

The Harcourt Herald

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



**ZOOMing
Away at
Harcourt!**

**Harcourt
Cares:
Who Was
That
Mask
Mam?**

**Organizing the
“Heavenly Hosts”**

**Staying on PAR
(Without Golf!)**

May 2020

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

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The Harcourt Herald is published 10 times each year (in paper and digital formats) by the Communications Committee.

<https://www.harcourtuc.ca/space-resources/harcourt-herald/>

Your contributions are welcome!

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The Ministers' Quill



A Prayer in these Critical Times

Written by Bishop Reuel Marigza, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, a United Church Mission & Service partner. Bishop Marigza previously served as General Secretary of The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, with whom the United Church shares in mutual recognition of ministry. Bishop Marigza also served as a member of the United Church's Partners Council
<https://www.united-church.ca/prayers/prayer-these-critical-times>

Merciful God in this Holy week
when our world is in turmoil,
faced with an unseen foe
where thousands fall by the wayside
when there seems to be no end in sight
with mounting infection, more deaths, no cure.

Where can we turn to, but to you, our God
who had been our help in ages past,
our refuge, our comfort, and our strength?

And we hear you say:

“If my people, who are called by my name,
will humble themselves and pray,
seek my face and turn from their wicked ways;
then will I hear from heaven
forgive their sins and heal their land.”

We confess that we have taken so many things for granted:
in our human relationships
in the interaction of nations
in our relationship with the rest of creation.

We have not done what you required:
to do justice, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with you.

We implore your mercy and lovingkindness;
turn your eyes once more toward us
that in your compassion
there may be healing

and restoration to wholeness.

There are those more unfortunate than us,
with no resources on their own.

May a cup of water given in Jesus' name
and a bread broken to be shared,
become channels of your grace
to our neighbours
and to a world in dire need.

May your blessing and protection be with those
in the frontlines who have chosen to serve,
putting their lives at risk
so that others may live.

Restore us, O God, that we may be restored.

Heal us, that we may be healed from Covid-19 and its devastating effects.

In the name of Jesus, who by his wounds we are healed,
and who overcame death. Amen.



Sunday Services

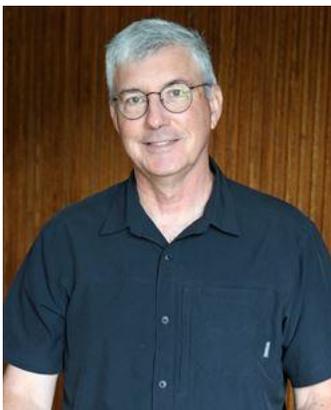
All gatherings and services ordinarily held at the Harcourt building are suspended

*The building is closed **but our community is open....***

Together, we seek, connect & act our shared life of faith.

Please note that due to the COVID- 19 outbreak, Sunday worship services are currently suspended and the Harcourt church building will remain closed until further notice.

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 this [link](#) regularly for worship and prayer resources and updates about connecting with our community of faith. Our webpage is www.harcourtuc.ca



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A Message from Rev. Miriam Flynn – April 16, 2020



Please hold down the Ctrl button on your computer and click your left mouse button on the photos to view/hear the messages.

An Invitation to Prayer



A Message from the Moderator, Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott



Council News

by Lorraine Holding, Council Chair



My Council e-weekly updates since mid-March have shared items that required attention while business is not-as-usual. Through Zoom videoconference technology we have continued our practice of sharing personal reflections, discussing factual information, acknowledging many unknowns, making informed decisions, and closing with meaningful poems or prayers.

At our April 15th Zoom meeting, we opened and closed our agenda with reflections on how Easter Sunday 2020 was a unique experience. While opportunities for isolated worship are appreciated, our practices of group worship are missed. We appreciate our staff and lay leaders who are continuing to experiment with technology to connect us.

We confirmed that all of our staff continue on our payroll, following guidance from the United Church of Canada and the federal government. Finance Committee is monitoring updates about the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program as well as other programs or loans, and providing guidance to Council. Council will explore what process might be feasible if/when we require congregational approval for any financial decisions.

Following concerns about the security of Zoom videoconferencing, we discussed whether that is the appropriate platform for Harcourt to use. Council confirmed that Zoom will continue to be our choice at this time. Our Tech Team is preparing guidelines on how to configure Zoom to address security concerns, as well as what level of licence best meets Harcourt's needs.

Before writing this article, I re-watched Rev. Paul Miller's video message that he would have given at Harcourt on March 15. I encourage you to watch it. **"Acting Ourselves into a New Way of Thinking"** is on our website under the Lent 2020 series. Paul's message urges us to do that: improve what we have, and create something new. He acknowledges that God is beginning to work in new ways, through Harcourt's narrative of Radical Change, and Guelph United Ministries (GUM) Conversations of Change. Taking small steps and experiments with risk are part of acting into radical change and a new way of thinking.

How have we acted ourselves into a new way of thinking following COVID-19's arrival? Many ways! As a Community of Faith and Council, we have experienced worship and the carrying out of business while linked from separate locations outside the church building. We have almost forty neighbourhood groups of people who are beginning to connect with each other. We have become more aware that the church is us, as God's people. Our minds are starting to reimagine what church could be like after the pandemic.

In Council's 2018 book study of *"Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World"* (Alan J. Roxburgh; 2015), we learned that such a journey involves simple activities for listening to God and each other, discerning where we hear the Spirit, experimenting in the neighbourhood, and reflecting on what we've seen and done. Reimagining church means taking small steps that can lead to extraordinary results.

Here are some questions that have popped up from the past few weeks:

- In our United Church structure for congregational meetings, guidance of the Spirit moving in the discussion often draws us in directions we did not expect. For that reason, voters must be participants in a meeting where voting takes place. How can congregational meetings be implemented during physical distancing restrictions?
- What have we learned from having multiple opportunities to worship on-line, and share reflections in the Sacred Listening Circle, at Coffee Time and on Harcourt Cares Facebook page?
- What new forms of connection and pastoral care have occurred through more phone calls and attempts to create small Harcourt neighbourhood groups across the city?
- How can our reimagined use of our space better connect us with our community?
- How might Harcourt become a 'community hub' for partnerships with other As we move into May and its unknowns, we continue to be blessed by the many people who offer leadership and support within our Harcourt community. We are thankful. We continue with faith and hope.



How did you engage in communion online?

<https://youtu.be/sfi9QAAiZUO>

ABC NEWS

(Anything But Corona!)

Free Expert Consultations For Any Landlord or Tenant

Rent Panda is offering free rental consultations (including paralegal help) during this crisis to all landlords and tenants, no matter the question or issue. Whatever your rental question, we can bring you the answer and point you towards the resources that are here to help.

<https://www.guelphtoday.com/classifieds/buy-sell-and-services/look-local-sales-offers-more/1623242>



Calgary Students offer Joy4All Hotline for Seniors and Others

The [Joy4All project](#) was launched by students from the Ever Active Schools recreational leadership program run by the Calgary Board of Education. The teens have created the free hotline as a means of comforting quarantined seniors across North America. However, people of all ages are encouraged to dial 1-877-JOY-4ALL in order to enjoy the regularly updated selection of jokes, stories, guided mediations, and educational messages.

University of Guelph to Prepare Hundreds of Meals a Day for the Hungry

The University of Guelph is supporting a not for profit organization in feeding the city's most vulnerable people. In a news release, the school says its chefs will prepare about 500 meals a day to support [The SEED](#), an organization aiming to end food insecurity in Guelph. The SEED recently launched the Emergency Food Home Delivery Program in response to the pandemic. <https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/university-of-guelph-to-prepare-hundreds-of-meals-a-day-for-the-hungry-1.4905193>

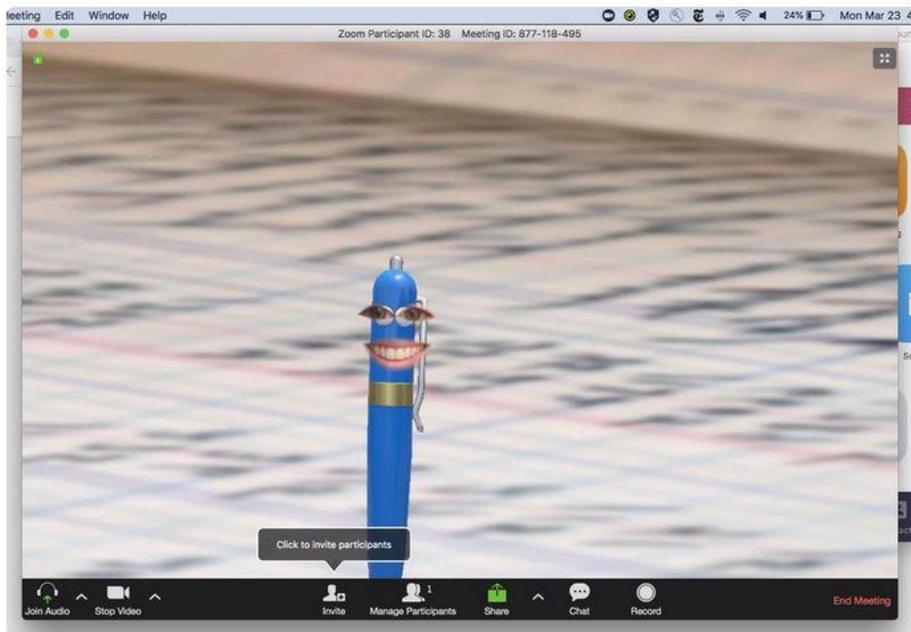
Enjoying Using Zoom for Church Meetings? Here are some funny tweets about the experience!



erin griffith ✓
@eringriffith



omg HELP i was messing around with some zoom add-on and now i have to do a serious business interview and am stuck like... this



daniel taroy ✓
@danieltaroy



just started talking to my cat in the middle of a 68-person zoom meeting—and i wasn't muted!!! send the meteor!!!!

♥ 91 2:07 PM - Mar 16, 2020



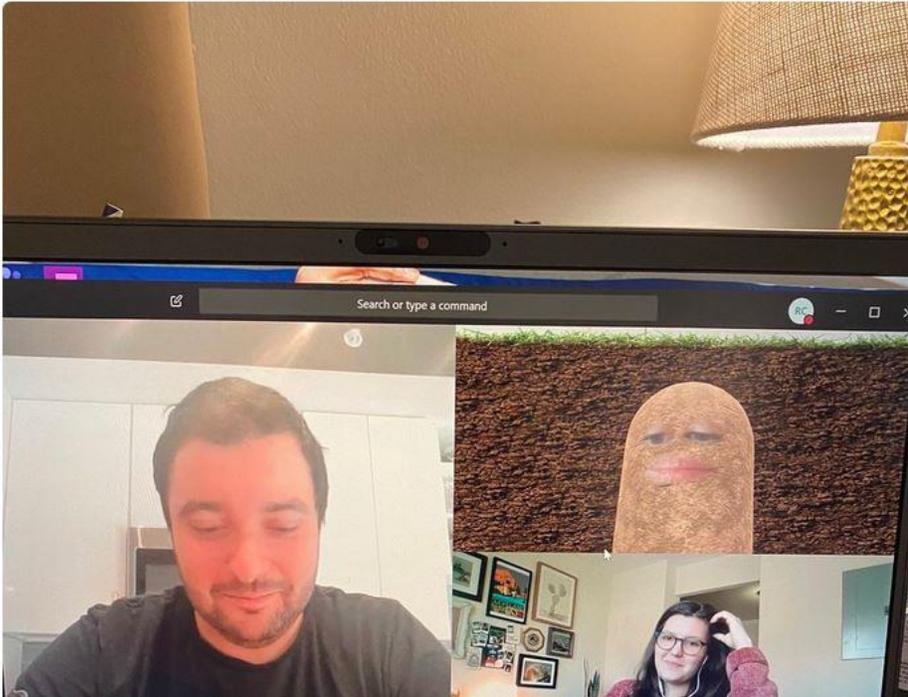


Rachele with an e but pronounced Rachel

@PettyClegg



my boss turned herself into a potato on our Microsoft teams meeting and can't figure out how to turn the setting off, so she was just stuck like this the entire meeting



Kelsey Lewis Vincent

@KelseyMLoo



So apparently whoever was in charge of live-streaming my brother's church service knowingly or unknowingly used a googly-eyes filter on the priest.



PUBLIC HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS TO "STAY IN YOUR BUBBLE" HAS REQUIRED A REWORKING OF THE "Jesus Bids Us Shine" SONG...



COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Staying on the Sunny Side

by Lisa Beattie, Peter Jackson (Spiritual Life) and Suzanne Welstead
(Lisa and Peter are covenanted spiritual companions at Harcourt. Suzanne and Lisa are professional psychotherapists.)

*Grab your coat and get your hat
Leave your worry on the doorstep
Just direct your feet
To the sunny side of the street*

Dorothy Fields wrote these words in 1930, as the world struggled under the weight of the 1929 crash and the great depression that followed it. Then as now, the words are easier to sing and the street easier to cross than is the maintenance of a positive outlook as sickness stalks our world, disrupting through social distancing, self-isolation and economic shutdown. Yet as Jim Ball (2020) wrote in April's Herald, "now is a time for clear, thoughtful and optimistic minds".



How then are we to achieve optimism and hope? Optimism can be thought of as expecting the future to be positive, based on assessment of the facts and extrapolation from them to the most likely future.

To begin with, then, we might pay attention to what sources we rely on for our 'facts'. We have been blessed in this country and this province (and indeed all provinces and territories) with leaders who seem to be transparent about what is happening, willing to allow their public health to speak openly. Mainstream media seem to have been unbiased in their reporting, with the appetite for bad news and scandal (that's what sells newspapers!) relatively restrained up to now.

This is in pleasant contrast to the bombast, lies and muzzling of scientists we observe from leaders in other jurisdictions. The words and actions of those leaders rightly receive attention in our media because of their influence on worldwide developments. Yet even as we shake our heads at such utterances we can also pay attention to the determination of

Canadian leaders to counter them; and as we rue the me-first mindset that leads foreign leaders to deny medical supplies to us, we can also pay attention to the innovative, resilient and public-spirited response of Canadians.

So, step one might be to obtain our information from credible sources. As time goes on and we chafe at the restrictions, it may become tempting to look around for 'alternative facts' that would justify us visiting family or friends. You don't need to look very far to find an article telling you that the COVID-19 crisis is a hoax or a scam or a conspiracy. The Stanfields (2020), a singing group from Nova Scotia, encourage us to ignore such fake news:

*If you read an article you find upon the 'net
That tells you something different than our government
It ain't no propaganda, though you might whine and moan:
Think about the common good and stay the blazes home.*

Once we have ascertained the facts, we need to make some thoughtful assumptions to complete our picture of the most likely future. Some of these will be technical assumptions about things such as infection rates, treatment protocols and recovery rates. For these we can do no better than rely on public health officials and other scientists. Our assumptions about people's behaviour, however, are more subjective.

Sadly, some people will behave like '**covidiots**', a word coined in Australia for the people who still gather in crowds on beaches and in parks. In the USA a woman was filmed coming out of a church service proclaiming that she was drenched in the blood of Jesus and thus protected from COVID-19. We have to assume that a minority will persist in such behaviour: the idiots are always with us.

While media may treat such incidents as newsworthy (that's what sells newspapers!), our assumptions also need to take into account the vast majority of people who are not doing those things but complying as best they can with government requirements and recommendations. Moreover, we can pay attention to the upwelling of people voluntarily stitching masks and other protective equipment for medical personnel and others, and corporations donating their own supplies.

We should also not overlook the way God speaks to us through the beauty of the natural world. Macy Gray (Gray, Lopez, Reichart & Kross, 2010) sings a song of hope to young people depressed by the climate crisis that threatens the world they are growing up in. At the climax of the song, *Beauty in The World*, she sings this:

*When you don't know what to do
Don't know if you'll make it through
Remember God is giving you beauty in the world
So love, yeah love.*

In the end, our assumptions about people have much to do with our belief about ourselves. Each of us is capable of acting with uncaring selfishness; each of us is capable of acting with self-giving compassion. Do we place greater trust in our good angels or our bad angels?

This brings us to hope. Hope, suggests Jim, is grounded in trust. And that is a product of our natural disposition, what has happened to us, and how we have processed that - in other words, nature, nurture and processing.

There may not be much we can do about our nature: that is pretty much a given from birth, except to the extent we change it through mind-altering drugs sourced externally or through intense meditative practices. We offer no comment about drugs, that is ground to be trodden under the one-on-one care of a specialist.

We do recommend regular meditation and other spiritual practices. There is a rich source of suitable practices at Spiritualpractice.ca, a web site run by Andre Auger, as an adjunct to the Harcourt web site. Regular intentional spiritual practice can help you develop a deep sense of Loving Presence, an assurance that you are God's child, held in a Love that will never let you go. Such trust is, for religious people, what carries us through every adversity and is the foundation of our hope.

As to nurture, In the Ignatian Exercises there is an exercise called 'My Blessed History' (Pathways to God, 2019). People are asked to recall memorable episodes in their lives, and to reflect on where God was present in them. Often, the episodes recalled are traumatic experiences of harm visited on one by another person or people, and it is easy to see oneself as helpless victim. Deeper reflection often leads retreatants to identify the Love of God present through a helping hand or kindness even from a single individual, or a movement emanating from their spiritual resources, a 'strange warming of the heart' as John Wesley termed it (Christianity.com, 2007).

And so, one practice we suggest for when you feel overwhelmed is to recall difficult times in your past, and to recall also what carried you through them. If it was another person who helped, remember that **there are other good people around**, also willing to help. And if it was a spiritual resource, remember that it could still be available to you.

Psychotherapy offers many practices that are helpful in addressing how we process what happens to us, and we offer two here. The first is using the Choice Model. When a crisis occurs, it is easy to lapse into negative self-talk, fear and distress and head down the path of victim, blaming yourself or others. This path is automatic and problem-focused, and often leads to low self-esteem and depression.

In contrast, the positive path starts with acknowledging that the crisis has occurred, and continues with examining what new choices are open to you. Instead of putting yourself down, you are compassionate and gentle towards yourself, putting energy into seeking choices that will help you stay on track. Asking a question such as ‘what is the most useful action I can take now’ can put you on the solution-focused path. Actually, taking that step is what Ignatius, in his twelfth rule for the discernment of spirits, would call “confronting the temptations of the enemy firmly, doing what is diametrically opposed to them” (Gallagher, 2005).

The second is called narrative therapy, or sometimes cognitive behaviour therapy. It asks us to draw a distinction between what happens (the facts) and the story we tell ourselves (the narrative). The facts are what they are, although it can take a deal of work to distinguish them from the interpretations we have placed on them. The story, however, is entirely of our own making. So, when we make a mistake, our story might be “I messed up, I was inattentive, I’ve never been good for anything, I’m a total failure.” Alternatively, we might tell a different story, “I messed up, I got confused, I’m still learning how to do this, I’ll do better next time.” As you can see, the story we tell ourselves has a lot to do with setting us on the negative or positive path in the Choice Model.

Finally, here are four pieces of homespun wisdom:

1. Your personal experience is valid; honour whatever your experience is. “Use this mantra, it’s working for me these days: There is no right way to feel right now” (Moss, 2020).
2. Stay in relationship with other people, because trouble loves company. Left alone, your anxiety may well fester; shared, it is likely halved.
3. “All will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things shall be exceedingly well”. Words written by Julian of Norwich, a spiritual counsellor in the 14th century. As a young woman, she had herself bricked into a ‘cave’ in the wall of a church, and she is known by the name of that church, St Julian’s. (For more information read *Revelations Of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich available as a pdf at <https://www.catholicspiritualdirection.org/revelations.pdf>).

4. "Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end" (Sabino, n.d.)
5. As Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh (1930) wrote,

*I used to walk in the shade
With those blues on parade
But I'm not afraid
This Rover crossed over*

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MANNA invitation to Online Worship



Manna is an all-ages church service that normally meets at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday in the Friendship Room (except during summer) at Harcourt. However, even though our building is closed, our community meets each week! We meet online for a service that is:

- Meaningful for all ages
- Experiential – activities, hikes, discussions, food making and more!
- Inclusive and affirming of all
- Fun!

Come and share worship with us! We worship online every Sunday at 10:30am. If you would like to participate, please email yourweeklymanna@gmail.com to receive our weekly worship link!

Hold the Ctrl button and left-click your mouse on the photo below to see and hear the story of Palm Sunday using Lego by Rev. Kirstin Autio



LAMENT for a GREEN THUMB*”

by Ben Fear, Property Committee

When it's springtime in the garden
And there's dead leaves all around
I know they should be cleaned up
But this is what I found

It's not conducive to good health
To work in too, close quarters
The virus has proved deadly
And really knows no borders

So the Property committee
The ones who have the voice
Decided to forego the cleanup
They really had no choice

So there will be no need to
Rise early on May two
The work party has been cancelled
So this is what to do

Keep checking on the message
That comes to you each week
And we 'll be sure to tell you
The hour and day of week

To turn out with your garden rake
And gloves to hide your pinkies
In case your gather up some stuff
That turns out to be stinky

When it's Springtime in the Rockies
Flowers bloom through through all the lands
So remember — “ After gardening
Don't forget to wash your hands “.

* authors note
to be read with bagpipe accompaniment



ANNOUNCING THE
HARCOURT CHURCH **LIBRARY**
BOOK SERVICE

Here's how it works:

1. Check out the Harcourt Library Catalogue of book holdings online at <https://bit.ly/2JhiHfz> (or we'll mail you a copy).
2. Choose the book(s) etc. that interest you.
3. Send an e-mail to Harcourtbook@yahoo.com to request a book etc. or phone 519-837-8453.
4. A member of Harcourt will contact you and work with you to purchase a local or digital copy of the material that you want that will be delivered to you.

Goings On...

by Dave Hume, Chair of the Property Committee.

It feels like the whole world changed in the last month! I thought you might like to know how things are happening. At Harcourt, the church is closed, as you know, but the insurance policy requires that there is an inspection at least once every 24 hours. So, up until today (April 17th), Mark Sears and I have set up a schedule to do a walk-through from Saturday to Thursday and Mark collects the mail and contributions. Mark and Marilyn do the counting and deposits. On Fridays, Wendy comes in and distributes the mail. Shauna and Marilyn and Jane work from home but some of the videos that Miriam has made were done in the Chapel. The United Church has urged its congregations to keep their employees on salary, so David Kucherepa will begin doing the walk-throughs tomorrow and grass cutting when needed. I can report that the church is fine, that the daffodils are starting to open, that there's a sign on the main entrance advising church mice that the church is closed until further notice and the mice are to stay away during that time too.

The Property Committee had decided to have a spring clean-up on May 2 but that has been cancelled. Please see Ben Fear's poem in this Herald. Many Harcourt people have been helping out in many ways during these trying times and I would like to say "Thank you". One of the pleasant surprises for me has been the way good people have responded so well in these times of need.

There May Be no Golf, but you Can Still Stay On PAR!

by Brian Magee, Finance Chair

Harcourt's Finance Committee is exploring all options such as government subsidies and short-term loans to maintain sufficient operating revenue. Operating revenue allows Harcourt to continue paying staff and regular expenses. Though the Church is closed during COVID 19, expenses are still ongoing. The loss of Sunday offering and rental income may stretch and even deplete our available operating funds.

Thank you to those contributing by PAR. PAR provides a stable monthly source of revenue. Members and friends not on PAR can help by signing up for PAR, by mailing post dated cheque(s) to the church, by e-transferring funds online through their bank, or donating on line using the Donate Now button on the Harcourt website. To set up PAR, email Wendy at office@harcourtuc.ca for the current process. E-transfers also use the



office@harcourtuc.ca email address and do not require a password for deposit. If you require further information on ways to donate, visit the financial section of Harcourt's website or contact me.

Thank you to those who have already shown their continuing support by using these donation methods. Your support allows Harcourt to continue to be God's presence in our community and beyond.

How the Virus Stole Easter

With a nod to Dr. Seuss

by Kristi Bothur

Used with permission

Submitted by Lynn Handcock, Umbrella Councillor for Stewardship

Twas late in '19 when the virus began
Bringing chaos and fear to all people, each land.

People were sick, hospitals full,
Doctors overwhelmed, no one in school.

As winter gave way to the promise of spring,
The virus raged on, touching peasant and king.

People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen.
They YouTubed and Zoomed, social-distanced, and cleaned.

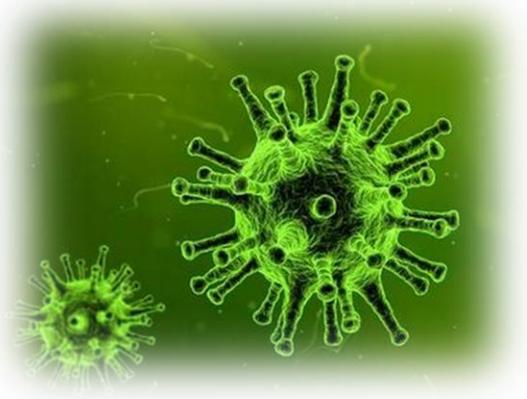
April approached and churches were closed.
"There won't be an Easter," the world supposed.

"There won't be church services, and egg hunts are out.
No reason for new dresses when we can't go about."

Holy Week started, as bleak as the rest.
The world was focused on masks and on tests.

"Easter can't happen this year," it proclaimed.
"Online and at home, it just won't be the same."

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the days came and went.
The virus pressed on; it just would not relent.



The world woke Sunday and nothing had changed.
The virus still menaced, the people, estranged.

"Pooh pooh to the saints," the world was grumbling.
"They're finding out now that no Easter is coming.

"They're just waking up! We know just what they'll do!
Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,
And then all the saints will all cry boo-hoo.

"That noise," said the world, "will be something to hear."
So it paused and the world put a hand to its ear.

And it did hear a sound coming through all the skies.
It started down low, then it started to rise.

But the sound wasn't depressed.
Why, this sound was triumphant!
It couldn't be so!
But it grew with abundance!

The world stared around, popping its eyes.
Then it shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise!

Every saint in every nation, the tall and the small,
Was celebrating Jesus in spite of it all!

It hadn't stopped Easter from coming! It came!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!

And the world with its life quite stuck in quarantine
Stood puzzling and puzzling.
"Just how can it be?"

"It came without bonnets, it came without bunnies,
It came without egg hunts, cantatas, or money."

Then the world thought of something it hadn't before.
"Maybe Easter," it thought, "doesn't come from a store.
Maybe Easter, perhaps, means a little bit more."

And what happened then?
Well...the story's not done.
What will YOU do?
Will you share with that one
Or two or more people needing hope in this night?
Will you share the source of your life in this fight?

The churches are empty - but so is the tomb,
And Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.

So this year at Easter, let this be our prayer,
As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.

May the world see hope when it looks at God's people.
May the world see the church is not a building or steeple.
May the world find Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection,
May the world find Joy in a time of dejection.
May 2020 be known as the year of survival,
But not only that -
Let it start a revival.

Reading Suggestions

Janet Webster, Library Committee

Just before the buildings closed, I had set aside 3 books for consideration by the Library committee. They are still here in my home and I have been dipping into them over the last few weeks.

Embers -One Ojibway's Meditations by Richard Wagamese A selection of meditations where the author found lessons in both the mundane and sublime . Here he explored the manifestations of stillness, harmony, trust, reverence, gratitude and joy. (from the introduction)



The Wisdom of the Native Americans by Kent Nerburn (editor) Part 1 is entitled: The Ways of The Native American, Part 2: The Soul of An Indian and Part 3: The Wisdom of the Great Chiefs. These are a collection of thoughts or speeches by Ohiyesa, Chief Red Jacket, Chief Joseph and Chief Seattle

A Little Book of Celtic Wisdom compiled by Sean McMahon A little anthology taken from monastical writings in the 12th century.

A book mark included with the last book reads as follows:

*I arise today
Through the strength of heaven,
Light of sun,
Radiance of moon,
Splendour of fire,
Speed of lightening,
Swiftness of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.*

Zooming Away! Online Harcourt

by Joan Barham, Communication Chair

During the last month, Harcourt has undergone a transformation. We no longer are using our building. Ministers, and Administrative staff are working from their homes. Council, committees, groups and services are meeting online. Concurrent with this is the reality that Harcourt now has **about 37 geographic Neighbourhood groups**, each with their “Heavenly Host”. This has been developed by Lynn Hancock and is inclusive of all in the Harcourt , directory . This new structure has many, many possibilities for caring, sharing..... and lends itself to developing new ways of being in community, connecting us as we shelter in our homes during this COVID – 19 pandemic.

Online and on the ground we are seeing Harcourt in a new form. This provides Harcourt with a way of gathering and also caring while we are still all in our homes. Quite a remarkable undertaking, especially seeing that it has come together in this last month!

The Communication Committee wishes to acknowledge what comprises Harcourt Online:

Staff

Jim Ball - Minister

Miriam Flynn – Minister

Alison MacNeil – Music Director

Wendy Guillmette – Administrator

Shaina Ensing – Technology

Pam Girardi - MANNA

All Staff can be contacted through the church office or through their e-mail addresses. Shaina uses Zoom and e-mail.

Most Harcourt meetings and groups run online using the software called Zoom . We hope you will join an online Harcourt Group. To participate you only need to call or e-mail the Church Office Manager (Wendy) who will direct you to the contact person for the group you are interested in. Here is a list of the meetings that are currently taking place:

Worship Services

MANNA Service (time varies) – you need an invitation through the Office to attend this Zoom service

Council and Committees meeting on Zoom

Property

Spiritual Life

Ministry and Personnel

Communication

Finance

Worship

Groups on Zoom

Women's Spirituality

Choir - Private

Coffee at 11.00 - Sunday

Progressive Christianity - Saturday morning

Bible Stories for These Times – April 15 – May 6

Eco Justice - on line, but on pause

Holy Listening – Sunday 11.00am

Mindstretch - 10am Thursday

Other Connecting Opportunities

Harcourt worship videos and spiritual resources.(Harcourt website, Harcourt Facebook, Harcourt U-tube)

Harcourt Herald (website)

Weekly E – Letter

Friday Reminder – Sunday services

Prefer to get your information in writing? Please contact the Church Office.

COMMUNITY

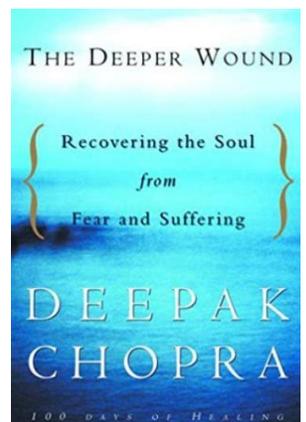
Deeper Wound – A Book Review

by Lisa Browning

I finished reading my first book of my "book a week" challenge, but forgot to post about it! It's interesting ... Deepak Chopra's "The Deeper Wound" has been on my to-read list for quite some time. Because it was written so long ago (2001) it's no longer available in stores. I ordered it from Amazon, and it was shipped to me from India!

Although Deepak wrote this in response to 9/11 (and I did not know this when I ordered it), I was amazed at how relevant it still is (and particularly given our worldwide situation now).

I loved this book. Very short, and easy to read ... but also very raw. He talks a lot about fear, self-worth, and our common connection. I got a lot of clarity from it, and had a lot of "aha" moments.



I was somewhat disappointed when the "narrative" ended, and the last half of the book was filled with 100 daily affirmations (meant to be read one per day). I read them all in one sitting instead, and did gain some further insight from Deepak's commentary on each affirmation.

A highly recommended book!

Reference:

Chopra, D. (2001). *The Deeper Wound: Recovering the Soul from Fear and Suffering*, 100 Days of Healing. New York: Harmony Books.

Updating the Harcourt Directory – A Labour of Love

by Lynn Hancock

In January 2020, I took on a new project in order to get to know more about the members of my Harcourt community and to know more about their God given gifts and talents. With a copy of a 33 page office directory in hand, I began making phone calls to folks with the knowledge and support of Merrill Pierce, Kathy Magee, Lorraine Holding, Esther Devolin and the Church Council. I was energized by my curiosity. The people I called were told that I was calling on behalf of Harcourt United Church and I was helping to update the directory. I was also hoping to ask a few questions; including :”How do you feel most connected to Harcourt?”



Back in January and February B.C.,(before Co-vid 19), I found it easier to catch people at home on weeknights and weekend afternoons when it was either snowing or raining. Nobody hung up on me and I was appreciative of how gracious folks were. I experienced a wide range of responses; e.g. “the number you have reached is no longer in service” and “the number you have reached cannot accept incoming calls”. I was actually pleasantly surprised when someone answered because so many folks have been hooping other ways to communicate. The number of voicemail messages for me, on any given day, were few compared to the emails in my inbox. How were people going to respond to a complete stranger asking them about their connection to Harcourt? Well, in January and February, I made 85 phone calls to folks who were willing to share their connections to Harcourt and respond to questions long enough for me to make notes. Wow! What a fascinating, educational and invigorating experience. Everyone, without exception, had, at some point in time, felt connected to Harcourt. For some, they had fond memories of

their kids going to Sunday School. Their kids grew up, had kids of their own, and the parent/grandparent, over time, had “drifted away”. Very few told me they were attending another United Church in Guelph. Their Sundays were still important but they were spending their Sundays visiting family, enjoying the freedom of retirement and their ability to travel. Enjoying Nature. Camping. Spending summers at their cottage, spending their winters in warmer climates. I didn’t hear anybody complain or find fault with Harcourt. They were just enjoying the freedom to make choices that best fit their stage in life and circumstances. When they said: “Well....I haven’t actually been coming to church lately, almost apologizing for their absence, I would say they were in good company, supporting them to follow whatever helped them to feel nurtured, supported, replenished and rejuvenated. In one case, a woman told me: “My church is my garden.”. For someone else, being in Nature helped her to feel more connected to God and she loved hiking.

If you have been called by me or another “Heavenly Host”, THANK YOU for being willing to help us update our Harcourt directory. Before the church was locked, I had felt inspired to borrow the Historic Roll and make notes of those who are still members; members by profession of faith(p of f), members by transfer (T), and those confirmed (C). I called the United Church of Canada and was sent information from “The Manual” describing all the different ways people could engage. Some folks on the directory are “adherents”. Although not members, they feel a connection to Harcourt and appreciate being able to engage in mid-week activities.

If you are contacted by a “heavenly host”, recruited to help in this quest to have an updated directory, please know that it is our intention to express appreciation for your participation and respect whatever choice you make. We have tried to maintain a tone of invitation and essence similar to communion where it has been said, “come because you may come, not because you must come.”

How does an updated directory serve the Harcourt community? What are the benefits moving forward? Information you share is being forwarded to either Wendy Guilmette, (Harcourt’s Office Administrator) or Shaina Ensing, Worship, Communications and Technical Support Staff. FYI, Shaina is the one responsible for sending out the e-harcourt weekly to folks requesting a weekly on-line update.

On Saturday, March 14th, a decision was made by members of Council and qualified health care advisers, to suspend worship services at Harcourt until the end of April, effective March 15th. That decision sparked a series of meetings in order to decide how to move forward with alternative forms of worship. If not in the church building, how, where and when? In an attempt to keep folks safe and help prevent folks from being exposed to a new mysterious virus, we were soon introduced to ZOOM technology.

At the end of the first ever Council meeting on Zoom, Kent Hoeg reminded us that we were actually due for a new photo directory. As a newcomer to Harcourt in 2014, I was so thankful to have my own hard copy of the 2016 photo directory. I was keen to imagine a 2020 version. The following morning, I was inspired to attach a map of Guelph to a cork board and use map pins to show how spread out congregants were. Thanks to the revised database, I had proof that folks were driving from Fergus, Elora, Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Puslinch. Although I was delighted to see how far people were willing to drive in order to feel connected to a gathering space on Dean Avenue, I imagined the benefits of creating smaller neighbourhood groups based on addresses provided.

If we were to observe the new social distancing requirements, all those willing to be in the church directory could get a possible sense of belonging if they were given an opportunity to belong to a smaller neighbourhood group. Individuals could, of course, choose how to engage. I recruited almost 40 volunteers to serve as “Heavenly Hosts”. They were asked to make their initial contact around Easter time and either confirm the information to be saved on the database or share changes of address, phone numbers and emails.

As Fred Graham reminded us in the movie: “[Places of Worship](#)”, “What is a Church? You and I form the body of the whole people of God. Hence, we are the Church.”...“Christians do not always need special Holy places removed from ordinary life. God meets us in the ordinary. For those of us attending the first two Re-imagine Conferences in Hamilton, we could not have imagined that we would be literally re-imagining church in 2020. The building is closed and we, the church, are finding new ways to connect and be the Church.

What have I learned since the middle of January? I have learned that the Harcourt community has an abundance of human resources!

What can you expect moving forward? You can anticipate your neighbourly host contacting you and asking how you have managed this last month in self-isolation and/or quarantine. What sustained you? Was it prayer, phoning loved ones and neighbours, meditation, sewing masks, sketching, dancing, writing, going for a walk, watching services online, engaging in small group zoom gatherings, baking, mailing cards, following the e-harcourt weekly, watching inspirational videos, reading inspirational blogs, following loved ones on Facebook?

You each have a voice and you deserve to be heard. As a Harcourt community, we maybe asked to make decisions that require congregational input/support. In order to move forward as a community of faith, every voice matters, every vote counts. If you want to have an opportunity to express an opinion and/or provide input to a discussion/decision moving

forward, we encourage you to respond to upcoming surveys intended to discover how best to move forward in these uncertain times. You may be contacted by your neighbourly host and asked what kind of photo directory you would like to have. What kind of directory would best serve our community and your needs? Could our next directory include your talents/passions/interests? How would you feel about submitting a photo taken on your trip to Peru, an Alaskan cruise, hiking the Bruce Trail? On a personal note, I'd love to refer to a Harcourt directory and hire someone who is tech savvy. I'd love to order a pie from someone referred to as the "pie lady". I'd love to buy a painting from a local artist. I was delighted to receive a card in the mail from one among us who designs/makes her own cards. She is customizing each card to match the occasion and is cutting and pasting from her substantial card collection. Recycling at its best, eh?! I will treasure that one of a kind hand written note and keep it as a reminder of days gone by when people sent cards with personal messages. I hope to hear more stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things in unprecedented times. "Talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift to God". – Leo Buscaglia

Reference:

Buscaglia, L. (n.d.). Brainyquote.

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/leo_buscaglia_150305



Duck Parking at Harcourt!

Photo by Sarah Lowe

The Church Garden Corner

A Very Special Magnolia Tree

by Sarah Lowe

The church garden undergoes a dramatic transformation throughout the month of May. If you go out for a walk now and again, consider walking round the church property. You will



see several shrubs and trees with spectacular showy blossoms, starting with yellow **forsythia**, followed by white **serviceberries** and magenta **redbuds**, all in the Celebration garden.

One flowering tree you mustn't miss is the very special **magnolia** near the southerly front door of the church, right beside the entrance driveway. This tree was planted by three Dutch families 25 years ago, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands by Canadians, at the

end of the second world war (May 5, 1945). A local nurseryman tells me it is probably the hybrid variety "Betty". The variety was chosen well, because the showy pinkish-purple flowers open later than other magnolias, and as a result they usually avoid being damaged by late frosts. Last year the glorious show of flowers extended over several weeks. Quite a show!

I find it moving to reflect on the important world event that this tree commemorates; an event that took place exactly 75 years ago this month. A big thank you to the Dykeman, Ragetlie and Vanderkamp families, who help us remember!



“You shall not pollute the land in which you live...” Numbers 35:33.

Ok, you’ve been pretty good at recycling and taking your cloth bags to the grocery store, right? But oh, oh...COVID-19 regulations for grocery stores mean that you can’t always bring your bags with you anymore! You have to use plastic. So, what do we do with a box full of plastic bags? Well...if you’ve got a bit of time (ha ha!) why not make these lovely items:



Make a basket out of plastic grocery bags

<https://www.instructables.com/id/Make-a-basket-out-of-plastic-bags/>

Make a Foot Stool:

These hassocks/cushions are made by weaving strips of plastic bags together, then stuffing plastic bags inside them.

<https://www.bobvila.com/slideshow/trash-to-treasure-10-upcycled-products-we-covet-44667#recycled-plastic-bag>





Make a beautiful (and easy) wreath!

https://www.gracefullittlehoneybee.com/rag-wreath-tutorial/#_a5y_p=3621984

We're also coming up to spring planting time (traditionally the May 24th weekend). Check out your local Guelph nursery to see if they have a "curbside" pickup for buying plants online. Try to purchase drought resistant plants if you can – they're better for the environment.

Harcourt Cares

Who Was That Mask Mam?

An Interview with Ann Parsons



Ann Parsons

During World War II thousands of people (women mostly) knitted socks, sewed bandages and parachutes and mended clothes for the military. Fast forward to the COVID-19 crisis and here begins the story of Harcourt member Ann Parsons. One day Ann was looking at Facebook when she came across the webpage of Toronto fashion designer, Diana Coatsworth. Diana had heard the desperate cry from healthcare and essential workers for personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect them against contracting the virus, and she had set up a system to respond. On her website, Diana made connections between those who needed equipment and those who could make and deliver it. She also set up a webpage providing information and patterns on how to sew facemasks (both standard and specific for front-line health workers) as well as providing patterns for sewing caps and gowns. The "Sewing Army"



Thank you to Anne Parsons and her sewing crew, at the Village by the Arboretum, for donating over 300 handmade masks for our Residents at Arbour Trails.

62

3 Comments
5 Shares

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became a term used with pride as ordinary people began to come together to put their skills to work for a great cause.

You may not be surprised to learn that Ann Parsons is a quilter who lives in the Village by the Arboretum (VBA). She knew her skills and the skills of many of her friends would be well matched with what Diana was looking for. So, she joined the Sewing Army team and became Harcourt's "mask mam" (apologies to the Loan Ranger). In late March, and in partnership with Harcourt's Jean Hume, Ann and Jean brought 12 seniors together in the VBA to sew masks. Their first task was to serve the needs of the staff in their own community at Arbor Trails who initially required 50 masks - they were given 70 made by the team. The next task was a request from Hospice for 35 masks, which were made and delivered. Once the word got out, the requests for masks grew and grew. The team made masks for staff in Toronto hospitals, made 300 more masks for Arbor Trails, 140 for midwives, 50 for care workers in St. Jacobs and so on. The team members began to specialize – some making regular masks, others making specialized masks for healthcare workers where filters could be fitted in the front. Some cut material only, some made just the strings for attaching the masks. Donations of fabric and thread came from all directions – fabric store owners, personal stashes of material, sheets and pillow cases, quilters ends, etc. Even Ann's husband literally sacrificed the shirt off his back and all of his t-shirts which were stripped apart for the cause.



As the group of volunteers increased and the machines sewed furiously, more and more requests came in. Ann laughs as she says that some of the seniors hadn't used their older machines in years, and there were a few learning curves to overcome. Those whose machines needed repair moved temporarily to cutting fabric. But volunteers were patient and dedicated and got the job done. So far 728 masks have been made by the VBA group and by

the end of April the number will increase to 1,000. This is how Harcourt, and its greater community, cares.

Nevertheless, the bigger picture is astounding. In Toronto, Diana keeps track of the masks made and given out by her Sewing Army – now with seamstresses and deliveries in other provinces. A graduate of George Brown College’s Fashion program, Diana, like many small business owners, found herself out of work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. When she read about the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), she knew that she could help. She quickly started a Facebook group called the *Sewing Army*, where she and other members help thousands of people develop patterns and source materials for face masks and other PPE. The Sewing Army has grown from 10 sewers to more than 3,000 sewers and helpers across Canada.

The masks are being donated to those working in essential services including health care, grocery store employees, cleaners and nursing home workers. So far the whole group has made 23,665 masks, 1,685 caps and 170 gowns for a total of 25,520 PPE. For more information about how you can volunteer to sew or deliver these products please contact Ann Parsons or Jean Hume or visit <http://thesewingarmy.com>. If you need masks or other PPE for your staff please visit <https://thesewingarmy.com/how-to-request-face-masks-and-scrub-caps/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Passing:



Holmes, Shirley Ann (nee McFee) passed away peacefully in her 81st year on Friday April 3rd, 2020 at home with her children by her side after facing cancer with courage. Loving wife of 48 years of the late Allan Holmes. Beloved mother and grandmother. Shirley Ann was born to Margaret and Wilbert McFee in Hillsburgh and attended Orangeville District High School where she met her future husband, Allan and received awards in agriculture and home economics. She graduated with a BHSc from Macdonald Institute, University of Guelph in 1962. She had a long and successful career as a professional home economist working as a food consultant, food stylist, recipe and

product developer, cooking school instructor, and cookbook author. Shirley Ann was a dedicated volunteer with the Mac '62 Alumni Association, and was an active member of the Canadian, Ontario and Toronto Home Economics Associations and Cuisine Canada. She received the Sally Henry Memorial Award from OHEA for showing a great enthusiasm for life, diverse interests, and sharing her knowledge and love of food with others. She was a member of Probus, the Canadian Federation of University Women Guelph, as well as Red Hat, movie, bridge, meditation, and hiking groups. She was a great neighbour and loved her Maple St. and River Mill friends. She was a bright light in the world who touched others with her caring, optimistic, generous, and courageous spirit. Memorial contributions can be made to the Shirley Ann Holmes Scholarship at the University of Guelph which will be used to establish an annual award for students studying in food and nutrition. Please contact Kourtney Parker at k.parker@uoguelph.ca for more information. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, a celebration of Shirley Ann's life will be held at a future date. Arrangements entrusted to the WALL-CUSTANCE FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL, 519-822-0051.

Behind the Scenes

Part of the Swarm

by Gill Joseph

What do bees, ant colonies, flocking birds, schools of fish and bacteria have in common? They all have a collective consciousness with members of their own species that leads to "intelligent" behaviour – the reason for which is unknown to the individual creatures themselves. In other words, bees don't know why they follow a queen out of the hive as a group – they just do it. Birds and fish turn quickly through the air as a group in perfect synchronization without asking each other what to do. *In science*, this collective consciousness is called "swarm intelligence". Interestingly, and apropos of our current situation, this term also relates to the internet.

Wake is a novel written by well known Canadian novelist Robert J. Sawyer and was the first book in his *WWW Trilogy*. It was published in 2009 (New York: Penguin) and it is a story about the spontaneous emergence of an intelligence on the World Wide Web called *Webmind* who develops a friendship with a blind teenager named Caitlin. I met Robert Sawyer many years ago (before he wrote this book) when I ran a program for Grade 7 and 8 students at the University of Guelph and he joined us to teach a popular module about writing science fiction. I remember him as a friendly, interesting man who was full of wonder. I read *Wake*, a well-

written and thought-provoking story, about a year after it was published, and even now I wonder at the possibility that it suggests.

For example, the web is programmed to learn our viewing preferences, to provide us with customized news, to filter out what it “thinks” won’t interest us. It coordinates our sharing of information with each other simultaneously all across the globe through e-mail and social media, as we come together there (perhaps as the Russian government did in the 2016 American election) to influence others about politics, social reform, world markets and just about anything else. We can explore and present our bad side to others with it, and do amazing things to help each other and the earth on it with our good side. While we do this, the internet is learning. There are no moral judgements made by the web – we are accepted as we are or as we want to be. But information about what is hidden, what is accessed by law makers and politicians and what is removed by administrators is part of what informs intelligent software behaviour and helps it to better understand where we humans draw the line between right and wrong. All of these possibilities make one wonder: are we leaving some *residual* of ourselves in cyberspace each time we use the internet, and is it possible, as Robert Sawyer suggests, that a consciousness, independent of our own, can somehow develop from what we leave behind in our collective digital interactions?

I joined my first Church Zoom gathering a few weeks ago, along with 50 other members of the Harcourt community. It didn’t take me long to get connected, nor did I experience anything frustrating or unpleasant when using the software – despite what I had been reading on the internet. As Harcourt leaders scrambled to make decisions about whether to continue using Zoom after disturbing reports of hacking, we were reassured that programmers had written code that *told* the web software how to “plug” the holes in its security. It only needed a command. All is now well. However, it is interesting to note that two Stanford researchers have discovered that the Internet determines how much bandwidth is available for the transfer of data in much the same way as a species of ants determines how many foragers to send out of the nest for food (Carey, 2012). In other words, at some level, the internet is independently conscious of what happened in that moment and can go back to reflect upon and repeat or change its actions without asking.

This global Coronavirus crisis has catapulted our use of the web to an extraordinary level. Who would have imagined at the turn of the century (or even a month ago) that for a significant amount of time in 2020 we would only be able to worship collectively as a “church” online? Who would have imagined that we would come together globally as an online collective to try to keep each other safe – giving equipment, re-tooling factories to make respirators, sewing overalls for healthcare staff? And would you have ever realized that there would be someone looking out for you in a crisis such as this even though you don’t have a

computer, all because the web exists (see the articles above about Miriam and Jim's messages, Ann Parson's facemask group, Lynn Hancock's database of Harcourt communities and Joan Barham's list of Church committee Zoom meetings)? Reaching out through the web is now as natural to many of us as breathing. Yes, there are cracks. We are working to plug them. But what we learn from this crisis experience will remain in our heads and online as *residual* – ready to be reflected upon and repeated or changed should the need ever arise again. Moreover, this *residual* is a testament to our humanity and the *swarm intelligence* of our own species - that in a crisis knows instinctively, like the birds will always know, what to do when the need arises... without asking.

Reference:

Carey, B. (2012). Stanford researchers discover the 'anternet. Stanford News, August 24, 2012. <https://news.stanford.edu/news/2012/august/ants-mimic-internet-082312.html>

Be Well...Stay Safe!