

The Harcourt Herald

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

Happy Thanksgiving...
COVID Style!!

God is waiting,
what's your next move?

The Significance of
Endings & Beginnings

October, 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
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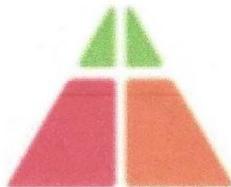
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theherald@harcourtuc.ca

Editor: Gillian Joseph



The Ministers' Quill

by Jim Ball

In June of 2019, I joined the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS) at its annual symposium. The event moves around the continent, and every fifth year or so it comes north of the border. Last year the symposium was held at the Tyndall College campus located in North Toronto. The campus, some of you will know, is situated on the grounds of a former monastery and convent, and is blessed by a significant amount of undisturbed green space. It also benefits from the presence of a breathtakingly beautiful sanctuary. The NAIITS banner was prominently displayed by the lectern of the great, mosaic decorated chancel. In addition to the letters, the banner includes a large feather and a cross. The cross and feather have been part of the logo of the school since its inception.



On the morning of the first day, after an opening ceremony that included drums and fire and smudge and the offering of the great thanksgiving common to indigenous cultural events, we listened to the keynote address and then divided into discussion groups. We assembled in various locations on the front lawn. It was, as you can see from the photo, a remarkable blue-sky day, crystal clear and comfortable in the light. You can also see the spire of the sanctuary.

Still to come were two days of presentations by prominent academics, ministers and social activists. The speakers' list included six nations member Adrian Jacobs, the principal of the United Church's Sandy Saulteaux Centre in Manitoba, as well as Joshua Grace, a musician, artist and pastor friend who lives and works in Philadelphia. While I looked forward to the presentations, the sharing time on the lawn suggested that some of the gold of this event was going to be encountered in small group sharing and over meals.

Thoughtful millennials, indigenous and non-indigenous alike, weighed in quickly on the pieces of church life and social experience that gave them energy. And they were quick to name the pieces that evoked disgust and condemnation. Each seemed well versed in the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's process and its 94 calls for action. The calls, we remember, were issued by the Commission in order to *"redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation."* The young adults in my group could name the recommendations they were working on, the ones churches should be advancing, and the ones governments and school boards should have long addressed. There was not an incrementalist among them. Change delayed was justice denied. Their comments, gently offered, made clear their conviction that significant change in personal and collective behaviour was required yesterday - religiously, politically, socially and environmentally. Indeed, long before yesterday. Any thought of putting things off to tomorrow was just avoidance. The exchange and atmosphere felt a little like an evangelical camp meeting, which, I concluded later, it was. At least in its sense of urgency.

"It is hard to know where to start when we don't know what we don't know, yet need to learn first," an elderly woman said. There was quiet. And then a young woman said, *"Start anywhere."* To which there was a quiet nodding of heads. And then a middle-aged woman offered this. *"I have found it helpful to set a learning goal."* The group looked at her in a way that suggested she say more. *"Maybe,"* she continued, *"over time, our daily investment in new learning will educate us into better questions, more effective action, deeper relationship."* And there was another moment of quiet and a nodding of heads. Like I said. *Gold.*

It was old wisdom, of course. The kind we each know but don't always practice. The kind that can be applied to any issue, and could certainly help in regard to the matter of reconciliation. *Pick a goal and stick with it. Just one. And read. Listen. Show up. Do so, a little, each day. Or every week. See where the investment, the commitment, leads. Start small. Start anywhere. But start. Again. And know that allies and resource will find you on the way.*

My time at Tyndall that week was well spent, as the content and conversations continued to challenge and inspire. But the tone was set early in the small circle experience on the front lawn of that first morning. For it was there that I was struck by the energy, impatience, commitment and hunger for learning and doing better expressed by participants. I took note of each person's desire to find or deepen their own piece of the reconciliation work. And I was impressed by the sense participants had that their religious understandings and faith practices, however expressed, mattered and were intimately tethered to the outcome.

All of it left an impression. Including this serendipitous fact. What you cannot see, but is contained in the photograph, is this: above the sanctuary, high atop the spire, on the left arm of the cross, is perched the largest red-tailed hawk I have ever seen. It sat still and watching for the entire time we were gathered on the lawn. Still and watching. Us. The feather and the cross. As I returned to the plenary hall, I remember thinking that the God who is with us also waits for us. And that the next move, however small or modest, is ours to make.

Blessings,

Jim



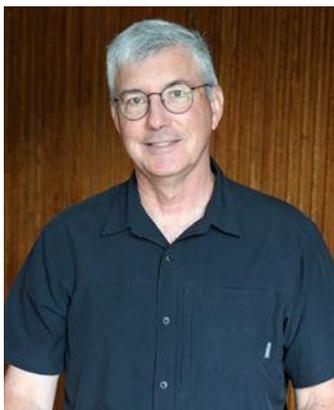
Want to make a financial contribution
to Harcourt Church but don't know
how to do it online? Just click

[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. 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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Tel: 519.824.4177 x: 223



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

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

Progressive Christianity Conversation. Saturdays at 10 am.

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

Coffee and Chat. Every Sunday at noon.

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

Harcourt Cares. Harcourt Facebook Group.





Harcourt Council News

by Lorraine Holding, Council Chair

Much has occurred since I wrote my article for the September Herald! E-weekly updates since then have included key news items.

In late August, we received Jim Ball's announcement that he will retire from ministry on January 1, 2021. Individually and collectively, we have gained much from his leadership and ministry with Harcourt since September 2008. We are happy for Jim and Anne as they enter another phase of their life's journey together, and we understand this decision. On the other hand, we will greatly miss their dedication and many contributions to our faith community.

At Council's September 9th meeting, we briefly discussed our need to take time and opportunity to once again begin a discernment process to clarify Harcourt's purpose, who we want to be moving forward, and what structure will provide flexibility to carry out our purpose. A Steering Team will develop our discernment process to make short-term and longer-term decisions. Congregational input will be very important, knowing that COVID-19 will continue to spur new methods of communication and connection. We will develop our Community of Faith Profile and Living Faith Story, guided through connection with Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council. We will continue to provide updates as the next steps of transition unfold.

On September 8, our building reopened with controls in place to follow Harcourt guidelines and public health protocols. The Re-entry Planning Group, Property Committee and staff have been preparing our spaces for internal gatherings and renters. The Re-entry Planning Group has met in the Friendship Room twice to practice the protocols and ensure that signage is in place to provide instruction to individuals and groups who come to our building. Short videos are being prepared, too.

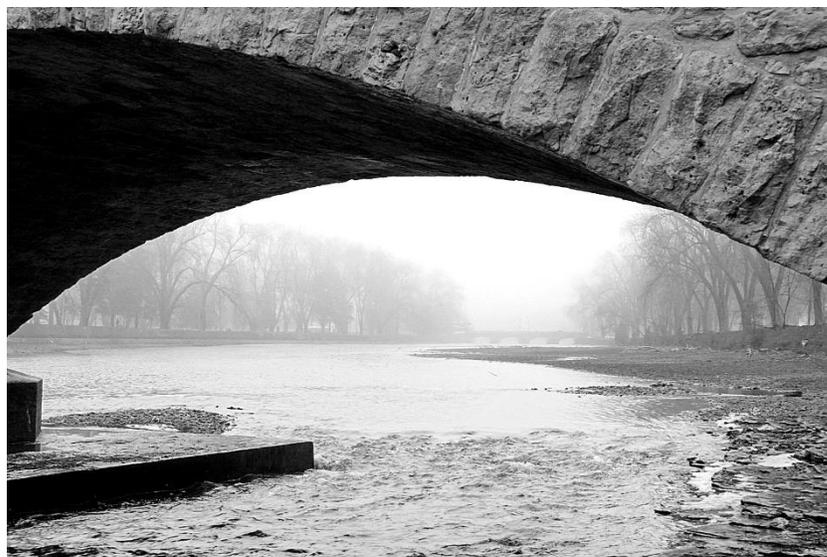
Many will remember that our March Annual Meeting: Part 2 was cancelled due to the pandemic. Since then, Finance Committee has worked diligently to monitor our status, including successful applications to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Program. Due to United Church procedures during the pandemic, Council approved a revised almost-balanced

budget, to be ratified at the next Congregational Meeting. It's important to note that all committees are reducing expenses, and Council's plan for another contract with a Community Engagement Facilitator is on hold.

We say THANK YOU to Kent Hoeg, who participated in his final Council meeting after a decade of leadership on Finance Committee and Council. The 'word cloud' found in this newsletter highlights some of Kent's many contributions!

On September 23, Council hosted a joint meeting with committee/team chairs. Focused on changes in our roles experienced this year and still to come, sharing and listening to each other highlighted great commitment to our faith community. Experiencing a pandemic is giving us opportunities that will guide our planning for the future. God is with us. We are not alone.

With faith and hope,
Lorraine Holding, Council Chair



First Place winning photo by Ilona Dobos

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.



Photo by Sarah Lowes

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.

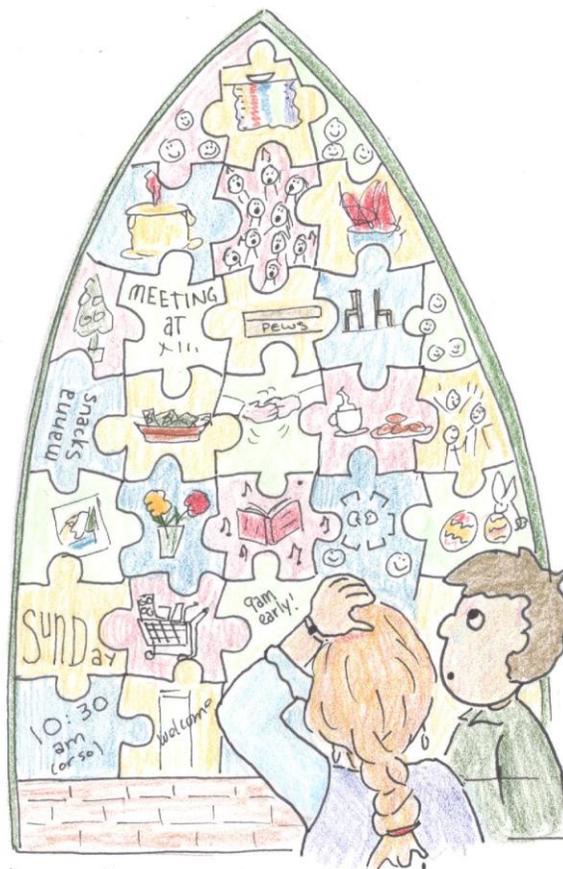
B. Registration: The group organizer needs to keep a log for each event for 30 days, containing date and time of the activity and contact details for each attendee. This speeds up public health contact tracing should it be needed.

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!



"What can you remember about Church before ZOOM and YouTube?"

ABC NEWS

(Anything But Corona!)

- **Guelph Chamber Choir Launches 40th Anniversary Season**

Guelph Chamber Choir (GCC) (*with our very own Alison MacNeill as pianist*) is pleased to announce SingOUT 2020-2021, a new season celebrating 40 years of choral excellence. “COVID-19 has made us shift tactics, but even a pandemic can’t stop the music,” says artistic director Dr. Charlene Pauls. <https://www.guelphmercury.com/community-story/10206901-guelph-chamber-choir-launches-40th-anniversary-season/>

- **2020 United Way Campaign Launch Kicks Off with Focus on Food Security**

In Canada, 13 to 14 per cent of residents don’t have access to good food. Within Guelph, that number is slightly higher, says Gavin Dandy, the managing director of The Seed. <https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/2020-united-way-campaign-launch-kicks-off-with-focus-on-food-security-2733676>

- **Tree canopy covers nearly one-quarter of the city**

Despite invasive species and severe weather damage, Guelph’s urban forest is holding fairly steady with a 23 per cent canopy covering. That’s pretty much the way it’s been since 2013 when city council of the day approved the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) ... of course the plan’s goal is 40 per cent. <https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/tree-canopy-covers-nearly-one-quarter-of-the-city-2733236>

Dave Hume in Stitches! Property Committee Comments

by Larry Smith

We've all realized that Dave Hume is irreplaceable. Frank Webster is Interim Chair of Property during Dave's cardiac surgery and recovery. Currently I'm subbing for Frank while he travels. Best wishes Dave for a full and speedy recovery.

With Dave's help we continued to keep up with building maintenance as well as garden pruning, weeding and watering. We are hoping for volunteer help for our late summer clean up Saturday 26th September. Thanks so much to people who have been continuing to help in and use the garden. It can be a lovely retreat in these stressful times.

Repair Café used the entire parking lot on a Saturday at the end of August with at least a dozen tables set up and with good health protocols in place, and the autistic services dogs continued to do their training in the parking lot through the summer. Attendance for the Level-Up Computer Camp improved in their second week, going from one girl on Monday to three in all on Friday. With Wendy's help we updated rental contracts to accommodate COVID-19 protocols and are working with the re-entry committee to move cautiously on rentals for the Fall. Park N Dance changed their mind and are not coming, at this point.

Royal City Preschool's incoming president Carolyn Cartile has been in touch to let us know that they anticipate smaller enrollments for the fall. We remain open to addressing their needs as requirements for COVID conditions change. The school expects to open on September 28. Property proposes that the west (side) door should be used exclusively for the pre-school with all other entries and exits via the Church front doors.

Nan Hogg and half a dozen water colour painters will meet in the Friendship room on Wednesdays.

Cubs and Scouts plan to meet outside for as long as the weather holds. Guides responded that programs would re-start in October. From this point in time, that will be outside for one meeting and then one virtual meeting.

The Rainbow Chorus and Harcourt Church Choirs are now meeting in the Celebration Garden on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Manna will be meeting online and outside for now.

COMMUNITY

Chalmers – Six Months Later

by Peter Gill

In the middle of March, a lifetime ago it seems, the staff decided after much soul-searching that we needed to stay open for our guests with no idea that we would be in essentially the same position today.

So, with staff working from home and communicating via email and Zoom, and a skeleton crew of under 70 years of age volunteers, we continued to offer the same nutritious food as always to our guests. However, no cafes, clothing, mending, knitting or conversation circles or social time which many of our guests look forward to.

Since then we have expanded our volunteer roster considerably, staff are beginning to spend time in the office and we are just beginning to figure out how we might offer additional services with guests able to enter both our Downtown and West locations.

Those six months have been interesting to say the least. We have had virtually no in-kind food donations (remember the grocery cart in the greeting area?) of non-perishables but have received an unprecedented quantity of fresh produce from community gardeners and CSA's. In September the board approved increases of \$30,000 in our food and \$3,000 in our diaper budgets to cope with increased demand (2020's food budget had been \$87,500). We were able to do this through grants from the United Way, Guelph Community Foundation, City of Guelph and a wonderful response from individual donors.

Other important work continues:

- Bylaws are being rewritten
- A land acknowledgement and background document have been prepared
- The hiring of a paid Executive Director will commence very soon
- A Fundraising Committee (called Community Giving) has been formed
- So, as we enter fall and the challenge of colder weather, we are aware that demands on our services will continue to grow. With continued community support, our ever-willing teams of volunteers and super-dedicated staff we will continue to offer Chalmers' guests "Respect and Dignity for All".

An update from the Youth Group

by Suzanne Webster

It is hard to believe that the Youth Group has not met in person since late February. Sue and Lisette miss all the members and their energy very much!

As schools re-open and our subsequent bubbles expand exponentially, we are going to hold off on having any in-person Youth Group meetings for now. We will re-evaluate in the new year, and/or when the church re-opens for larger groups.

We hope you are all staying safe, washing your hands and keeping your distance. We know it is very difficult to stay away from your friends. Please do what you can to keep everyone safe! We are all in this together. See you soon!

Love, Sue and Lisette



a ZOOM gathering for
Young Adults
18-35 years



ALL ARE TRULY WELCOME
Every Wednesday at 6:30pm
a safe space for
open-minded, faith-based
and engaging conversation

hosted by
McClure United Church
in Saskatoon

Contact Rev Laura Fohse for the ZOOM link:
Text (306-291-5838) or
email laura@mcclureunitedchurch.org

Hey young adults.

Our nation-wide young adult discussion group is resuming WEDNESDAYS at 6:30 (SK time).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81981340712...>

Meeting ID: 819 8134 0712

Message me for the passcode. Contact info in the image.

United Church of Canada Youth and Young Adults

Public Facebook Group. 958 members

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2248115450/>

Gill Joseph, Editor of the Harcourt Herald, is Retiring!

by Joan Barham, Chair Communication

A decade ago, Gill became the editor of the Harcourt Herald. It has been a labour of love whereby she has spent 8 to 10 days per month for 10 months of every year, bringing us a newsletter/magazine that highlights both happenings at Harcourt and news from other sources. Letters from the ministers, chair of Council, a calendar of events, special interviews, input from the congregation such as thought pieces, poems, cartoons, contests, updates, recipes, committee updates, requests for support and news of other GUM churches and the United Church of Canada ...all this is organized for print by the Editor.

Gill kept us safe by ensuring that permission was given for everything published even when it was not written by the person who submitted it. Not only did she not want Harcourt to incur the large fines that some other Guelph people had received when they did not respect the legalities of copyright, but she also felt strongly that as Christians we should not be stealing other people's work! To ensure this protection, Gill spent time each month contacting authors of articles, photos and cartoons for permission to re-print, researching quote sources and bibliographic references and seeking alternatives when permission was denied. Laws concerning accessibility were also kept in mind. As a result, the Harcourt Herald was able to respect intellectual property and honour the diversity of the people we serve internally and externally.

To facilitate congregational input, Gill established an e-mail connection with an automatic reply that sent a confirmation receipt to those Harcourtians who contributed to the Herald (by the 20th of each month!). Gill has worked hard at encouraging the congregation to share their numerous activities, their faith in action, their creativity and spiritual insights - all of which form the life of Harcourt.

Gill increased the outreach of the Herald over the years by ensuring that it was marketed on Facebook and Twitter each month and available in both hardcopy and digital formats. She also made sure that hardcopies were available for visitors to the church as well as regular congregation members and those living in retirement/nursing homes. The copy on the website has even attracted people from around the world who read the Herald. Our statistics show that the Harcourt Herald is read by people in other parts of Canada as well as the U.S., Europe and Australia.

In her role as Editor of the Herald, Gill has also served as a member of the Harcourt Communication Committee since its inception 10 years ago. She attended meetings not only when she was in Guelph, but also when in Florida where she spends some months each year. We simply *Skyped* Gill and placed the computer in a spot where we could see each other and all work together. And yes, the Harcourt Herald was also researched and put together in Florida when she was there for the past 8 years.

Along with several activities (noted below in *Behind the Scenes*), her most recent innovation has been the Harcourt Herald Photograph competition. This was a “special something” for fun and to help us get through COVID isolation. The 32 submitted photographs were high quality and once again Gill has shown how blessed Harcourt is with the talents of those in our congregation. We can look forward to seeing all of the photographs up in the church building and online soon.

Gill, thank you for 10 years of love and labour in providing us with a very special newsletter which enriched our lives and brought our Harcourt community closer together. We wish you well as you embrace new activities in your life.

New Team for the Harcourt Herald

by Joan Barham, Chair Communication

With the retirement of Gill Joseph as Editor of the Harcourt Herald after 10 years, we have begun to form a team to work on the next Harcourt Herald.

Fortunately, the Harcourt Herald has a very good framework in place for receiving and organizing information that comes from the congregation. Once put together, the Herald is sent to the Office by the last Thursday of the month where it is printed, mailed or delivered to those who are not online by a system of volunteers. It is also uploaded onto the Church website.

We have three people who have come forward to be part of this team, but we need more people so that the various tasks can be broken down into small chunks which can fit into everyday life more easily. We are starting talks this coming week, September 21st, as to how the Herald will look going forward. The Herald is a critical communication vehicle in our congregational life and especially for those who are not on-line. Please call me to ask questions, or express your interest in being part of a team participating in bringing the life of Harcourt to others through the Harcourt Herald. Phone: 519 836 0433 E-mail:

jfbarham@gmail.com

A Foundation That Makes a Difference

submitted by Lynn Hancock



Sarah Charters

Since 2002 The United Church of Canada Foundation has been providing service to congregations & communities of faith, regional church bodies and partners, and the General Council to help further their mission & ministry. Sarah Charters (nee Magee) joined the Foundation in 2007 and has embraced the opportunity to have her career as a fundraiser in the charitable sector align with her love for the United Church. Sarah Charters spent her formative church years at Harcourt as it was – and still is – the congregation her parents belong to. Indeed, while now a member and chorister at Kingston Road United Church in Toronto, Sarah still has fond memories of Harcourt Church.

In her current role as Acting President of the The United Church of Canada Foundation, Sarah and her team are working hard to ensure that congregations like Harcourt are able to rely on the Foundation for help with gifts of mutual funds and shares (Harcourt benefits from this service many times a year), with accessing low cost, professional investment management (Harcourt also work with the Foundation on this), and access to grants for innovative ministries. Stay tuned of more information on Harcourt's relationship with the Foundation and the opportunities we have to work together. Please click on the logo below to link to the Foundation.



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FOUNDATION

Focusing on the future together

Sarah Charters, CFRE

Acting President & Acting Director of Philanthropy • scharters@united-church.ca

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www.unitedchurchfoundation.ca

DONATE NOW

ALL THINGS CHRISTMAS Covid Style

by Janet Webster

As the Harcourt Herald press time approaches the planning group is thinking about how we can hold this event under the present guidelines. General feedback is that we should be able to do this... but **differently**. The space for the event is booked for November 26, 27 and the 28th with the actual sale scheduled for Saturday, November 28th.

Obviously, the activities held in the Friendship Room will not be possible. The space would not allow us to hold a Muffin Cafe or selling of treasures in a safe way. But, could we ask people to submit a list of their baking/ preserving offerings and take on-line orders? Pick-up could perhaps be at a church door with social distances or maybe even some delivery. Thoughts?

The way we have created arrangements in the past could be adjusted so that a limited number of signed-up volunteers would be in the gym, six feet apart with no casual drop ins. We realize that this will certainly change the atmosphere, but would follow protocol (as it stands now).

As for the sale itself, we are discussing several ideas such as:

- Sale of greenery from a shelter in the parking lot
- Customers buying or ordering on-line from descriptions and /or photos
- Timed pick-up of arrangements
- Payment by e transfers or exact change
- Other ideas?

In the meantime, here are some ways you can contribute:

- Process some late harvest foods into jams, jellies, chutneys, pickles etc. in case we do have a bake sale. If we do not, you will have a supply of Holiday gifts!
- Gather dried vegetation such as teasels, milk weed pods, hydrangea
- Set aside plastic pots approx. 10" across, such as hanging pots
- Save and donate soil for the outdoor arrangements
- Delay trimming your evergreens until November
- Gather items that could perk up the arrangements (such as ornaments, fake fruit on sticks)

We have had one offer of a canopy to set up outdoors, but would like a second. Does anyone have something similar? If you have suggestions or ideas please contact Janet Webster, Ann Middleton , Lisa McTaggart, Marilyn Sears or call the Harcourt office. We know there are many creative people in our midst who can help us bring this together. Watch Harcourt communications for updates.

Guelph Community Orchard Project Update

by Jill Gill

Since the restrictions around Covid-19 have been in place and the church building has been closed to the congregation and everyone else, you probably haven't been to the church grounds very often to follow developments in the Guelph Community Orchard.

The hazelnuts for the first time since the orchard was planted in September 2012, were abundant – and the squirrels must have had a feast!! The nuts were heavy on the tree one day and gone the next! Unbelievable. One year we'll manage to get a few (hopefully). Ditto for the Asian Pears and Arctic Kiwi which were heavy on the vines – gone in a heartbeat. Oh well, guess we have to live and share with the critters. I just wish they'd be willing to share



University of Guelph Students from Project Serve

some with us. On the other hand, the blackberries have been, and still are, plentiful, with many still on the vines to ripen and be enjoyed. If you are strolling by – give them a try.

The yearly University of Guelph Project Serve event has given opportunity to countless students to come to the orchard at Harcourt to work at maintaining and preparing the beds for fall and winter. However, with Covid-19 precautions, they switched everyone to virtual volunteering. Clearly gardening is

not possible in a virtual sense, so luckily on September 21st, two brave students came and did weeding and moving of wood mulch, which is much appreciated. The orchard is looking tidy and ready for a sleep over the winter months.

Garden Corner

Naked Ladies in the Harcourt Gardens!

by Sandy Middleton

The challenge for the perennial flower gardener is to find plants that bloom at different times of the year in order to maintain a continuity of bloom throughout from early spring to late fall. Fall, of course, presents a special challenge, as at this time of year most plants have “done their thing” and are entering into winter dormancy. However, most of us delight in the autumn display of native goldenrods and asters, that are such a striking feature of the Ontario countryside at this time of year, and which have given rise to many horticultural varieties. But in addition to these beauties, there are other less well-known plants that bloom late into the season, such as the beautiful, but poisonous, Monkshood. This brings me to Naked Ladies.

If you happen to walk through the Harcourt gardens at this time of year, you may notice in several places, clumps of large, showy, pink-mauve, crocus-like flowers (e.g. SW corner of the nursery addition). These are the flowers of The Autumn Crocus, Meadow Saffron, or Naked Ladies (*Colchicum autumnale*). The name, Naked Ladies, results from the unusual growth cycle of this plant which produces its leaves in the spring. The leaves then wither and die without trace, only to be replaced by an explosion of leafless blooms in mid-late September. Thus, the Naked Ladies.



But this plant has other interesting claims to fame. First, its scientific name is a latinized version of the Greek name, Kolkhida, which is the region in modern day Georgia where the plant is a common native. Second, even though it is referred to as a ‘crocus’ it is not related to our loved spring crocuses which are in a botanically different family. Third, although all parts of the plant are poisonous, and can even cause a skin rash to some when the corms are handled, it is the source of colchicine, a drug used to treat a number of ailments, including gout. And finally, on a sinister note, the plant’s poison was used by some nineteenth century murderers to dispatch their victims.

Who knew we had such an interesting plant in our Harcourt collection?

Announcements

Passing:



ENGBERG, Lila passed away peacefully on September 23, 2020 at Wellington Terrace, in Fergus, Ontario at age 97 years. Lila, who retired from the Department of Family Studies, University of Guelph, was born in Calmar, Alberta on April 24, 1923. She is survived by brother Bob (Betty) in Edmonton and nine nieces and nephews in Alberta. Lila attended Edmonton Normal School before teaching four years in Alberta. She obtained her B.Sc. (1949) in Home Economics from the University of Alberta. Lila taught foods and nutrition in Vermilion, in Fairview Schools of Agriculture and Home Economics, and in the Composite High School in Red Deer. She also served in Lethbridge and Edmonton in

the Alberta Extension service. Lila left Alberta in 1957 to teach at Macdonald Institute, Guelph. She obtained a M.Sc. from Iowa State University and a Ph.D. from Cornell. Lila became interested in justice issues in international development, particularly for women and families. She had three assignments in Africa; 1963-1968 in Malawi with the Nutrition Division of FAO, United Nations; 1970-1975 with the University of Ghana/Guelph partnership as acting head of the Home Science Department, University of Ghana, and 1982-1985 with University of Malawi/Mount St. Vincent University home economics partnership. After retirement, Lila had short term assignments in Africa, in Brazil and in Central Europe. Among the honours Lila received were a distinguished service award from the International Federation for Home Economics in 1996, a distinguished alumni award from the University of Alberta in 1997, and a Woman of Distinction Award in Guelph, 1998. Cremation has taken place—internment to be at Calmar Community Cemetery, Alberta. Her family and friends wish to thank the staff at Wellington Terrace for their loving attentive care. Memorial gifts may be given to KAIROS Justice Initiatives, to Harcourt Memorial United Church, Guelph, or a charity of your choice. Due to restrictions, no memorial service will be held at this time.

A tree will be planted in memory of Lila Engberg in the Wall-Custance Memorial Forest.

Behind the Scenes

The Significance of Endings and Beginnings

by Gillian Joseph

Many years ago, I was standing in the Harcourt Church narthex with my young son who was waiting to go in to the Sanctuary to compete in the Guelph Kiwanis Music Festival. Although well prepared, my son was nervous. To relieve his stress, he walked up and down the hallway looking at photographs and notices on the walls. I began to do the same and stopped at the photo of Mrs. Caroline Forbes Harcourt who is the namesake of our Church. Always aware that the photo was there, I had never taken the time to really look at it closely before. What a lovely, distinguished-looking woman. I noted her birth year, 1871. I noted her death year ...and gasped. Her death occurred on February 21st - the very day and year that I was born! It is not often that one finds a photograph of a person who died on the day of their own birth...and certainly not someone who is the namesake of a Church that has played such a significant part in one's life. I have thought about this connection many times since. The comings and goings of life. The end of Caroline's life, the beginning of mine. Endings and beginnings.

In August of 2011, I was teaching, undertaking and writing up research and working as the Director of a small research support company. Yet, I volunteered to be the Editor of the Harcourt Herald because it's the kind of work that I love to do. Jim Ball, Wendy Brown and Kyla Riach were Ministers/leaders then. Richard Barham was Chair of Council and Ann Purkis had just started as Church Administrator. Right from the start, being Editor of the Harcourt Herald was a responsibility that I took very seriously. After all, people in the Church needed to know what was going on, not only about our church, but also about the greater Church, the United Church of Canada, and our local spiritual community. The Harcourt Herald had previously been a small, black and white newsletter which was beautifully crafted by Terry McDonald, distributed in print and available by pick up or delivered by courier each month. However, the information that was coming in from Committees and individuals had begun to increase. Technology had changed and a demand for online information was growing. People wanted the font made larger and more photographs inserted. It was time to let go of the old way of creating the Herald and to consider new ways of getting information out to our members and beyond. So, with the encouragement of the Communication Committee and lots of online research into other examples of church communication, the "newsletter" with its two-column format, moved to a more magazine-type format (with a larger font) – and it was not only available in printed copy, but also put online. Endings and beginnings.

Although I could write a book about the submissions that interested, surprised or moved me over the years, there are a few that stand out in reflection. Here I will follow the outline of the Harcourt Herald. The first page, for example, changed several times as *Missions, Vision Statements, Core Values and Purpose* became more clearly defined, as our church logo was born (from a new web-page created almost entirely through the fund-raising efforts of the Communication Committee) and as staff and contact people came and went. The Ministers' contributions, initially entitled "From Wendy's Desk", now includes insights not only from our very own Ministry team, but also from those of other clergy, including some of other faiths as well as from our own Moderator. In particular, Jim's post-sabbatical daily prayer guide and his reflections about his part, as a young man, in the making of the Caledon Trailway, as well as Miriam's passionate call in 2018 to consider environmental stewardship, stand out for me. More recently, Moderator Rev. Richard Bott's powerful COVID prayer entitled "*A Prayer as I Put on My Mask*" is one of many moving contributions in this section of the Herald.

Over the last 10 years, "Council News" has also changed through the contributions of Chairs Richard Barham, Kathy Magee and now Lorraine Holding. In 2015 a regular feature of the Herald first called "*People Are Talking About...*", then re-named "*The Latest Buzz*" and now called "*ABC News (Anything But Corona!)*" had online links that attempted to inform the congregation about activities and insights of a loosely defined spiritual nature from outside of our congregation. With pride in our connection, Harcourt member Peter Gill's award announcement, Jill Gill's recognition as a "Guelph Woman of Distinction" and our city's efforts to address opioid addiction were three links published that really stood out for me.

For the section entitled "Committees and Groups", the humorous and informatively written and well photographed contributions of Ben Fear from the Property Committee have been, and continue to be, superb... and they always bring a smile. In addition, the reports years ago from Ben and Norma Fear about their experiences helping to build a school in Africa and the impact that it had on the local people was a powerful reminder to me of how inspiration, kindness and a bit of elbow grease can make a big difference to so many. The Harcourt Library Committee submissions from Brenda Kelly, Janet Webster and Mary-Lou Funston introduced me to some unfamiliar authors who challenged my ideas and made me think. Janet Webster's year-long garage sale updates (which I love) always get me motivated to clean out the corners of my house and I am blown away by the photos of the "regulars" at Harcourt who volunteer so much time and energy into making this a success each year. It has also been a wonderful education to be present to hear, or to hear about, the topics being discussed at the Caroline Harcourt Women's Fellowship and the Men's Group each month, or to be challenged and inspired by the insights of the Spiritual Life Committee.

For the "Community" section of the Herald, Jill Gill's regular reports on the Community Orchard, the Communal Garden and the Saturday Night Supper, and Peter Gill's reports on

Chalmers Community Services, have never ceased to inspire. I truly enjoyed Ann Clayton's poetry which was published in the Herald in my early years as Editor, as well as the flight log diaries of the father of a Harcourt member who generously submitted them for a Remembrance Day issue. And what about our talented cartoonist, Roz Stephenson who helps us to laugh at ourselves – I love her artistry. And what about the many people who have submitted poems, memoirs and book reviews throughout the years. Thank you SO much. Not to forget Sarah Lowe who, living next door to the Church, keeps an eye out not only for security purposes, but also Sarah and her friends update us in word and photograph in the Herald section entitled "Garden Corner" about the beautiful flora and fauna that grace our church property. I love this regular Herald feature and hope it continues!

When it comes to the "Announcements" Section, *Passing* (obituaries) has always been the first entry. Sadly, the obituaries of many Harcourt friends have been noted here over the years. However, without a doubt the obituary that had the biggest impact on me was the entry for Darko Cikovic, our custodian. Along with many others in our congregation, Darko's untimely death still continues to sadden me. Yet it reminds me over and over about the unpredictability of endings and beginnings and the importance of not putting off telling people how much joy their company brings when the opportunity arises. For the sections on "Baptisms" and "Births", I remember reporting on a baptism that I attended one Sunday that included the little ones of same sex parents Pam and Colleen. How proud I was of their courage and the courage of our affirming congregation that stands tall to support their family in such a turbulent world. In addition, in 2017, the Harcourt Herald featured an interview with parents Sam and Amanda whose baby Ariya was Christened both at Harcourt Church and at the Sikh temple where the family also worships. Visitors from the Sikh community were very much welcomed at the Harcourt baptism service that Sunday, as together we celebrated the joy of welcoming a little person just beginning life.

Behind the Scenes was the section of the Herald that attempted to challenge ideas and to introduce you to some of Harcourt Church's interesting and diverse members. It also let me write from my own perspective from time to time in over 25 essays on topics that ranged from Religious Hats to Singing Christmas Carols as an Act of Resistance. Interviews were my favourite thing though, and I did quite a few including interviews with Darko (October, 2012), Peter Gill (June, 2014), Ann Purkis (2015), Sandy Phair and her daughter Theresa (May, 2015), Arlene Fuhr Davies and Edna Miller (May, 2017), Miriam Flynn (September, 2017), Ann Ball (February, 2018), Lynn Hancock (October, 2018), Andy Kwiatkowski (February, 2019), Emmy Beauchamp (GUM) (March, 2019), Stan Bunston (November, 2019), Kathy Magee (December, 2019), Janice Walters, Supervisor, Royal City Cooperative Preschool at Harcourt Church (March, 2019) and Esther Devolin (January, 2020). Learning about the lives of these people brought me pure joy.

There were also a few Herald-sponsored activities during my tenure that I hope you enjoyed as much as I did. In the fall of 2013, for example, the Harcourt Herald ran a Limerick contest with Ben Fear winning First Prize. An example of one of the many clever rhymes submitted and published was one by Kathy Magee:

*There once was a church in transition
Who never lost sight of their mission
Together we learn
And try to discern
How discipleship inspires our vision*

In 2014 the Herald sponsored a contest for children, inviting them to build a scene that could be viewed through a hole in a shoebox. Approximately 10 entries were judged and displayed in the gym after the 10 a.m. service. I'm sorry that I can't remember who won, but I definitely remember the winning shoebox design and it was absolutely amazing – awakening me to the many creative people, of all ages, who make up our congregation.

In 2015 the Harcourt Herald, the Communication Committee and GUM sponsored a non-denominational workshop at Harcourt for Churches in Guelph and the surrounding area. It was entitled "*Reaching Out: Marketing Your Church in Challenging Times*" and we were able to attract David Tonen, Director of *Ministry Story* in Halifax, Nova Scotia, who had been cited in the United Church Observer as a leading "*Canadian Church Marketing Specialist*". It was a great success with over 100 people attending from churches all over the area, and included an expert panel of clergy and United Church visionaries who helped to lead the breakout groups. A special report on the workshop was published in the October edition of the Harcourt Herald. Most recently in 2020 the Harcourt Herald ran a photographic competition that attracted 15 entrants from the congregation with 32 photo submissions. Three judges volunteered to participate (an artist, a professional photographer and an instructor in media) and the winners were presented with cash prizes that were privately donated by members of the congregation. First prize went to Ilona Dobos, two second prizes to Lillian Carvalho and Mark Sears and two honourable mention certificates were given out to Laura Hofer and Jerry Daminato respectively. The prize-giving event took place in the church garden on a lovely sunny afternoon (with masks) – a real treat in our current times.

Endings and beginnings. Now it's time for me to step aside as Editor of the Harcourt Herald (after such a wonderful ride) and let other people take the reins. It is what life is all about as we move through this journey together. Endings and beginnings. Like the cocoon and the butterfly on the cover this month. This is my last issue as Editor. Thank you for making my job so incredibly rewarding over the years. Thank you for the supportive and

enthusiastic e-mails that made me feel so good, and the more constructively critical ones that made me think and work harder. I have faith that the new team, with your help, will create something bold and beautiful that would make Caroline Harcourt so proud. Blessings to you all! With love, Gill Joseph, Former Editor of the Harcourt Herald.



Joint Second Place Lillian Carvalho



Joint Second Place Mark Sears