the formal emergency service for Guelph by reducing the number of people they need to care for.

The Harcourt Emergency Team is in early days of planning. We are considering several key areas: communication; awareness/education; possibly opening Harcourt, at the request of the City Emergency Services, as a respite centre for front-line workers; and the development of a template which could assist other community groups who might also wish to participate in keeping their members safe.

We will continue to inform Harcourtians on our progress! Please feel free to ask questions and share your thoughts. We welcome your input!

## Notes from the Chancel Committee

by Barbara Friend, Chair Chancel Committee



Would you like to continue our tradition of honouring loved ones or to celebrate a special event by donating towards the purchase of an Easter plant? If so, please contact Barbara Friend at [barfriend52@gmail.com](mailto:barfriend52@gmail.com) or home: 519-763-5 032 by April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Worship in the Age of Coronavirus: Prayer, Elbow Bumps, Hand Sanitizer.  
(New York Times) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/us/coronavirus-worship.html>

# Harcourt's Hugh Whiteley to be Honoured by Wellington Water Watchers

by Arlene Slocombe – Executive Director  
Wellington Water Watchers  
Submitted by Caroline Davidson

I am writing to invite you to help us honour Hugh Whiteley by:

- Making a SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION to the Hugh Whiteley Lifetime Achievement Award
- Joining us on Sunday March 22 – World Water Day 2020, to honour Hugh Whiteley at *Silence*, 46 Essex St., Guelph. 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Wellington Water Watchers (WWW) is honouring the many years that Dr. Hugh Whiteley has dedicated to advocate for the waters of the Guelph area – the rivers, the river valleylands, the wetlands and of course the groundwater. Not only has Hugh been our go-to hydrologist for the 12 years of WWW's existence, but he has also been an inspiration to many for his tireless commitment to the protection of these natural features that are essential in maintaining a healthy ecology for all life that call these riparian areas home.

Hugh has spoken often of the need to go beyond a modern, human-centric worldview embedded in maligned policies and poor political decisions that mistreat life-giving waters. He understands that our best thriving, and that of all ecology, will happen when we work within the intricacies and balance of natural cycles. And although meticulous and relentless in his advocacy, Hugh has always managed to do this work with a twinkle in his eye and lots of great stories.

WWW is creating the Hugh Whiteley Lifetime Achievement Award. Our goal in creating this award are twofold: to honour Hugh's immense contributions, and, to inspire a new generation of water protectors. This will be an annual award given to one person each year who demonstrates an extraordinary passion and dedication to water protection. The first recipient will be Hugh himself.

WWW has commissioned a short documentary film to honour Hugh and will show this at the World Water Day event.

We are looking for fiscal sponsors for this film to help honour Hugh. If you personally or your organization have been inspired by the lifetime of teaching and influence of Hugh, please consider donating to cover the costs of this mini-documentary film.

DONATIONS OF \$250 OR MORE , will receive a Charitable tax receipt and we will list your name in the credits of the film.

DONATIONS UNDER \$250 will have your name included in a card to Hugh when he receives the award.

If you prefer to mail in a cheque, please email [arlene.slocombe@gmail.com](mailto:arlene.slocombe@gmail.com).

## **A Bit About Dr. Hugh Whiteley**

by Janet Baine - GRCA Communications Specialist

Taken from Grand Actions – The Grand River watershed newsletter.  
January/February 2016. Volume 21, Number1.



University of Guelph engineer and hydrologist Dr. Hugh Whiteley is a passionate advocate for the rivers in his community. For his years of dedication, especially to local waterways, he received a 2015 Watershed Award from the GRCA.

Whiteley's interest in water is rooted in genetics. One grandfather was a sea captain, the other operated a summer resort on Mara Lake in B.C. At age four he received his first paddle and accompanied his parents on many canoe trips.

As a child, he built snow dams in the spring and raced matchstick boats in the runoff streams in front of his Ottawa home. This led to a study of engineering at Queen's University with a fourth-year undergraduate thesis on flood prediction. Thirsty for more knowledge of water, he studied at Imperial College in London (Diploma in Hydrology) and at the St. Anthony Falls laboratory at the University of Minnesota (M.Sc.). Whiteley then applied his training in Guyana (Land of Three Rivers). He arrived at the University of Guelph in 1966 to teach and also complete his Ph.D. in hydrology. His teaching and research focused on water flow within the landscape.

“A great contribution Hugh made to the GRCA is likely the development of the hydrologic modeling system that we use to run all our flood forecasting,” said James Etienne, the GRCA's senior water resources engineer. “And he probably taught half of the engineering staff at the GRCA.”

## FLOOD FORECASTING MODEL

Flood forecasting is a key activity of the GRCA, especially during the spring. Whiteley's stream flow modeling system is called the Guelph All-Weather Storm-Event Runoff Model (GAWSER). It was developed 35 years ago as a tool for research on causes of pollution in the Great Lakes when Whiteley was part of an international group- the Pollution from Land Use Activities Reference Group (PLUARG).

The GAWSER model examined the impact of agricultural drainage on water quality of streams flowing into the Great Lakes. Whiteley applied this model in the Canagagigue Creek watershed, a tributary of the Grand River flowing through Elmira. When floodplain mapping was being updated by the GRCA in the mid '80s, Lorrie Minshall, Whiteley's former student and an employee of the GRCA (now retired), asked him to adapt his model to estimate flood flows for floodplain mapping. Two former students — Dwight Boyd, now the GRCA's director of engineering, and Dr. Harold Schroeder — adapted GAWSER for use in the Grand River watershed. Several other conservation authorities in southern Ontario also use it.

"The model did such a great job of modelling the hydrology of the Speed and Eramosa River and later the Grand River, it was adapted into the forecast model used by GRCA today to help manage and forecast floods," said Boyd.

When it comes to finding engineering solutions, Whiteley has always adhered to the mantra of the undergraduate engineering students at the University of Guelph — "all of us are smarter than any of us." For this reason, he said his achievements have all been collaborative efforts with the contributions and support of his colleagues.

Wellington Water Watchers

<http://wellingtonwaterwatchers.nationbuilder.com/>



MANNA

## The United Church Continues to Support the Ecumenical Response to the Coronavirus Outbreak in China



Arrival of medical supplies to Amity Foundation rescue operation of coronavirus relief in China.

*Credit:  
Amity Foundation*

Amid increasing concerns for those affected by the coronavirus, The United Church of Canada has contributed \$8,000 toward the growing ecumenical response to the emergency in China. These funds will support Mission & Service partner Amity Foundation as they continue their urgent efforts to slow the rise of infections.

As of February 7, 2020, Amity has organized and transported nearly 300 tons of disinfectants, 10,700 medical protective screens, 713 boxes of various disinfection supplies, 3,000 goggles, 43,000 masks, 250,000 pairs of medical examination gloves, and food items to Hubei Province, which has been the hardest hit by the outbreak.

Christians in China are actively supporting Amity's emergency relief operations directly and through the coordinating efforts of Mission & Service partner the China Christian Council.

There is still urgent need for protective medical supplies and assistance. The number of infections continues to grow, with some 31,161 cases of coronavirus confirmed on the Chinese

mainland. Please continue to offer your prayers and support to the people affected, their caregivers, and medical staff who are on the frontlines of battling the coronavirus outbreak.

For more information, contact: Patti Talbot Team Leader Church in  
[Partnershiptalbot@united-church.ca](mailto:Partnershiptalbot@united-church.ca) 416-231-7680 ext. 4018 or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 4018

## **Harcourt Communal Garden: Growing Plants and Friendships**

by Jill Gill

Similar to last month, we've had another snow storm resulting in piles that obscure our raised vegetable garden beds. And, still, you could be forgiven for not being ready to think about vegetable gardening this early in the year. However...

This will be the 10th season of harvesting edibles from the Harcourt Communal Garden. So far, we have harvested 5,521 lbs. of organically-grown vegetables, herbs and fruit (772 lbs in 2019 alone) entirely for donation to the Chalmers Community Services Centre (CCSC) food pantry. This produce is distributed to CCSC guests and supplements the regular food offerings that they receive. CCSC is a Harcourt-supported charity in downtown Guelph.

The Communal Garden is entirely maintained by volunteers who plant, water, weed and harvest during the spring, summer and fall each year. Families from Manna help with planting the seeds and seedlings when the ground has warmed. Last season we had 15 volunteers who worked in teams of four for 1-3 hours on the weeks they were scheduled. Each team gardened six times, on average, from June until the end of October. We also scheduled a couple of work 'parties' where as many folks as were available got together for a three-hour session to blitz the work that needed extra time.

**We would love to increase our number of volunteers**, and since this is our 10<sup>th</sup> season, we will plan some special ways to celebrate our successes and the great spirit of generosity that lifts our activity of producing and sharing fresh, locally-grown food with many of Guelph's food-insecure folks.

If helping in the Harcourt Communal Garden is an activity that interests you, please join us for a short planning meeting (approx. 1 hour) following the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, April 5, in the Chapel. You don't need to be an expert in vegetable growing, just be willing to learn and get your hands dirty! If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would still like to volunteer, or have any questions, please contact Jill Gill at 519.767.1244 or email me at [peter.gill@sympatico.ca](mailto:peter.gill@sympatico.ca).

## Harcourt Leaders Receive Baillie Volunteer Service Award

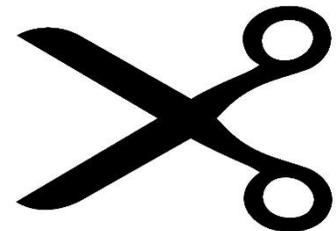
by Merrill Pierce

Lisette Vanderkamp and Suzanne Webster are two of 12 United Church youth and young adult recipients of the 2019 Baillie Volunteer Service Award. Lisette and Suzanne received the award for their work in organizing and running two active youth groups at



Harcourt. They have been doing this, unrecognized, for the past eight years and are very deserving of this award. Despite both having full-time demanding jobs, they give up a couple of Friday and Sunday nights a month to provide this opportunity for youth in the community to come and have fun with friends in a safe, inclusive and respectful environment. They were awarded a plaque and a cheque for this award, which is offered by the Toronto United

Church Council, in a worship service on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a celebration cake was enjoyed by all after the service. Congratulations, Suzanne and Lisette, on this well-deserved award.



by Peter Gill

Harcourt's eco-practice group met in January and one of the items discussed was the kind of practical steps the church and individual members could take in order to mitigate some of the effects of climate change. One of the most tangible and practical items we discussed was the planting of trees.

Swiss scientists in a 2019 article in the journal Science (Bastin et al., 2019) state that—"The potential for global forest cover" estimated that the planting of 1 trillion trees could suck up over the decades almost 750 billion tonnes of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the

atmosphere – about as much carbon pollution as humans have spewed over the past twenty-five years. That’s a lot of trees! However, estimates are that **only** 600 billion of those would survive and current estimates are that 170 billion trees worldwide are at risk of destruction. Take a look at this little Greta Thunberg video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S14SjemfAg&feature=youtu.be>

Guelph’s Urban Forest Management Plan is a 20-year initiative (2013-2032) which, among other things, calls for an increase in canopy cover from approximately 20% to 40%. [Guelph's Urban Forest Management Plan](#) In November 2019 Mayor Cam Guthrie presented his ‘Tree for Every Citizen’ plan to kick off in the first part of 2020. On the flip side over 10,000 trees have been lost to the emerald ash borer in the past five years. While there are no local figures regarding the loss of trees to development, I’m sure we all know of trees that have been cut down to make way for new buildings.

So, what is happening in the immediate vicinity of the church? In the spring of 2019, the city planted four trees on the Harcourt property along the Dean Avenue boulevard. These will grow into large shade trees over the years. Back in 2012 Trees Canada provided funding for Harcourt to be one of the sites of the first urban orchard in the city. We now have four pear trees, one plum, several serviceberries and a hazelnut scattered around the grounds. A more established tree planting has taken place over the past several years in Guthrie Park at the corner of Edinburgh and Forest Streets. An ‘urban shelter belt’ has been created on three sides of the park - a mini-urban forest which creates a windbreak, offers habitat and noise abatement and of course helps absorb carbon dioxide. Take a few moments when you leave the church to check out these examples of urban reforestation.

The eco-practice group will continue to explore ways that we can collectively and individually do our part in fighting the climate crisis we find ourselves in. You are invited to wonder what Harcourt could do to combat this existential threat.

### **Reference:**

Bastin, J., Finegold, Y., Garcia, C., Molicone, D., Rezende, M., Routh, D., Zohner, C.M., Crowther, T. (2019). The global tree restoration potential. *Science*, 365 (6448), pp. 76-79. <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/365/6448/76>

**\*\*Please note the Lenten Study on the environment described below.**



Rev. John Lawson will be leading a Lenten Study at Three Willows on Pope Francis' Papal Letter "Laudato Si". It will proceed as follows:

### **A LENTEN STUDY ON “CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME”**

This Lenten Study will use Pope Francis’ Papal Letter \_“Laudato Si”\_ to guide our conversation on the **environmental crisis the world is facing**. He invites all people – not just Christians – to “a new dialogue about how we shape the future of our planet”. We hope you will be able to join this important conversation.

MEETINGS & DATES: (all on Monday evenings at 7:30 PM at Three Willows Church)\_

1. MARCH 2 – Ch. 1 - What’s happening to our common home?
2. MARCH 9 – Ch. 2 - The Gospel of Creation – inspiration of St. Francis.
3. MARCH 16 – Ch. 3 - What’s brought us to this ecological crisis?
4. MARCH 23 – Ch. 4 - Integral Ecology - a way forward.
5. MARCH 30 – Ch. 5 - Necessary conversations and actions.
6. APRIL 6 – Ch. 6 - A new ecological spirituality.

CONTACT: John Lawson –revjohnlawson@gmail.com and Ph. 519-222-6199  
(NOTE: Book available free on-line \_\_<https://laudatosi.com>\_ [1]\_)\_

# The Church Garden Corner

## March

by Mark Sears



The garden surrounding Harcourt United Church is covered in a shimmering blanket of snow in mid-winter. Only the tops of shrubs with their 'gumdrops' of new snow are visible on the surface. But the silhouettes of the stately trees against the sky and shorn of their foliage present a beautiful backdrop to our winter.

That view inspires me to think of the famous poem by Joyce Kilmer (**Public Domain**):

## Trees

*I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.  
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;  
A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;  
A tree that may in Summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;  
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.  
Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.*

Being a biologist, I like to name things, but the trees have no leaves or fruit so maybe I am stymied. However, when I look more closely, the bark of each tree has a definite pattern that is unique to each species. Foresters pride themselves in the identification of tree species in their deciduous state or evergreen species by their bark, bud shapes and scales, and any fruit remaining in the winter. So, here is a simple test of your observation powers: spot these

trees in Harcourt's garden areas by the bark samples presented below. I have named them for you so you can look them up and also follow their life cycle in the spring when things may warm up.



Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) Red Oak (*Quercus rubrum*) Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)



Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*) Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)

Our Canadian forests and urban trees contain a significant amount of carbon that, if not sequestered in their woody trunks, would be released in the form of CO<sub>2</sub>. That is one of the major the gasses contributing to warming our atmosphere. Keeping our tree flora healthy is an important component of combatting the effects of climate change.

# A ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Passing:



**HILL, Mary** (nee Matthew). It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Mary Hill of Guelph on February 3, 2020 at the age of 87. Loving mother and grandmother, Mary was born in the Blenheim, Ontario and attended the McKeough Public School and Chatham Vocational School for her high school years before pursuing a nursing career which began at St. Joseph's Hospital in Chatham. Mary's career took her to various hospitals including Mt. Sinai in Toronto and Dufferin Area Hospital in Orangeville. Her nursing experience included working

in all departments, but her favourite was working in the obstetrics ward where she thoroughly enjoyed working with newborns. She welcomed everyone into her home and could be found in the kitchen cooking meals for a large crowd. She loved to dance and was never one to shy away from a good polka. Mary was an avid hockey fan and her favourite team was the Maple Leafs. She would often talk about the players that she met through Art's work. Her greatest love was her family. As expressions of sympathy, donations to Canadian Cancer Society or Diabetes Canada would be appreciated by the family. Donation cards are available at the funeral home 519-821-5077 or online at [www.gilbertmacintyreandson.com](http://www.gilbertmacintyreandson.com)

## Other Announcements:

- 10TH ANNUAL TRANSITION GUELPH RESILIENCE FESTIVAL, MARCH 23-29. A celebration of spring and community for one and all! This year's theme, "Local Food: great for you, great for the planet," will showcase the impressive health, environmental and food security benefits of eating local. For more information about the events visit <https://www.transitionguelph.org/project-list/resilience-festival/>
- As previously announced, The Websters are unable to organize a garage sale at Harcourt this year. Unless someone is willing to take it on, as of now there will not be a garage sale at Harcourt this spring. Please contact the main Church office or Janet Webster to volunteer or for more information.



## Minute for Mission

### A Tiny Baby

*The chaplains of Michael Garron Hospital in Toronto have to respond to many situations. Here is one story from a United Church chaplaincy student about her time in the pediatrics ward:*

I remember the first time I saw her. I had to put on a gown, mask, and gloves to go into her room. This tiny baby, hooked up to so many tubes, smiled up at me. She had so much trust in her eyes for a baby who had been abandoned by her parents. She'd had two heart surgeries and was now recovering. Each day she grew stronger, and soon most of the tubes had been removed and we no longer needed to mask and gown. What she needed most was human contact, so I would spend time each day holding her, talking to her, and watching her smile and coo. When she was three months old, her parents came back to reunite with her. They had many meetings with social workers, and I was included in those conversations. Her parents had been refugees who came to this country with their seven children; when the baby was born with Down's syndrome and many health problems, they panicked and left her at the hospital to be cared for. When the day came for this tiny, beautiful baby to leave with her parents, staff said goodbye to her, and many of them were in tears. After she left the hospital, we sat around and shared stories and grieved together. It was a very profound moment in my ministry.

Mission & Service supports chaplaincy in hospitals, universities, and prisons.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.



# Behind the Scenes

## Reflections on Jean Vanier

by Bruce McLeod

The devastating news from L'Arche in late February shocked friends and followers worldwide, including those who gathered at Harcourt last November for the Guelph book launch of "*Tender to The World – Jean Vanier and the United Church,*" by Carolyn Whitney-Brown (2019).

I think the word that fits me most, in the wake of this announcement, is "sorrowful." **Sorrowful** for the wise, bruised heart of the Creator who, disappointed so often, is never as surprised as we are by what the creatures do.

**Sorrowful** for the brave women who, no doubt with trepidation, determined to come forward with their appalling experiences.

**Sorrowful** for the L'Arche leaders, no doubt confused and broken-hearted over one they still love, who resolutely brought truth to light.

**Sorrowful** also for Jean, his spirit broken and aching wherever it is, but always held firmly in God's heart.

**Sorrowful** for the heartsick thousands worldwide still moved, and transformed, by the Spirit that flowed through this man, blessing us all, and still blessing.

**Sorrowful** for the cultural despisers of all things religious who, seizing on this to nourish their cynicism, stand ready (as always) to throw their stones.

Of course, my sorrow includes terrible disappointment as well – yes, in Jean's hidden history now bared, but also in my own, and others', naive, and ultimately faithless expectation, that this good man would always be somehow more than human - acquiescing when people, too quickly (and always to his discomfort), labelled him "saint." He hated people separating him off that way.

When did we forget that God never seems to be able to do much with perfect people? Or people who think they are perfect? Luther, and his namesake Martin Luther King had their shadow sides, and biblical examples abound - from murderer Moses, womanizer David,

persecutor Saul/Paul, to Jesus refusing to condemn the adulterous woman bent beneath the outrage of the religiously correct.

Saints in the New Testament are all the people of God's church together. Only once, I think, is there reference to a single saint. Playwright Bertolt Brecht (Public Domain) wisely warned about living in a "land that needs heroes" – about the distorting effects on us, as well as on the so-called "heroes."

Carolyn Whitney-Brown (2019), whose book on Vanier and the United Church was recently published, wrote a short piece in *Sojourners Magazine* last Spring in the midst of the adulation pouring out after Vanier died. It focused on his discomfort with the "saint" label.

*"Look, friends," she wrote, "here is what I want to say: Jean was not perfect and he hurt people and he knew it. If that reality crushes your opinion of Jean, then you might ask yourself why you want any human being to project perfection. Only the light itself has no shadows, and only God is the light. To turn a person into the light is to create an idol. Jean Vanier saw himself more like John the Baptist, pointing others toward the light.*

*"The one pointing to the light will have shadows and contrasts, areas that remain inarticulate, perhaps inaccessible. I suspect that the areas of Jean that remained mysterious even to himself are inextricably connected to his gifts" (Whitney-Brown, 2019).* Whitney-Brown then goes on to relate what was, for me, a poignant last moment before they parted when she bluntly asked him, "Are you a saint?" "He looked pained," she wrote, "and put his head in his hands. 'Nobody knows me', he said."

In 1972, knowing little about him, as the United Church Moderator I had to introduce Jean Vanier at our 25th General Council. We had lunch together that day, so I could find out more. Afterwards, I knew less about Jean than when we began, but he knew a lot about me. Before I realized, he had drawn out my whole life and held it in his hand, like a bird.

Coping my best with this wrenching news about my old friend this week, I find myself wondering if Jean ever had anyone sit with him, draw out his life, and hold it gently like that. One thing, for sure - we'll never know how abandoned he must have felt on the pedestal where we left him. So sad.

Some of you will know the “Little Prayer” in Dylan Thomas’ (Public Domain) “Under Milk Wood.”

*Each morning when I wake,  
A little prayer to God I make.  
O please to keep thy lovely eye  
On all poor creatures born to die .....*

*We are not wholly bad or good,  
Who live our lives under Milk Wood  
But Thou, I know, will be the first  
To see our best side, not our worst.*

Special pleading? Simplistic theology? Perhaps.

But there’s Gospel there as well.

Reference:

Whitney-Brown, Carolyn. (May 19, 2019). *Jean Vanier: Remembering an icon, not an idol.* Sojourners Magazine. <https://sojo.net/articles/jean-vanier-remembering-icon-not-idol>



**Flash from the Past: Placing the Cornerstone on Harcourt Memorial United Church**



## Harcourt Calendar – March 2020

Updated February 20, 2020 – [www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca) for most up-to-date information

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### Sunday March 1

9:00am Worship Service [C]  
10:30am Worship Service [S]  
10:30am MANNA Service [F]  
11:30am Annual Congregational Meeting [K,G]

### Monday March 2

1:30pm Prayer Shawl [202]  
7:00pm Scouts [G]  
7:00pm Communications Committee Meeting [L]

### Tuesday March 3

10:00am GWSA Exercise Program [G]  
5:00pm U of G Choir Rehearsal [G]  
6:45pm Cubs [G]  
7:00pm Bell Choir [M]

### Wednesday March 4

9:30am Lightshine Singers [M]  
1:30pm Tai Chi [F]  
5:15pm Meditation [C]  
6:30pm Guides [F]  
6:45pm Beavers [G]  
7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]  
7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting [202]  
7:00pm MANNA Meeting [C]

### Thursday March 5

8:45am MindStretch [C]  
1:00pm Park 'n Dance [G,K,F]  
6:00pm Mindfulness [C]  
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### Sunday March 8

9:00am Worship Service [C]  
10:30am Worship Service [S]  
10:30am MANNA Service [F]

### Monday March 9

11:00am Caroline Harcourt Women's Group [F]  
7:00pm Scouts [G]  
7:00pm Women's Spirituality [F]

### Tuesday March 10

10:00am GWSA Exercise Program [G]  
5:00pm U of G Choir Rehearsal [G]  
6:45pm Cubs [G]  
7:00pm Worship Committee Meeting [C]  
7:00pm Property Committee Meeting [L]  
7:00pm Bell Choir [M]

### Wednesday March 11

7:45am Men's Group [F]  
9:30am Lightshine Singers [M]  
1:30pm Tai Chi [F]  
5:15pm Meditation [C]  
6:30pm Guides [F]  
6:45pm Beavers [G]  
7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### Thursday March 12

8:45am MindStretch [C]  
1:00pm Park 'n Dance [G,K,F]  
1:00pm M&P Meeting [L]  
6:00pm Mindfulness [C]  
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### Friday March 13

7:00pm Junior Youth Group [G]

### Saturday March 14

10:00am Progressive Christianity [202]

### Sunday March 15

9:00am Worship Service [C]  
10:30am Worship Service [S]  
10:30am MANNA Service [F]

### Monday March 16

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

### Tuesday March 17

10:00am GWSA Exercise Program [G]  
11:00am Stroke Recovery Lunch [F,K]  
5:00pm U of G Choir Rehearsal [G]  
7:00pm Bell Choir [M]

**Wednesday March 18**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [M]  
 1:30pm Tai Chi [F]  
 5:15pm Meditation [C]  
 7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]  
 7:00pm Council Meeting [C]

**Thursday March 19**

8:45am MindStretch [C]  
 7:00pm Sharing Evening [F,C]  
 7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

**Friday March 20**

8:00pm KW Symphony Concert [S]

**Saturday March 21**

10:00am Progressive Christianity [202]  
 7:30pm U of G Choir Concert [S]

**Sunday March 22**

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

**Monday March 23****Office Closed**

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

**Tuesday March 24**

10:00am GWSA Exercise Program [G]  
 5:00pm U of G Choir Rehearsal [G]  
 6:45pm Cubs [F]  
 7:00pm Bell Choir [M]

**Wednesday March 25**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [M]  
 10:00am Eco-Practice Group [C]  
 1:30pm Tai Chi [F]  
 5:15pm Meditation [C]  
 6:30pm Guides [F]  
 6:45pm Beavers [G]  
 7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

**Thursday March 26**

8:45am MindStretch [C]  
 1:00pm Park 'n Dance [G,K,F]  
 6:00pm Mindfulness [C]  
 7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

**Friday March 27**

6:30pm MANNA Family Games and Gym Night [G]

**Saturday March 28**

10:00am Progressive Christianity [202]  
 1:00pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [G]

**Sunday March 29**

9:00am Worship Service [C]  
 10:30am Worship Service [S]  
 10:30am MANNA Service [F]  
 11:45am Congregational Meeting [K,G]  
 1:30pm U of G Chamber Ensemble [S]

**Monday March 30**

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

**Tuesday March 31**

10:00am GWSA Exercise Program [G]  
 5:00pm U of G Choir Rehearsal [G]  
 6:45pm Cubs [F]  
 7:00pm Bell Choir [M]  
 7:00pm TCOW Info Session [F]