

The Re-launch Plan!!

# The **Harcourt Herald**

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

September, 2020

# Harcourt Memorial United Church

Guelph, Ontario

An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada

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

## Seek. Connect. Act

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

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

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

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

Harcourt Memorial United Church  
87 Dean Ave., Guelph, Ontario N1G 1L3  
519.824.4177  
Webpage: [www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca)

**Office Hours:**

Church Administrator: Wendy Guilmette  
Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 3:30 pm  
[Office@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:Office@harcourtuc.ca)

**Worship, Communication & Technical Support:**

Shaina Ensing  
[tech@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:tech@harcourtuc.ca)

**Custodian:**

David Kucherepa

**The Ministers: The People,** with  
Reverend Jim Ball (ext. 223)  
[jim@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:jim@harcourtuc.ca)

Reverend Miriam Flynn (ext. 222)  
[miriam@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:miriam@harcourtuc.ca)

**Director of Music Ministry:**

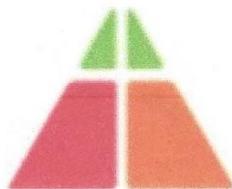
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[theherald@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:theherald@harcourtuc.ca)

**Editor:** Gillian Joseph



# The Ministers' Quill



## ***A Prayer as I Put on My Mask***

by Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator

**Creator,**

**As I prepare to go into the world,**

**Help me to see the sacrament**

**In the wearing of this cloth –**

**Let it be “an outward sign**

**Of an inward grace” –**

**A tangible and visible way of living**

**Love for my neighbors,**

**As I love myself.**

**Christ,**

**Since my lips will be covered,**

**Uncover my heart,**

**That people would see my smile**

**In the crinkles around my eyes.**

**Since my voice may be muffled,**

**Help me to speak clearly,**

**Not only with my words,**

**But with my actions.**

**Holy Spirit,**

**As the elastic touches my ears,**



Remind me to listen carefully –  
And full of care –  
To all those I meet.  
May this simple piece of cloth be  
Shield and banner,  
And each breath that it holds,  
Be filled with your love.  
In your name and  
In the name of love  
I pray.  
May it be so. May it be so.

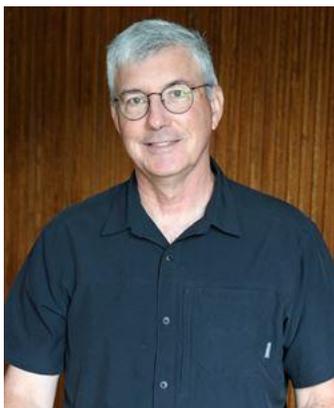
Want to make a financial contribution  
to Harcourt Church but don't know  
how to do it online? Just click

**[HERE](#)**

# Online Sunday Services & Virtual Groups

## ***Harcourt Memorial United Church***

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



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

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

***Progressive Christianity Conversation***. Saturdays at 10 am.

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

***Coffee and Chat***. Every Sunday at noon.

**MANNA**: All Ages Worship Experience. Every Sunday at 10:30 am.

**Harcourt Cares**. Harcourt Facebook Group.





# Harcourt Council News

*by Lorraine Holding, Council Chair*

It has been a busy summer for Council and several of Harcourt's committees and teams. Planning for re-entry to our building, thinking about fall activities, and pondering how COVID-19 will impact our future are important topics.

Council held three meetings during July/August. While highlights have been included in my e-weekly updates, I note a few here that will continue to be a focus this fall. In particular, we invite the Chairs of committees/teams to a joint meeting with Council on Wednesday, September 23 at 7pm by Zoom. This will be a time to share updates from each group, especially about how our activities continue to change as a result of COVID-19. Watch for more details.

We are very pleased to welcome Kathy Magee as Umbrella Councillor for Christian Life. Kathy's previous experience on Council and her commitment as a Covenanted Spiritual Companion will be valuable in all of our discussions. Her role includes being a connector to committees/teams related to Christian formation, MANNA, Youth Ministry, Worship and Spiritual Life.

We say "thank you" for the financial gifts that Harcourt continues to receive. The Finance Committee is preparing a revised 2020 operating budget for Council's approval. Ratification will be at the next Congregational Meeting. Of course, the timing of that is still unknown. Contributions to the Mission & Service Fund and any of our Pillars are appreciated – Property, Outreach, Music & Arts, and Spiritual Life & Education.

Collaboration continues with our Guelph United Ministries (GUM) partners. Jointly providing pre-recorded worship services during the summer has been a significant step. Opportunities to learn about and discuss how we can broaden our presence within Guelph will continue. A second Community Round Table will be held, focused on making Guelph a better place in which to live together post-pandemic. Accessing the services of the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) will be explored to assist with future planning.

Our increased use of technology since March leads us to deeper questions. How will our experience as 'church' continue to change? What does the future look like for worship as in-person gatherings and virtually on-line? How can we maintain and strengthen our connections as a community of faith outside of worship? This fall, an ad hoc group will investigate the considerations and technical and resource requirements for live streaming technology. I expect that other conversations will probe these topics, too.

September brings the first steps of reopening our building. The Re-entry Planning Group and Council have kept in mind the still changing realities of COVID-19, our Harcourt Re-entry Guiding Principles, conscientious work by many within our community of faith, and our need to remain flexible. Public health guidelines for the health and safety of all our staff, congregation, renters and the community at large must be followed. Our initial re-entry plan follows this article. More updates will be provided through the weeks ahead. We appreciate the cooperation of all during this next phase of life at 87 Dean Avenue.

We have experienced so much differently in the past five months, as we will this fall. Remember, God is with us. We are not alone. With faith and hope.

### **Harcourt's Initial Re-entry Plan (Approved by Council August 12, 2020)**

#### **A. Ministry and Personnel**

1. The church building will be reopened for staff use on September 8, 2020, Tuesday to Friday, with only the Custodian at the church on Monday to do thorough cleaning.
2. The office area including the offices, chapel, kitchenette, staff washrooms and music room and office will be closed to the general public. Staff will meet with people in other areas of the facility (e.g. Sanctuary, Friendship Room, Library, outdoors).
3. Outside doors will remain locked at all times. Appropriate signage will be placed on the doors regarding entry, appointments, etc.
4. Staff will evaluate the arrangements over the month and report back to the re-entry working group by the end of September 2020.

#### **B. Worship**

1. In-person indoor worship services will remain cancelled until further notice. To be reconsidered as new information becomes available.
2. Effective September 6, 2020, the pre-recorded worship services will continue.

3. MANNA will continue to worship by Zoom or outdoors as determined by the leadership team. Restart date will be in September as determined by the leadership team.
4. Worship Committee and the Worship Team will continue to discuss additional worship formats including small group gatherings, singing circles, outdoor worship, funerals and weddings.
5. Holy Listening Circles, currently offered by the Spiritual Life Committee, will be discussed by that Committee as part of their annual planning process.

#### C. Property

1. The Royal City Pre-school will be allowed to open as early as September 8, 2020. This is subject to reviewing their detailed requirements once they are released and ensuring those procedures and measures put in place by Harcourt and the Pre-School meet those requirements.
2. The church will reopen for rentals and internal groups on September 8, 2020. The church may need up to two weeks to prepare for a renter/booking.
3. Multiple users can be accommodated based on room capacity and safety protocols. For example, allow use of only one room upstairs and one room on the lower level at any given time, ensuring compatibility with the Pre-school area.
4. All renters will be asked to sign a COVID-19 Release of Liability, Waiver of All Claims and Assumption of Risk Agreement, attached to the rental contract.

#### D. Communications

1. Signage will be in place at entrances and throughout the church prior to reopening, based on Ontario government guidelines and any specific Harcourt requirements.
2. Articles will be prepared for the e-Harcourt Weekly Update and Harcourt Herald explaining the reopening decisions and protocols to the congregation.

### **Reopening in a time of COVID 19**

by Lorraine Holding and Megan Ward, Co-Chairs, Re-entry Planning Group

As churches reopen for worship and other activities, there are a few key principles which help keep people safe. Here's a **primer on good public health practices**, many of which will be familiar already.

A. Self assessment: Each person needs to assess themselves for symptoms and possible exposure to COVID 19 with a few simple questions prior to attending the church:

1. Do you have any symptoms of COVID 19?
2. Have you travelled outside the country in the past 14 days?
3. Have you tested positive for COVID 19 or come in contact with anyone who has?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, the person must refrain from coming into the church and should seek appropriate care.

B. Registration: The group organizer needs to keep a log for each event for 30 days, containing date and time of the activity and contact details for each attendee. This speeds up public health contact tracing should it be needed.

C. Personal protective practices: Physical distancing of two metres, masks, and hand washing or sanitizing are key individual practices for every person and every event. Organizers need to map out their space and provide instructions to make it easy for participants to follow these guidelines.

D. Entrances, exits and traffic flow: Tight entrances and corridors make it hard for people to space themselves properly. It's important to plan ahead to keep a smooth flow of traffic through the building, provide clear instructions, and follow the arrows and signs.

E. Extra cleaning of high touch surfaces: In addition to routine cleaning, all surfaces which are touched frequently need to be cleaned and disinfected often. These include light switches, hand rails, door handles, taps and toilet handles, tables and chairs. Soap and water are effective for cleaning and many common disinfectants are effective against this coronavirus. Church staff can provide details of the responsibilities of users and staff.

F. Communication: When hosting an event, provide clear instructions to participants well ahead of time. Church staff and the re-entry planning group can help with your questions. Just ask!

# ABC NEWS

**(Anything But Corona!)**

## **Long Time No Hear!**

Thirty-eight years after a young man from Guelph sent a request to an Irish newspaper for a pen pal, he finally got a response! <https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/38-years-later-guelph-man-receives-response-to-his-call-for-a-pen-pal-2660912>

## **Rejected!**

Ever wonder what license plate wording requests get rejected? Here's this year's list: <https://driving.ca/auto-news/news/gr8-pl8s-these-are-the-vanity-license-plates-ontario-rejected-this-year>

## **Lightening Storm Gives a Great Performance**

A lightening storm over Lake Ontario provided a fantastic light show on the weekend. <https://www.blogto.com/city/2020/08/lightning-storm-ontario-photos/>

## **Farmer's Almanac Predicts...**

Residents of Ottawa and Ontario are being warned to brace for a "cold and totally flaky" winter. The Canadian Farmers' Almanac has issued its 2020-21 Winter Outlook, declaring it the "Winter of the Great Divide." <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/cold-and-totally-flaky-farmers-almanac-predicts-a-snowy-winter-for-ottawa-rest-of-ontario-1.5076815>

# COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

## Harcourt Directory Update (Reprinted)

by Lynn Hancock, Umbrella Councillor for Stewardship  
(With the Editor's apologies for last issue's incomplete article)

GREAT NEWS!!! After months of phone calls and emails, the Harcourt office directory is now more updated than it has been in 20 years. How is this possible with a new Church Administrator who was hired and had only been in the office for a matter of months before the church was locked? The answer is: volunteers. Volunteers willing to contact folks in their assigned neighbourhood group on behalf of Harcourt. Volunteers willing to contact people by phone or email and ask those wishing to remain on the directory to confirm name, address, phone number and email. In some cases, multiple attempts were made to reach out and connect. Who are these volunteers, these "heavenly" hosts?

Lisa Browning, Pam MacInnes Judy Cimino Merrill Pierce Carol Martin Sharon Dills Madeline Harrington Barbara Friend Deb Murray Lorraine Dykman Ann Middleton Malcolm and Marta Coutts Joan Charlebois Arlene Davies-Fuhr Sharon and Bill Chapman Bonnie McDougall Larry Smith	Marilyn Sears Gretchen Ball Joan Barham Heather Sullivan Elizabeth Bone Linda Stockton Lynn Hancock Marnie Allen Janet Webster Bernie McNamee Ben Fear Marjorie Fraser Steve and Marilyn Fraser Esther Devolin Jean Hume Leone Sutor Barb Gamsby Julie Ashley
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As members of the Harcourt Community, this is now an opportunity to say thank you. Merci. Although words of gratitude are important, many of us grew up hearing that actions speak louder than words. So please, in appreciation of their efforts, let's now help Wendy to maintain our updated Harcourt office directory. If you move and change your address, phone number or email, please call Wendy at 519-824-4177 or email Wendy at [office@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:office@harcourtuc.ca).

On a more personal note, as well as thanking all the neighbourhood hosts, I need to express my gratitude and appreciation for the support and encouragement of Bill Lord, Bill and Sharon Chapman, Miriam Flynn and Jim Ball.

Although a new photo directory cannot be promised for the near future, ways to share an updated directory with names, addresses, phone numbers and emails are being explored. We need to be able to offer a digital format or printed copy mindful of privacy issues etc. We may be able to offer a copy upon request. Stay tuned.

So what's next? Now that one of the purposes for the neighbourhood groups has been fulfilled, let's imagine how these groups could serve the Harcourt community moving forward. Let's dream. Let's envision a thriving Harcourt community rich with human resources and people offering their gifts and talents.

Let's continue to find new ways to connect, participate in small group gatherings and nurture any new friendships and conversations that have been sparked.

With so many of us counting our blessings at this time, I'd like to share this quote from John Henry Jowett: 1864-1923 (British Protestant Preacher):

**“Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic. This is a most searching and true diagnosis. Gratitude can be a vaccine that can prevent the invasion of a disgruntled attitude. As antitoxins prevent the disastrous affects of certain poisons and diseases, thanksgiving destroys the poison of faultfinding and grumbling. When trouble has smitten us, a spirit of thanksgiving is a soothing antiseptic.”**

## **Rental Relaunching Still Unclear**

by Dave Hume, Chair of Property

For much of the last month, the Property Committee members have been trying to help with recommendations to Harcourt's Re-opening Committee, which then passes on input to Church Council for decisions. Council's decision to **not** start worship in the Sanctuary in September has been quite clear. What have been less clear have been decisions about when

rentals can start, who wants to start, when, who will come and all the specific details of how COVID-19 conditions should be put in place. Let me illustrate. Property decided not to start rentals before September, with one exception. We approved a rental to an entity called Level-Up Computer Camp, to be held in the gym for 2 weeks in August. Wendy Guilmette, the church administrator is a friend of the lady who runs these camps, so Property thought this would be a good test to see if the detailed plans for renters actually worked and where changes are necessary. Wendy, Sarah Lowe and I all made input into the details of the doors by which the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) students would enter and exit, which washrooms, how tables would be arranged, where lunch would be, spacing before entering, traffic flow, where parents would pick up these young students, etc. The two leaders came in the day before the class was to start and David Kucherepa helped them set up the tables and supplies. Then the first Monday of the two-week contract arrived and nobody came. David and I got a phone call from Wendy about 15 minutes after the beginning time and she relayed the message that no families had been willing to bring their children.

A second try the following Monday had only one student arrive. What we learned was that families are very reticent to send their children to activities. Similar responses have been received from parents of Girl Guides. We don't know yet what responses will be from parents of Scouts and Cubs and Beavers.

We also don't know yet whether arrangements made by the Royal City Pre-School will be approved by the Ministry of Health, the local boards and the city, even though the teachers have asked to come in at the end of August to get ready for pre-school to start.

We do know that Park N Dance has asked to start in September, but most other groups have indicated they won't be back in the fall and have asked for their deposits back. That's a quick look at getting rental things restarted for our church. I am learning that it must be terribly difficult to satisfy all the demands of students, parents, teachers, school boards and governments in trying to get even pre-schools re-opened.

# COMMUNITY

## **No Thorns...No Worries! Guelph Community Orchard Project (GCOP)**

by Jill Gill

The fruit and nut trees and shrubs in the Harcourt site of the Guelph Community Orchard Project were planted back in 2012. There have been a few replacements over the years, due mostly to severity of weather or disease. And it seems that each year's conditions have favoured different fruits.

2019 is shaping up to produce a bumper crop of thornless blackberries. They won't be ripe for harvest for a few weeks yet, but keep checking and grab them before the birds do! You will be surprised at how sweet and flavourful they are, compared with what you have sampled from the grocery store.

We have already enjoyed plenty of asparagus and there are two lovely little pears on the Bartlett Pear tree. This is the first season this tree has fruited.

In March, we planted a new Cherry-Plum Tree. It will be a few years before we can expect fruit, but apparently the taste is delicious. Looking forward to sampling those 'Chums' in summers to come.

In June we had a volunteer crew of 10 folks from Farm Credit Canada as part of the United Way's Days of Caring initiative. They helped weed, mulch and generally clean up the orchard – it was looking magnificent by the time they had finished! They also helped put some critterproof fencing around the raised beds in the Harcourt Communal Garden. They were a fun and enthusiastic group and I would love to work with them again next year, if possible. In mid-September we will be assisted by a dozen or so student volunteers from the University of Guelph's Project Serve event. They have joined us each year since 2012 and always manage to accomplish a substantial clean-up and sometimes harvest some tasty fruit for their efforts.

The Guelph Community Orchard Project is a diverse urban orchard that is volunteer maintained with all the harvest available for anyone in the community to pick. We aim to donate up to 50% to Chalmers Community Services Centre food pantry at 41 Macdonell.

## Lots of Exciting News from the Harcourt Communal Garden

by Jill Gill

What a bountiful growing season we have experienced so far this year in the Harcourt Communal Garden! We have harvested rhubarb, asparagus, basil, lettuce, zucchini, purslane, kale, cucumbers, beans, dill, bell peppers, chives, mint, sage, mustard seed and tomatoes for a total of 155.5 kgs (342 lbs). There will be plenty more to follow before the end of the harvest season. Our entire crop yield is donated to Chalmers Community Services Centre (CCSC) food pantry where it is distributed weekly to help feed some of Guelph's most food insecure folks. It is especially needed, and appreciated, this summer since the fallout from COVID-19 has created a marked increase in the number of folks in need of food for their families. Emergency Food Providers (like CCSC) have been continuing to distribute food all through the pandemic.



Our garden volunteers who generously give of their time, have done a wonderful job of planting, maintaining and harvesting vegetables and herbs for donation to Chalmers' guests.

Because of COVID-19 we are unable to offer a Community Gardens Festival that has taken place at Harcourt for the

past two years. However, a video presentation has been made urging gardeners to donate any excess produce they harvest to one of the Emergency Food Providers who are still open to give food to those in need. The video has been edited and is being forwarded to the Community Garden Network at City Hall to be checked for content before being released to the public. As soon as it has been approved, I'll include it in a Thursday eblast for your viewing pleasure. We also urge gardeners to save seeds to use next year, to trade with other gardeners and to donate to the Guelph Seed Library.

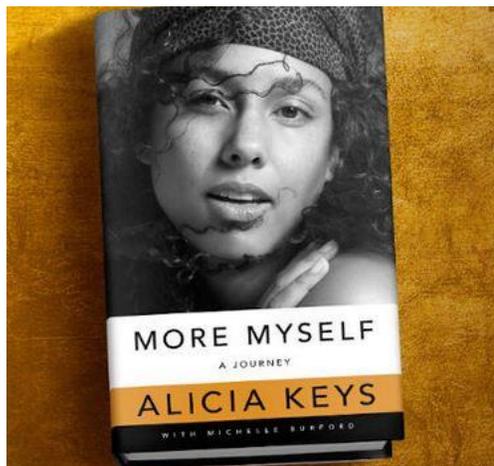
Another exciting prospect on the horizon has been announced from the Smart Cities Office at City Hall in the form of a “Grow Back Better” Grant for projects in Urban Agriculture. The grant we will apply for is called the “Shovel and Fork Fund” which offers \$2,000 each for six community projects that have shared community benefits embedded in their goals. We have several upgrades that need to be made to our current raised beds to repair them as well as developing a more sustainable method of irrigation and protection from critters. The Guidelines for scope and applying for the grant will be issued on September 8<sup>th</sup> with application deadline October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The funding is to be used in 2021. Stay tuned for updates in the months to come. Since this is the Tenth Anniversary of growing produce at Harcourt for Chalmers, I think this would be a fitting celebration ‘prize’.

## ***More Myself* by Alicia Keys: A Book Review**

by Lisa Browning

Still ahead of the game! I read this book over about two days, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Lots of aha moments in here, and LOTS of things I could relate to, all interspersed with loads of behind-the-scenes details of Alicia's life and career.

Lots of pithy things I could quote ... but I've chosen instead something Alicia said in the intro: "Gathering the raw pieces of my experience and holding them up to the light has, for



me, been a transformational exercise in truth telling. I've spent so many years withholding parts of myself, sacrificing my spirit to make others feel comfortable. But now, I'm done with pretending, with living in a prison of my own creation. I'm done with dimming my light. Writing this book has been about meeting myself, with all my wounds and vulnerabilities, exactly as I am -- and then, at last, having the courage to reveal my full face. It has been about realizing that in order for the truth to set me free, I must first be brave enough to birth it."

*Editor's note: Alicia Keys is a popular American singer/songwriter*

Reference: Keys, A. (2020). *More myself: A journey*. New York: Flatiron Books

Late July Weeding Party  
Photos by Sarah Lowe





SEP  
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## WATCH LIVE: Courageous Conversations with Faith Groups - The Hub

Public · Hosted by [Jordana Wright](#)

Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM EDT

Creating a better church means asking better questions.

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🗨️ 'Things To Talk About At Coffee Hour' is an innovative live experience and card game that sparks the courageous conversations you've been dying to have with your church. We'll guide you through the questions you're too afraid to ask - covering topics from financial pressures to race in the church. For example, "What is the toughest decision we've had to make in church, and how did it change us?"

### ABOUT THE FAITH GROUP:

🏠 The Hub is a youth and young adult grassroots community network. It lives to ignite place-based community, service and discipleship for young people who have struggled to find space in existing church and social structures. It originally grew from the United Church Camps of Southern Ontario (including alumni of Silver Lake Camp, Cave Springs, Ryerson, Ganadaoweh, Golden Lake, and more!).

### ABOUT THE HOST:

🗨️ Jordana Wright leads a placemaking and community development practice focused on introducing new audiences to their local churches, while helping congregations reach their sustainability goals and expand their social impact.

For more information visit:

[\*\*United Church of Canada Youth and Young Adults\*\*](#)

## **From Jessica Stevens – United Church of Canada Youth and Young Adults – Facebook page:**

YAYA Video Project Deadline Extended!

This summer I have been working on the "**day in the life of a quaranteen" video project**. This was launched as an initiative to engage with youth and young adults from across the church to learn about their experiences of life during the pandemic.

Since launching the project I have received some great responses, but I am still on the lookout for more videos! If you like to film, take pictures or share stories, then this is the project for you.

I have attached the advertisement poster for the project with the new deadline (September 3rd) to our Facebook page. This has all the information that you need to complete your video. You will also find a short video as a promotion video from some of the submissions I have received so far.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

### **Why Haven't We Opened the Church Doors Yet?**

by Rev. Daniel Benson, minister at [St. Paul's United Church](#) in Scarborough, ON

The emails showed up almost immediately. The phone calls not much later. "Is the church open?" "Are we having services this Sunday?" "When can we come to church?" Premier Ford had just announced that places of worship could reopen, and obviously many of my parishioners were eager to return. "What are we waiting for?"

Ah, if only it were so easy. Open the doors and they will come! But, as has been said so often over the past few months, these are "unprecedented times," and such times require unprecedented planning to welcome back the flock.

People come to church for many reasons. The most obvious one, perhaps, is for spiritual nourishment and religious exercise (we can talk about the whole "spiritual but not religious" thing another time). They also come for help and guidance in leading a good life (again, a topic for further discussion). And many come for the community, fellowship, and sense of belonging that faith communities, at their best, offer. Sometimes this gets labeled as merely being a "social club;" and yes, it sometimes feels like that.

But the loss and isolation many people are feeling with the closure of their churches, mosques, synagogues, and other places of worship suggests they're way more than just social clubs. COVID-19 has robbed a lot of people of something more than just a place to meet and greet friends. After all, Starbucks has better coffee, the Victorian Monkey has better food, and your own sofa is more comfortable than our pews.

Faith communities such as St. Paul's (and most others, I imagine) think of themselves as extended families. Not because it's a cozy idea, but because it's a challenging and even difficult concept. We get to choose our friends – we don't get to choose our family. You don't get to disown crazy Aunt Sally or weird Uncle Ernie, and in faithful faith communities, we don't get to say who belongs and who doesn't. You come in, you sit down, and you belong. Period. "God don't make junk," the saying goes, and our job is to understand and live that by being God's welcome wagon.

But, when COVID-19 closes our doors, this deep sense of belonging and acceptance is closed as well. Sure, we can do online worship, Zoom book clubs, virtual dinners, and telephone calls, but it's not the same. Families are nourished when they gather together, often around a table, always with everyone welcomed and cared for.

So, why haven't we opened the doors yet? Because we, as family, care for one another: not just spiritually, but bodily as well. Therefore, we need to work out a lot of details. What's the best way to ensure everyone keeps a safe distance (a challenge when your extended family tends to be very huggy)? How do we keep frequently touched surfaces clean? What do we do about singing? Do we need to designate entrances and exits to manage the people flow? If our sanctuary can hold 60 people under the 30 percent rule, what do we say to the 61<sup>st</sup> person who comes to church on a Sunday? And a dozen more things have to be discussed (and we haven't even got to the coffee and cookies yet).

Most businesses are trying to figure this all out. We are too, but with an additional layer of complexity: these are not our customers we're talking about, this is our family. The beloved, the crazy, and the weird ones, all together. Many are vulnerable and frightened, all of them are concerned about their own well-being and that of others. Somehow, we will figure this all out; and, sooner or later, our doors will re-open. In the meantime, it's only the bricks and mortar of the church building that is closed; the church itself has not been closed for a minute. It continues to live, serve, and thrive because the people – our family – are open to how God is always doing a new thing in the world, even in a world of COVID-19.

## Prayer for Back to School

by Moderator Richard Bott

Hi, God...

it's not too long before my daughter heads back to school,  
alongside of other children, teens, and young adults,  
in so many communities.

And, to be honest, I'm worried.

Not just for her,  
but for every single student —  
from the youngest to the eldest;  
and for every single teacher,  
and support person,  
every one of the support staff,  
and the administrators —  
the people we trust to not only help our children learn,  
but learn in an environment where they are  
safe,  
cared about,  
and respected;  
where their whole person is taken into account,  
as they live and learn and grow!

But... I'm worried.

I'm worried about their health,  
in the face of COVID-19.  
I'm worried about the resources we've set aside,  
not just to ensure their learning,  
but their learning in safety.

And it's not just the ones who will participate in learning  
at the school building —  
I'm worried about the ones who will be learning from home,  
the ones who will be sitting in front of their screens,  
connecting with the lessons, the teachers,  
and their peers there.

And I'm worried about the students  
who won't have what they need —  
technologically, or people-wise —  
to experience the schooling we understand  
they need.

So, I'm praying.

I'm praying that our decision-makers:  
listen to the science,  
make sure the resources are there,  
do all they can to help the children  
who will be in schoolrooms and at home;  
I'm praying  
for the health of our children,  
and all those who support them;  
I'm praying  
that we all work together,  
in equity and in hope,  
to ensure that every student has what they need,  
to be the learner that they are.

And I continue to pray for all of our health-care workers,  
and those researching therapies and vaccines,  
that we might be able to respond to COVID-19,  
and have the health to work on  
the rest of what needs to be done.

Help me to trust that we are doing  
all that we can  
for all of our children.  
Help me to trust that we will do even more  
than we think we are able,  
for every child,  
everywhere.

In Christ's name, I pray.

Amen.

**This is the first time in history  
that we can save the Human Race  
by lying in front of the TV and  
doing nothing....  
Let's not screw this up!!**

***COVID  
Funnies!!***



**Quarantine has me realizing why my dog  
gets so excited about something moving  
outside and going for walks and car rides.  
I just barked at a squirrel.**

**In an unsettling  
reversal of my  
teenage years, I am  
now yelling at my  
parents for going out!**

**I never ever thought  
that I'd be going into  
a bank with a mask  
on and asking for  
money!**

**Thank goodness I don't have to  
hunt for food during this  
pandemic....I don't even know  
where Tacos live!**



## Minute for Mission

### Access to Clean Water

Water is sacred—a gift of the Creator and a source of life. Clean water is a cornerstone of public health and a fundamental human right. In 2015, United Nations member states established 17 goals essential to sustainable development. The sixth goal is the availability of clean water for all.

Access to safe drinking water is one of today's most pressing environmental issues. Large numbers of people have no access to water and lack adequate sanitation to keep water sources clean. According to UN statistics, millions of people die every year from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation, and hygiene. More than two billion people are currently living with the risk of reduced access to freshwater resources. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to be affected by a chronic shortage of fresh water.

The United Church of Canada, as a member of the World Council of Churches, joined with other churches in the Ecumenical Water Network, a Mission & Service partner. The EWN brings churches together in faith-based advocacy for the preservation, responsible management, and the equitable distribution of water for all. On-the-ground Mission & Service partners like People's Action Forum in Zambia and the Moravian Church in Nicaragua play important roles in establishing community access to water—from digging boreholes to providing training on pump maintenance and protection of the water supply.

Your gifts to Mission & Service help bring the provision of clean water to all people closer to reality.

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.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Passing:



**WILLIAMS**, George Ronald (Ron) passed away on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Ron was a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biochemistry and Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Toronto.

Born in Liverpool, England, Ron's active and inquisitive intellect earned him a scholarship to Merchant Taylor's School, and a PhD from the University of Liverpool. Postgraduate work at the Universities of Toronto, Pennsylvania, and Oxford followed. In 1956, he obtained a position at the University of Toronto. He was Chair of the Department of Biochemistry from 1970-1977, and Principal of Scarborough College from 1984-1989. He

combined his passion for biochemistry with concern for the environment and in 1996, published *The Molecular Biology of Gaia*, about the stability of the Earth's environment. Married to Joyce Mutch, also from Liverpool, he was a much loved father, grandfather and great grandfather. He and Joyce were strong supporters of the United Church of Canada, nationally and as members of Washington United in Scarborough, and Harcourt United in Guelph. Ron was exceptionally active throughout his life. He was on the University of Liverpool track team, and continued running well into his 60s. Hiking was a passion. He loved the English Lake District, Wales' Snowdonia, the Munros of Scotland, and Lake O'Hara in the Canadian Rockies. His renaissance mind made all aspects of science, religion, politics, and global affairs subjects for in-depth discussion. Above all Ron found joy and meaning in the arts: chamber music to opera; theatre to visual arts; and poetry to novels. His joy flowed from professional artists, but also from local amateur groups and, especially, children. It is the intent to hold a memorial service as soon as the pandemic allows. Memorial donations may be made to: Gallery Stratford's Children's Programs: [abrayham@gallerystratford.on.ca](mailto:abrayham@gallerystratford.on.ca) or Nature Conservancy

Canada: <https://donate.natureconservancy.ca>

[www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com](http://www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com). A slide presentation about Ron is available for viewing on the Harcourt Memorial Digital Quilt at <https://harcourtuc.ca/services-celebrations/in-memoriam/>



**BUTCHER**, Betty died peacefully at Wellington Park Retirement Home in Guelph on Tuesday August 18, 2020. Betty Butcher of Guelph, formerly of Hillsburgh, in her 88th year. Beloved wife of the late Dave Butcher (2009), loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

A private family (due to the Covid19 regulations) service was held on Saturday August 22, 2020 at 2 p.m. Rev. Irene Walback officiating. Interment Huxley Cemetery. If desired donations can be made to The Norfolk Manor, The SickKids Foundation or a charity of one's choice. Donation cards available at the funeral home or you may send the family a condolence at [www.macintyrefamilyfuneralhome.com](http://www.macintyrefamilyfuneralhome.com). To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Elizabeth "Betty" Irene (Fludder) Butcher, please visit our [floral store](#).

## Behind the Scenes

### **Do Not Serve Catastrophic Thoughts Tea – and Other Important Things I Learned on This Journey.**

by Judi Morris (a 9:00 a.m. er)



An unplanned journey up to April 3rd, 2020 arose from an opportunity to shed debilities I suffered from an aggressive meningioma – a brain tumor. I could have chosen not to take it because it did not offer promise of full recovery – only percentages, larger ones, which included not only keeping the debilities, but developing others,

along with serious mental acuity issues and eventual death. Through sharing my situation with friends, relatives and Harcourt members, the road and means became more self evident. The more I shared, the more I was fed with prayers, encouragement and support.

Some take a journey such as this, on their own or with only a few friends and loved ones. My immediate loved ones' plates were overloaded as it was. Not only could I not

burden them, but they speak a different *language* than me. Their demands and expectations would have held me down. I took along only those that wanted to join me. Their food became my strength, hope and life changing persistent gifts and blessings.

The first gift came on Valentine's Day from my physiotherapist, the mother of one of my riding students. The day after the diagnosis she brought a heart box of chocolates and card full of love and inspiration, saying that I am the strongest person she knows. The next gift came from my dearest friend Eddie Attah who is a retired, world-renowned cancer pathologist in Nigeria. He had been a customer of the bank I worked in while he completed a stint at Sarnia General Hospital. I bombarded him with questions about Africa every time he came into the bank. We became friends. This friendship continued after he and his family returned to Nigeria and for 50 years or more after that. Eddie told me that science has proven that a happy positive attitude contributes to survival and recovery from such an operation. Up until then I dwelt in fear, worry and anxiety. Prior to the diagnosis I had been convinced the debilities were from Parkinson's Disease. I thought how I would prefer to have a cancer diagnosis than Parkinson's because at least one would have the opportunity to fight cancer or die rather than lose, little by little, the things in life that I had created and that brought me joy. I felt I would become an inconvenience to those around me and I felt that I needed to figure out how I could set up a MAIDS (Medical Assistance in Dying) process. "Be careful what you wish for," as the cliché goes.

The third gift came from Sandy Phair, a Harcourt member. Sandy told me something from a book that she had read (but couldn't remember the name). She said, "*Do not serve catastrophic thoughts tea. They are not for today.*" When I find myself slipping I often hear Sandy's voice.

I trusted Eddie and believed everything he told me. I embarked on a hunt to find *happy* and to replace *fear*. In the meantime, I purged my books and things I could contribute to the church sale to leave less of a mess for my family. While doing so, I came across a book entitled *Stories from the Heart*. I had never opened the book but hoped that by reading it I might be able to enter into a happy space.

So many people were emailing me! I couldn't answer them all because I had serious bookkeeping to get behind me before the operation. Instead I did one email and sent it to them all. I titled it, "My Journey to April 3," the date of the operation. The emails began with how I was feeling at the moment, then I shared the happy story that I had just read which conjured up memories of events in my life. Of course, they were pretty much all humorous, including naughty things that I had done! Every email ended with funny sayings about predicting weather.

The response to these emails surprised me. I was encouraged and found it fun to recall my life. I became driven to write and started at 5:00 a.m. every day. When others learned about my writing they asked to be included in my updates and soon I had 44 people journeying with me. Some answered every day. I told everyone they could unsubscribe at any time – but they kept asking me to please keep them on the list. I have self-isolated since February 13, before Covid became an issue. Writing was the only way I could keep connected with everyone.

Sandy Phair and Ellice Oliver came for lunch just before Covid experts told us not to. Both offered beautiful prayers of support and care. Ellice had been the glue for me when I first embraced the possibility of Parkinson's. Then wham...Rob Ford cancelled all elective surgery, which meant all non-emergency surgery. I crashed something terrible. This tumor was serious and advancing toward a dangerous area. There was little time to make this right. I told everyone I was finished and had nothing to say. A plethora of emails came in pleading, and begging me not to give up and filling me with hope. How could I quit after such emails of faith, love and care?

The Websters sent a plant of daffodils and I placed them on my office desk – they spoke to me every time I lifted my head away from the computer. The fresh daffodils sent by Elizabeth Hughes that I had enjoyed so much had just died. I finished the stories in the book so I started to introduce them all to each other. Three a day. I wanted them to be friends because I told them I was taking them all with me into the operation whenever it might happen. I began to call the emails, 'HOPE.'

Eventually the neurosurgeon called me in for an emergency MRI. That gave him what he needed to circumvent Rob Ford. The operation happened April 2nd, a day earlier than scheduled. Frank Webster was at the house April 1<sup>st</sup>, helping to take down, work up & clear away nine dead ash trees in our front yard along with two of my carriage-driving friends. It was exciting to be able to share the hope with them.

I walked out of that hospital on April 3<sup>rd</sup> with a normal gait. No tripping, limping or stumbling. Yet the recovery process proved to be slower than I could have imagined - until the six-week mark, whereupon I improved by leaps and bounds. In mid May I began to drive my carriage pony every day and by the end of May I rode my Percheron cross horse. Every week brought about new improvements. In spite of the fear of Covid, people came and did things for me such as Frank Webster who continued to work on the trees and another friend who cleared up my winter manure in the paddock. Others dropped off food.

Five months out I wrote to my friend Eddie that my greatest gift in life has been this recovery, and that the people who came along on this journey with me had truly been my

blessing of all blessings. Throughout all that time, many people sent cards and notes. I always sent cards and notes to people who were having a tough time with something - only now did I realize how much they meant. Janet Gostoni sent me a note on the back of a photograph of her cat. If she only could have seen the smile that put on my face. Dot Daynard sent a note that was returned because of an error in the address. She didn't quit, she kept at it until she got the right one and sent another after the operation. Every card and note was a blessing to behold. Many people from the 9:00 a.m. service sent notes and emails filled with prayers and hope. Harcourt Women's Spirituality made one of their meetings all about each one writing me a note. When I received them in the mail I had to sit down in quiet, wipe the tears and take in each individual blessing. Emails from both of our Ministers made me feel held. I planned my funeral with Miriam.

Should you find yourself in an emotional and physical mess, I say share, share and share some more. I promise it will come back to you in beautiful unexpected blessings. Know that science has proven that a happy, positive attitude contributes to survival and recovery. Do not serve catastrophic thoughts tea. They are not for today. Never hesitate to send a note or card to someone fighting for their life or any other issue they are dealing with. Even the shortest ones have tremendous effect. And finally, know that you are blessed being a part of this Harcourt community and family.... I know I am.



Enjoy September

Keep Healthy and Safe