

The Harcourt Herald October 2021

The Life and Work of Harcourt United Church





Harcourt Memorial United Church

An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada

We are a people of God called together and sent forth by Christ to... **Seek. Connect. Act.**

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

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

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

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

Church Administrator:
Wendy Guilmette

Worship, Communication
and Technical Support:
Casey Connor

Custodian: David Kucherepa

The Ministers: The People
with
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part-time pastoral care
minister Rev. Marcie
Gibson, Pamela Girardi
Manna lead coordinator,
Director of Music Ministry:
Alison MacNeill

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Table of Contents

From the editor's desk.....	4
Grace Before Meals.....	5
Council News.....	6
Hello from Manna.....	8
Financial update.....	10
Thanksgiving flowers – we're back in church.....	10
The saga of the gym floor.....	11
Living a life of gratitude.....	12
Reflections on Thanksgiving.....	14
Reflections on Thanksgiving.....	15
Ways to be thankful and give thanks.....	16
Thanks.....	18
Much to be thankful for this year.....	20
Thanks/giving – Thanks/doing – Thanks/being.....	22
Mark your calendar for All Things Christmas.....	23
Orange shirt day.....	24
Lila's treasures raise \$5858 for Harcourt.....	25
The gauntlet is thrown! Will you rise to the occasion?.....	26
"Dog Daze" featuring some folks at Harcourt.....	27
Notice:.....	27
Thanksgiving Prayer 2021.....	28

From the editor's desk

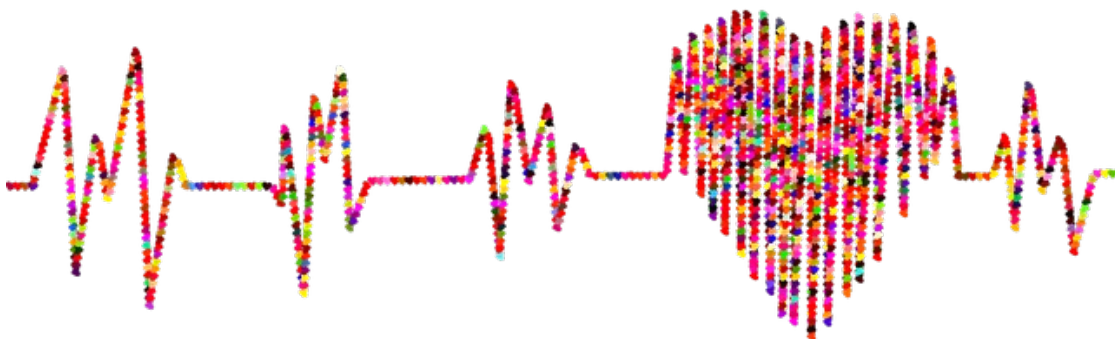
Oh my! We are already into October! Time flies when you're having fun. And, actually, I am having a lot of fun. We are at a cottage in the Muskoka area enjoying the last moments of summer and the start of autumn, and I'm very thankful for the sunshine and the still warm weather.



Overall, there is so much to give thanks for: our health, being fully vaccinated, having all we really need, belonging to the Harcourt congregation ... and so much more.

That leads me to realize that just saying thanks is not all there is to the yearly reminder celebration with turkey, pumpkins and colourful trees. We also stay active in creating acts of kindness toward other people and creatures and our planet earth. Thus, I created the word *thanksdoing* to remind us that we need to do more than simply say thanks: we have a lot of work to do in the world to express that gratitude. Articles in this issue reflect both thanksgiving and thanksdoing.

**There is no article from the minister's Quill in this issue; our minister, Rev. Miriam Flynn, is on a spot of medical leave.
We wish you well, Miriam!**



Grace Before Meals

send in by Lynn Hancock

As we begin this meal with grace,



Let us become aware of the memory
Carried inside the food before us:
The quiver of the seed
Awakening in the earth,
Unfolding in a trust of roots
And slender stems of growth,
On its voyage toward harvest,
The kiss of rain and surge of sun;
The innocence of animal soul
That never spoke a word,
Nourished by the earth
To become today our food;
The work of all the strangers
Whose hands prepared it,
The privilege of wealth and health
That enables us to feast and celebrate.
Amen.

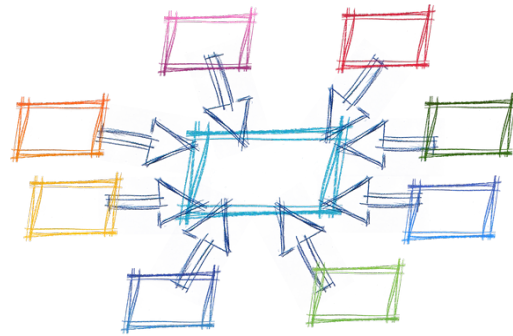
(By John O'Donohue)

Council News

Lorraine Holding, council chair

Where are WE at?

- Individually?
- As a community of faith?
- As a church in transition and still living through a pandemic?



This month I want to focus on our discernment process and the work that has been done during the past four months. Since our Harcourt Conversations on Zoom in May, much work and time have been dedicated by the Transition Steering Team. In this update, I want to share a re-cap of where we're at.

- June 3 – Council and the team met with Rev. John Neff, Minister for Congregational Support & Mission for Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council. He helped us understand the need for and purpose of preparing a Community of Faith Profile (Living Faith Story; Demographics Worksheet; Financial Viability Worksheet; etc.).
- June to September – The team met five times to work through the input received in May.
- August 15 – Two small working groups submitted their work on the Demographics Worksheet and the Financial Viability Worksheet for review.
- September 15 – The team met with council to present its picture of key patterns of focus for Harcourt's future.

I encourage you to re-read Bill Lord's article in the September Herald, Harcourt's Journey into the Future: the Leadership Challenge! Our team and council are focused on this journey towards a revised missional purpose, and how the ideas gathered in May help to guide our direction. Briefly, I share how our analysis has unfolded.

- We pulled together the ideas gathered from the eight Zoom conversations focused on hospitality/community building, worship, spiritual growth/learning, and needs of the world. Did you read the four summary reports linked to the June 30 e-weekly? The Harcourt Conversations Round 2 Summaries report can be requested from the church office.
- We also pulled together the ideas gathered from Manna's conversations and survey.
- We sorted those ideas as: technical problem-solving, adaptive challenge/change, or deep change. We realized that, in a circle, the possible technical actions are closer to the centre

for more immediate action. The deep change actions would take longer to explore or implement.

- Next, we sorted the various ideas into broader clusters: looking outward (with community, with partners, with hired staff); worship (variety, with technology, change in minister focus); spiritual life practices; physical space.
- We have worked with all the ideas and clusters to identify threads and patterns. Council provided feedback at our September meeting and was supportive of three themes as potential priorities for Harcourt. These will be shared when ready for viewing and explanation.

From all this work, we will discern recommendations for ministerial and/or other staff positions to lead Harcourt forward. As we proceed through fall 2021, we continue to listen for the Spirit and aim to have our Community of Faith Profile compiled for approval by council and the congregation.

With faith and hope,
Lorraine



Hello from Manna

Julie Henshaw



On Sunday September 12, Manna families met for an outdoor service where we worshiped and wondered together about the theme of creation. We played a fun game called Evolution – a variation of Rock, Paper, Scissors. We heard a story about the earth’s place in the universe, and we considered the delicate balance of our amazing ecosystem. We spent some time brainstorming the threats to the health of planet earth, and we thought about the changes we could make that would help keep earth healthy for all of creation. Emily Steers led us in song, and kept the beat by playing the Canjon (pictured below). We also enjoyed a special treat, on what is known at Manna as Sundae Sunday! Although it

looked a little different this year (with Covid-friendly servings), everyone enjoyed a cool ice cream cone. It sure was nice to gather together in person.

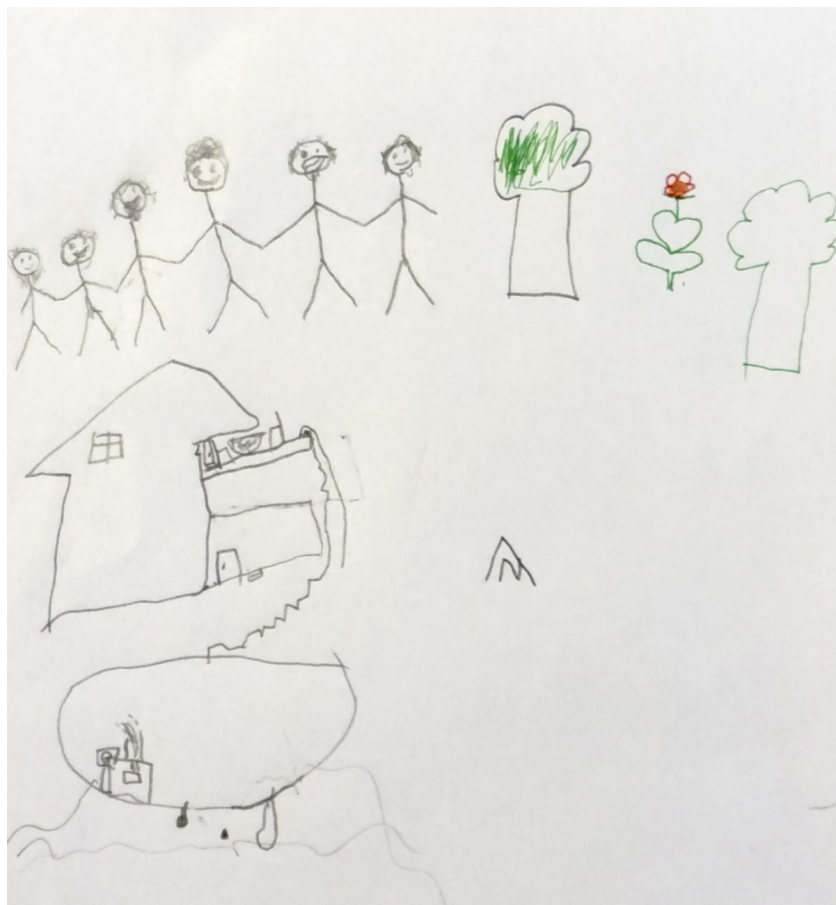
Thank you to our many Manna leaders who always plan new ways for everyone to engage in worship. Are you curious about Manna? Would you like to join us? We would love to see you! Below is a list of our upcoming gatherings. If you’d like to be added to Manna’s email list for details about services, please reach out to tech@harcourtuc.ca for more information.



- Sunday, October 3 – outdoor service – Humanity and Communion Sunday
- Sunday, October 10 – Thanksgiving harvest hike at Ignatius Farm
- Sunday, October 17 – online on Zoom – cooking together for climate



I am thankful for our time with the family at the cottage



FOR BEING AT THE COTTAGE WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY
AND FOR GREEN TREES TO GIVE US AIR

I AM THANKFUL

Financial update

Brian Magee

Monthly financial reports are distributed to council, all committee members and teams. For members who do not receive the reports, the Finance Committee would like to offer the following information. You may recall that at the end of 2020 Harcourt had a surplus of \$26,000. This was directly the result of receiving federal subsidies of \$80,000. Without the subsidies, Harcourt would have realized a deficit of \$54,500.

As of the August 31, 2021, Harcourt has a deficit of \$33,000. The deficit would have been \$64,000 without the subsidies received so far this year. Currently the monthly subsidies are smaller than last year and the subsidy program will likely end this fall.

When Harcourt is able to fully engage in rentals and fundraising, our financial position will improve. However, we cannot sustain deficits of this magnitude. Please consider donating again on a regular basis or increasing your financial support so that the church can maintain its many important faith programs.



Thanksgiving flowers – we're back in church

Barb Friend



We have much to be thankful for this fall. In-person, indoor worship services are back; many of us are once again visiting with loved ones; and church and social activities are restarting.

The chancel committee is once again planning to decorate the sanctuary to celebrate Thanksgiving. If you would like to assist us by donating towards the purchase of chrysanthemums to honour a loved one or special event, please contact Barb Friend by October 4 at

Barfriend52@gmail.com

Home: 519-763-5032

Cell: 519-803-5032

The saga of the gym floor

Dave Hume, past chair of the Harcourt Property Committee

The Harcourt Property Committee has investigated the asbestos content of the tile floor in the Harcourt gymnasium. There were three samples taken from the plastic tiles and three from the mastic that glued them down. Laboratory analyses by LEX Scientific here in Guelph showed that the tiles contained 15% asbestos, but the mastic was less than 0.5% asbestos.

After those results came in, Reitzel Brothers Environmental from Breslau was hired to remove and dispose of the existing tile and mastic. When that was completed in September, the floor was down to the bare concrete. The next step was to test for air-borne asbestos, both in the gym and in the lower hallway between the gym and the main classroom of the Royal City Pre-School. The results of that testing showed extremely low asbestos levels, well below Ontario guidelines. The replacement tile flooring, free of asbestos, has been ordered from Ferra Flooring, but is on back order because of difficulties Armstrong Flooring is having with supplies. The bare, concrete floor will remain until the new floor tiles arrive.

Special thanks is extended to the Harcourt Scouts and leaders for their help in moving their supplies out of the gym cupboards. Thanks also to the pre-school teachers for their co-operation so the asbestos-containing floor tiles were removed before the new year of pre-school started in September. Another piece of good news is that the pre-school is back to full operation, at least for now.

One more item: Frank Webster has taken over as the new chair of the Property Committee.



Living a life of gratitude

Andre Auger

The older I get, the more I come to believe that thanksgiving is more a way of life than a particular act. Mortality brings the gifts of life sharply into focus! I find myself grateful for so many things – big and little.



In fact, I am inclined to the term “gratitude” more than thanksgiving to describe this attitude. Perhaps this is in part a reflection on my theology. Thanksgiving implies thanking someone for something. I have long ago jettisoned the idea of a Providence who looks after me. Much as it would be comforting, this would imply a divinity who intervenes into the natural unfolding of the universe. My recognition of science tells me that intervention into a closed universe by an external power is impossible. Moreover, that view would make God responsible for all the bad things that happen as well as the good things. I can’t live with that. There is randomness and chance in our universe, and there is human evil and error, and life unfolds in this mix.

On the other hand, I believe in a universe biased toward growth and fulfilment. Like loaded dice! Since I see the universe as the concrete actualization of God’s infinite potential, I am prepared to consider God as that original dynamism toward good, deep at the heart of evolution. That is enough to make me grateful. Years of mindfulness practice allow me to notice even small instances of beauty and grace all around me. Gratitude is an attitude of appreciation, of recognition that things could be otherwise, and that beauty and grace are somehow gifts that I haven’t necessarily deserved. Gratitude tends to render everything and every moment sacred – the play of sunlight on leaves, the sound of a child playing in a neighbouring yard, a sip of an especially fine wine, a friend who drops over unexpectedly.

The editor, in her invitation to write articles for this month’s Herald, coined an especially interesting neologism – “thanksdoing” – as distinct from thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, when seen through a slightly cynical eye, is merely about *saying* something. Words are easy. “Thanksdoing” focuses on what we *do* to give thanks, to express our gratitude for this bountiful universe.

I am reminded of the expression “paying it forward.” These are acts of random kindness, without expectation of recognition, simply out of the need to create more joy, more love, more beauty in response to the experience of joy, love and beauty in our lives. So we write thank you notes to the letter carrier; we pay the coffee order of the fellow behind us at the drive-through; we make sculptures out of donated canned goods to be a bit playful.

“Thanksdoing” tells me that I am called to be co-creator of this world with God. We are not meant to be waiting for God to clean up this mess of ours: God expects us to do our bit. The founders of every major religion in the world have come up with the same insight: we are called to treat others as we wish ourselves to be treated. Can we ever come to the point where we see everything – and everyone – as gift and that our task is to, in turn, gift the world with our very best? This to me would be true thanksgiving.



Reflections on Thanksgiving

Peter Jackson

If the only prayer you ever say is thank you, that is enough. So said 14th century mystic Meister Eckhart.

My guess is that Meister Eckhart's thinking went something like this: saying thank you is a sign that you appreciate that you are blessed. Appreciating your blessings is the foundation from which may spring acts of generosity. And acts of generosity (broadly construed to include acts of compassion and justice) are what this world needs; saying a prayerful thank you is a sign that you are on the right track.

Thanksgiving is upon us, this most Canadian of celebrations. When Jean and I immigrated to Canada nearly 50 years ago, we were charmed to find a public holiday whose only purpose was to encourage people to be thankful. So many Thanksgivings later, it is our favourite holiday.

It can be illuminating to look back over your life and notice the times that you have been blessed. For me, the blessings begin with being born healthy, and to loving parents in a safe country. I can count many other blessings in every decade of my life. Even in the adverse passages of my life, I can identify kind words and helping hands that got me through.

It can be humbling to count your blessings and to realize that all of them were given freely, that you have done nothing to deserve them. And counting them repeatedly deepens the sense of being held in Great Love. The only response possible, it seems to me, is to give thanks and then pass on the blessing to other people in need.

Passing on the blessing may begin as a mere spoken "bless you," or in its everyday watered-down form "have a nice day." But passing on the blessing does not have to stop there. It can extend into giving practical help; some would say it *should* extend into giving practical help, becoming part of the flow of Great Love.

Many of us already know this. We volunteer here and there, and give financial support to good causes. All the same, this Thanksgiving is an opportunity to reflect:
Have I counted my blessings lately?
Am I truly thankful for these grace-filled gifts?
In what new ways might I pass on the blessing?



Reflections on Thanksgiving

Kathy Magee

This time of year brings into focus the many blessings that we sometimes take for granted. I am so grateful that I live in Canada where we have access to vaccines and healthcare, where we have the privilege and responsibility to be part of a democratic process, where we live amid beautiful and abundant nature. I am grateful for the relationships with family and friends that are rich in love, joy, compassion and fun. There is so much to be thankful for.



Being thankful need not just be passive. When we express our gratitude to someone, let our appreciation be known, that too is an act of kindness that touches a heart. Think about how it feels when someone has thanked you for something. It can create a sense of connectedness and encouragement.

Recently I had the honour of sharing a eulogy for a beloved aunt. There was much to be thankful for in her life, and I was grateful for the opportunity to share my love for her in this way. However, it was the letter of appreciation that my cousin sent after the service that most deeply touched my heart. Her words of thanks will stay with me, as mine, for her mother, will stay with her.

One of the messages of thanks I will treasure forever is a phone call saying “I miss you Nana” after I had spent four months helping with childcare and homeschooling for our grandsons. Those messages of thanks enriched and deepened my experience and sense of connection.

Consider all the ways you have expressed your gratitude, said thank you during the pandemic. A thank you to a grocery clerk, to a caregiver, to a friend who took the time to check in and see how you were doing. Maybe an email, or a note tucked into a borrowed book. Those acts of gratitude are thanks-doing, as much as thanks-giving. We often are unaware of how much those small acts can mean. They are ways of being God’s love in action.

Sometimes accepting thanks can be difficult. I have had to unlearn the automatic response of “It was nothing.” It is important for us to be able to express our thanks and have that expression received and appreciated. A simple “You are welcome” or “I was glad to do it” validates and values the other person’s experience.

As we move into the fall and face the challenges and promise that our journeys hold, may we take delight in our opportunities to share God's love in simple or complex ways, to say thank you, and to receive thanks from those whose paths we cross.

Yours in Christ's light, Kathy

Ways to be thankful and give thanks

Deborah(Deb) Murray

I have always viewed life as one long journey and throughout the different chapters of life, there have been walls of challenges to climb in order to step into the next chapter.

I will never forget the different disabilities throughout my childhood that caused many years of feeling like an outcast amongst my peers and siblings. It always took me twice as long to do my homework because of my learning disability. As I grew up, I learned that I could have simply made the choice to give up and quit my education. However, I have always been thankful that I was blessed with very loving, supportive, encouraging family members who praised me simply for putting forth my best effort. I also had teachers who gave me the same kind of encouragement and taught me to focus on determination, perseverance and motivation by making proper choices and remembering not to be afraid of mistakes, but instead to learn something new from them.

As I grew up, I learned how to work with my disabilities by giving help to other children with similar difficulties and I learned how to lend a hand to many around me as a way of remembering how grateful and thankful I have been for all the blessings and gifts in my life.

When I was in my twenties, it was my dream to have a family of four children. As time passed, I learned that dream was not meant to be. Over the years, I've become thankful I never had children of my own because I've learned that I simply do not have the strength for parenthood 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Instead, I give thanks to the Lord that by living a single life, I've been able to make a difference in the lives of many children by giving my time.

I am also very happy that I was blessed with a sweet affectionate furry four-footed pet as my baby. She loves to cuddle in my arms all the time and is precious company at home.

I've learned as well throughout this pandemic that there is much to be thankful for. It has been almost one year since my father's passing, and I give thanks that he did not have to go through the lockdown. He was able to just avoid it.

I also bonded and made a sweet friendship with one of my sisters in Guiding and over the past year she and I have become very close. I thoroughly enjoy the company of her family.

There was much time throughout the lockdown for me to learn new skills at home and to make many new crafts as gifts. During this time, many people have learned much more about how to be grateful for the true values in life. It truly is a high challenging wall for all to climb, but I continue to remind myself that since I can't make it disappear, the best I can do is reach out and help those around me to show the importance of sticking together and staying strong throughout difficult times. There is much to be thankful for and by reaching our hands out to share our gifts, we help spread the light of happiness, peace, love, care and kindness.



Thanks...

Julie Ashley

October means so many things to us – raking leaves, pumpkins, closing cottages and the much anticipated Thanksgiving day – a time where we scramble to get together with loved ones around the dinner table, often with turkey and dressings, overeat, and shortly after, waddle out for a hike to assuage guilt and enjoy the fall beauty around us.

When recently asked to write an article about Thanksgiving - Thanks**doing**, my initial thought was I can really do the Thanks**doing** part with aplomb. I have **nailed** doing. There have been many years of doing, then out-doing myself on Thanksgiving when our five grown children, friends and extended members and family members of extended members show up for Thanksgiving. Sometimes I have been left feeling: Wow, what was that about? And was it all really worth it? Thankfully, I usually answered myself with a weary yes.



I then return to the thought of Thanksgiving, to reflect on the **giving** part. To model gratitude, every year my family is treated to some variation of an imaginative exercise. Everyone brings some form of nature to the table to form an organic centerpiece. Then we move around the Thanksgiving table, popcorn style, encouraging utterances of what each one is thankful for. Heard often are “family” and “love” among the many blessings we might ponder, if only for a moment, amidst much doing and busyness.

Alas, our children have learned the doing part well, whether from their parents or western culture itself. But thankfully they are also grateful and good givers. Beyond that, I know that Thanksgiving can raise all sorts of issues where we do not feel particularly grateful – money shortages, unhealed relationships, a loss that makes us wonder if there even is a God to thank. This led me to think about how it can be difficult to be grateful all the time, and how interesting it is that we stuff it all into one day.

What would happen if we celebrated and moved towards Thanks**being**? This is where I feel somewhat unequipped as me just *being* is about as elusive as intelligent wild turkeys right before Thanksgiving.

Seriously, imagine a state of being where we were grateful every day, where every day we celebrated God's goodness and our many blessings, where we didn't write down our gratitude in a journal, we lived it. If everyday we enjoyed a celebration of self, the miracle that we are, the life we have been given by our Creator. What if we stopped and asked ourselves Am I good enough? without giving or without doing? Can I receive well? Can I open my heart a little wider to both give and receive well?

When I reflect on the important people in my life, it is often not what they gave me nor what they may even have done for me that I am most grateful for, but for their being – Who they brought to the table. Who they were. That is what touched me most.

I must believe that way back in 1621, when the Pilgrims shared a bountiful table with the Wampanoag, they were celebrating relationship and unity, and peace, as well as God's bounty. They put aside all differences and previous hardships and just celebrated life and togetherness. That is Thanksbeing. I would like another helping of that please.



Much to be thankful for this year

Rosalind Slater



Around the world, most cultures celebrate Thanksgiving. Studying the celebrations described on Google, I found how very much alike we are as people. All give thanks for a good harvest, though the date changes depending on the climate. The western world's celebration is for the most part in October when all is safely gathered in, but in India and its near neighbours, January is the month when a four-day feast with singing and dancing occurs, celebrating the joys of a good harvest and the hope for the same in the coming years.

In England where I grew up we didn't celebrate Thanksgiving as a family. We had Harvest Home in the Methodist chapel where I worshipped with my family. I'm too young to remember the wartime shortages, but I do remember the plentiful bounty of our congregation from the time after my seventh birthday. Of all the church festivities, harvest was my favourite. After most of the gifts of fruit and vegetables had been distributed to the poor and needy, an auction was held of the remaining produce which usually consisted of unusual or large vegetables that could not be conveniently divided. These, I remember, tended to be in the squash family and I always hoped that my mother would not bid on Mr. Heywood's prize-winning marrow. Even though she stuffed it with tasty meat I detested its soggy texture.

Following the auction each year, we enjoyed a social evening, so called because Methodists were not supposed to dance or play cards. However, in addition to old-time dancing, whist was enjoyed by the men and some old ladies in the vestry adjoining the school room. As a child, I could not understand the ramifications of this and asked my mother why we did it if it was wrong. She answered that all the chapels in the area got away with a social evening so it must be alright, especially as Rev. Lamb, the minister shared by the parish, liked to have his game of cards.

Eating, singing and dancing were and are the norm in most countries to give thanks for a good harvest, but let's not forget that in pagan times the thanks were given to appease the gods, thus preparing for the next year's bounty. I wonder if this is where the puritanical attitude to dancing comes from.

In this time of pandemic, what will we give thanks for this year? And how will we do Thanksgiving? My thanks are for my now healthy family here and in the U.K. I have already celebrated with a reunion of about half my family at Nick and Lauren's wedding in Britain in August and after 18 months of uncertainty and three attempts to have the joyous occasion, August 19 was one of the highlights of my life.

In addition, I give thanks for a well informed government that has rolled out the vaccinations which will continue to keep us safe and for the volunteers who have fed the poor and hungry allowing thanksgiving every day by putting food on their tables.



Lastly I am thankful for the arts community which always adds light to the darkness around us. They have been hit especially hard by the pandemic, but I'm grateful that new technology is allowing them to rise again. And as I give thanks for the music at Harcourt and in other parts of the city, I pray that we'll soon be able to enjoy some maskless singing and lift our voices together to join in melodic harmony. I wish each of you and your families a healthy gathering this Thanksgiving. We have a lot to be thankful for.

Thanks/giving – Thanks/doing – Thanks/being

Lisa Beattie

In the cycle of the seasons, when Thanksgiving comes around again, I have often heard mentioned the dichotomy of doing and being. For many there is pressure, on one level or another, to be Martha and not Mary!

But the foundational number in our faith tradition is three. How might this number, and the flow between ... giving ... doing ... being ... infuse the holiday of Thanksgiving for us, and for others this year?

Although a cycle repeats, each year is a unique and living thing. We ourselves are in different seasons of our lives over the years. The tapestry of events in just one short year brings differing feelings and experiences; we may have been visited by sadness or joy – illness, death, birth, abundance, scarcity.

Perhaps underlying all of this, and the false dichotomy of doing and being, is a need to offer ourselves up to holy listening. As you reflect on Thanksgiving, what do you feel called to give, to do and to be this year? What word or image around gratitude, harvest or thanks captures your attention? Ask yourself what is going on in your life that made this item stand out. What are you being called to pay attention to? At the core of this reflection is the opportunity to listen to the uniqueness and aliveness of this Thanksgiving season, entering the flow of love that is the core and promise of our faith tradition.



Mark your calendar for All Things Christmas

Janet Webster

As we start planning for the November 27 event, we are again unsure of what it will look like, but we are proceeding as though it will be similar to the 2020 sale with most of the action taking place in the parking lot. **The sale date is Saturday, November 27** with preparation on **Thursday, November 25** and **Friday, November 26**. Once again, numbers of volunteers allowed in the gym will probably be limited, but there are still many ways you can help.

- Baking and preserves are **very** popular so please think of things you could contribute and any late harvest foods you can transform into jams, jellies, chutney etc.
- This is the time to gather dried vegetation such as teasels, milkweed and mullein to be spray painted festive colours ahead of time. Let me know if you have room to store and paint in your garage.
- Set aside any larger pots (10" diameter such as hanging pots or large plant pots that are not tapered), and leftover potting soil for filling the pots ahead of freeze up.
- Delay trimming evergreens until November so that the pieces can be used in arrangements.
- Gather any items that could be used to add bling or interest to the arrangements such as ornaments and fake fruit on sticks. Use your imagination!

If you have any suggestions or hope to volunteer for some role, please contact Janet Webster, Marilyn Sears or Ann Middleton or leave your name with the office. All are welcome.

Janet Webster 519-821-0953 fwebst0953@rogers.com



Milkweed for the sale needs to be cut and cleaned on site in mid to late October when the seeds are easily removed. Teasels and mullein can be cut anytime now. Ann would welcome help with sourcing and cutting plant materials.

Orange shirt day

Andre Auger

By the time you read this, Orange Shirt Day will have passed. The federal government declared Sept 30 a holiday and several provinces have followed suit, Ontario being an exception. The day has been designated as an opportunity to acknowledge publicly the tragedy of the residential school system and the loss of so many children, as well as so many cultures.

Why is the orange shirt a symbol for this day? The inspiration came from residential school survivor Phyllis Jack Webstad who shared her story at a St. Joseph Mission Residential School commemoration project and reunion event in Williams Lake, British Columbia in 2013. Phyllis recounted her first day of residential school when she was six years old. She was stripped of her clothes, including the new orange shirt her grandmother bought her. The shirt was never returned. According to Wikipedia, the orange shirt now symbolizes how the residential school system took away the indigenous identities of its students.

For settler Christians in particular, this is a time when we can reflect on our role in colonialism and the residential school system, and our ongoing responsibility to make reparations, says the United Church Facebook page.

“Settler” ... Hmmm ... I have never considered myself a settler. And while I am ashamed of the cruel and immoral behaviour of my forefathers (in this case, I think the masculine suffices) toward the original inhabitants, do I personally have a responsibility to make reparations? I bought my house fair and square and legit. I can trace this property back through seven owners. I know this house was built on land owned by the mayor of Guelph in the 1850s. But before – way before – whose land was this? Was this piece of land acquired fair and square from its original owner? Did First Nations even know what land ownership meant? Did the governments of the time respect the conditions of the treaties that ceded the land of the Grand River basin to the white settlers? Can I safely say that this piece of land I love so much was truly ethically acquired? Do I have any reparations to make for “settling” on this piece of land? If the descendants of the original inhabitants of this basin were ever to take us to a world court to argue that they had been cheated out of their ancestral land, would we win the case?



So the orange shirt. I don't have one. But on September 30, I will reflect on my “ongoing responsibility to make reparations.”

Lila's treasures raise \$5858 for Harcourt

Ann Middleton

A pre-sale and auction of art work donated to the church by long-time member Lila Engberg has raised \$5858. It would warm Lila's heart to know that her treasures had brought in so much money for her beloved church. Retired family studies professor and advocate for the rights of women and girls, Lila – who died in 2020 – worked for many years in Africa and other countries around the world for the University of Guelph, FAO and the UN.

Every item of the 50-piece collection – from a pair of Russian lacquered wooden teacups to a beautiful museum quality Inuit seal from Baffin Island – was sold.

There were surprises and detective work involved. An oil painting by Trevor Southey, purchased by Lila from the Harare Art Gallery long before Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, proved to be the work of an internationally known artist whose brother lives in Guelph. That work was re-united with the family. Another painting, water lilies, by Lila's sister-in-law, drew 11 bids from family members. It too has been re-united with the family of the artist.

We are deeply grateful for Lila's generosity and the dedication of the Harcourt volunteers and tech support person Casey Connor, who made the sale and auction happen.



The gauntlet is thrown! Will you rise to the occasion?



This food structure was created by Ann Middleton from food, toilet paper and diapers collected for Chalmers by friends. The 127-pound gift will be matched by a \$127 donation to Chalmers from Julie and Albert Ashley.

Julie and Albert Ashley have generously agreed to extend the Chalmers food challenge for another month, matching donations with a dollar for every pound given. To take part while doubling your gift to Chalmers Community Services, make your own food sculpture, weigh the food, and deliver it to Chalmers by Oct. 20. Send a picture of your creation to the Herald and the Ashleys at jraeashley@gmail.com. If you're not feeling creative, just stack the food and take a picture!

Drop off times for Chalmers are:

Downtown: Tuesday 10-11; Wednesday 7-8; Friday 9-12.

Chalmers West: Wednesday 12-1:30; Thursday 9-12.

"Dog Daze" featuring some folks at Harcourt

Arlene Davies-Fuhr

For your listening enjoyment, there is a link below to an original YouTube production penned by Arlene Davies-Fuhr and titled "Dog Daze."



The production was brought to life by the technical wizardry of Casey Connor who was appreciative of Harcourt's permission to use the church's computer technology. The humorous 25-minute video explores goofy ideas and strange hypotheses dogs have regarding bizarre human behaviour during Covid-19. This production includes cameos of some Harcourt folk. Can you find Ted Sefton, Gary and Anne Parsons, the late Brian Clark, Bryan Fuhr and Arlene Davies-Fuhr? Did you see the screen shot taken early on during Harcourt's Holy Listening. Those with keen eyesight will discover Gill Joseph's portrait of their beloved basset hound as well as Judi Morris's amazing stone carving. I would encourage you to kick back and be amused by the canines' antics. View "Dog Daze" at this link: <https://youtu.be/-sFklHqpWPo>

Notice:

We had some problems receiving emails sent to the Harcourt Herald address (theherald@harcourtuc.ca).

We hope it will be solved before the November submissions are due.

Just in case, please let us know via marion.auger@sympatico.ca) that you wrote something



Thanksgiving 2021

Arlene Davies-Fuhr

Thanksgiving is different and difficult this year
Haiti, Afghanistan, First Nations weigh heavily on my heart
Anger, disrespect, entitlement permeate the
News as fear, hopelessness, poverty rage
Knowing all this, it is hard to celebrate or
Sing traditional harvest songs of thanksgiving.

God of all things, all populations and situations
Infuse me with openheartedness and understanding
Visions of what shape your radical community could take
Inject me with courage to act, meditate, wonder, pray
Now and in the days and months to come
God of Creation, I give you my heart, my hands, and my praise.

Thanksgiving Prayer 2021

