

The Harcourt Herald March 2022

The Life and Work of Harcourt United Church



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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

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and Technical Support:
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From the Editor's Desk

Are you, too, enjoying the days getting longer again? The sun feeling warmer? The birds chirping louder? The trees seeming more alive again?



Yes, I think Spring is in fact just around the corner. However, as I write this the snow is piling up outside and the forecast promises even more of the white stuff.

So it is with Easter – it is coming but before that comes Lent as preparation. Does “giving something up” for Lent still make sense to me? I guess I’d rather “add something on”. This year I will try to be more faithful with my “cup of tea with God,” a wonderful expression I learned from the late Rev. Dr. Diane Clark describing her morning meditation time. Just like having a nice conversation with a friend, God being the friend. But I might opt for coffee instead!

You will notice that several people contributed their thoughts and feelings of the loss of Ellice Oliver. She was a dear friend to many of us at Harcourt and a wonderful example of how to stay thankful to God and deal with gracefully with age’s diminishment.

So, enjoy this issue which comes at Lent and preparation for Spring from so many different perspectives. As usual, I have fun illustrating some of the articles (hope no offence taken – otherwise let me know).

Notice of Congregational Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 6, 2022

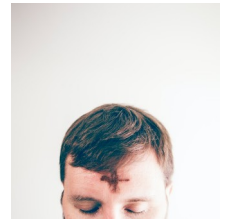
1:30 – 3:30 p.m. on Zoom

Watch for Annual Report, Meeting Agenda, Registration Details

And I invite you all to consider attending the upcoming Annual General Meeting of Harcourt United Church.

Message from Rev John Lawson for Harcourt Herald - March 2022

I would hunch that most of you, like me, grew up with a little awareness of Lent. Lent was something the Roman Catholics did -- although I do remember some Anglican classmates coming into school late with a black splotch on their foreheads and being told it was ashes, for Ash Wednesday -- whatever that was. But I was assured that, for most Protestants, we had done away with all those seasons and festivals that did not have any biblical basis.



Over my years in ministry in the United Church, however, I have watched the church seasons, and in particular the season of Lent, grow in importance as part of our spiritual rhythm and practice. No doubt the wide adoption of the Revised Common Lectionary -- which sets weekly scripture readings shared across many Christian churches -- helped make us aware of liturgical seasons. They have taken root not only in our Sunday morning worship but also in our personal spiritual imagination and practice. At least that is what has happened for me.

Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday on March 2nd this year, is in that perfect sweet spot. Winter still holds us in its icy grip. Life still lies buried under snow or the sleeping brown earth. But we know by the lengthening days and the stronger sun that spring will soon break winter's grip.

We also remember Jesus, "turning his face to Jerusalem". His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem led him to the cross and to death. Along the way, he confronts all those forces that hold humans and human society in a never-ending winter of hate and violence and fear.

In this Lenten season it is good to turn toward those things we would rather turn away from. To remember all who suffer in the icy grip of hate and oppression. To remember the icy places in our own hearts where deep hurt, shame and unforgiveness reside. (Sometimes those places inside us can surprise us. It's like walking on the Bruce Trail in the middle of summer only to look down some deep crevice in the Niagara escarpment and see snow still lying in the deepest crack, where no sun can reach it.) To remember Christ's call to seek justice and resist evil.

Lent is a journey. And it is a journey we make with Christ who leads us through death to resurrection and new life. That is the Easter promise.

I pray that as Harcourt seeks new life and new ministry for a new and changing society, we will live into those things that must die so that new life can be embraced. New Life that, by God's grace, is ready to sprout and grow and flower.

Council News

Lorraine Holding, Chair

Harcourt continues to work through a significant time of transition. As announced on January 31, Rev. Miriam Flynn has requested a change in pastoral relations, effective June 30, 2022. Individually and collectively, we have gained much from her leadership and ministry with us, in partnership with her colleagues and many lay leaders since 2016. We will welcome her return from sabbatical in May for a time of thanksgiving and celebration.

Our discernment journey and experimentation through the past year positions us well to immediately increase our focus on our ministerial needs to walk with us in our visioning for the future. The Transition Steering Team and Council have specific next steps to follow in order to create and fill a vacant position:

- Finalize our Community of Faith Profile: Living Faith Story, Demographic Worksheet, and Financial Viability Worksheet. Drafts are in progress. Congregational approval will be required.
- Develop a position description for one full-time minister. Initial discussion on specific roles and expectations of skills and experience is underway.
- Liaise with Human Resources Commission of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council through preparation and implementation of a search process.
- Name a Search Committee to begin work as soon as possible.
- Continue work to define a staffing model to support our future as a community of faith.

At Council's February 16th meeting, we focused on the Living Faith Story, reflection questions about the visioning scenarios, and other items in preparation for the March 1st Budget Information Session and March 6th Annual Meeting. I am very pleased to share that Kent Hoeg will join Council as Vice Chair this year. Lynn Hancock will move to Umbrella Councillor for Harcourt Community Life – a new name for Congregational Life, with focus on Hospitality and Pastoral Care. **We have an important need for a Councillor to focus on Stewardship – a key position to help plan financial recovery from the projected deficit.** I welcome conversation with anyone who is ready to offer this leadership.

With anticipated changes to Ontario public health regulations and protocols on March 1, we look forward to more open access for individuals and groups who gather in our building. Please read an overview of our revised protocols in this newsletter. We especially look forward to a return to in-person worship on March 6. Continue to watch for updates from the Re-entry Planning Group.

The months ahead hold significant planning and decisions. We continue to be an active community of faith through our journey together, listening for the Spirit in all opportunities. Please join the conversations as you are able. With faith and hope, we move forward.

Update from the Re-entry Planning Group

Lorraine Holding and Megan Ward, Co-Chairs

The provincial government is loosening several COVID-19 restrictions as of March 1, 2022. Some things will remain the same for us at Harcourt, including the requirement for masks, hand sanitizing, passive screening for COVID-19 illness and exposure, and maintaining good ventilation and traffic flow throughout the building.

However, many things will change. We will be returning to in-person worship on March 6, 2022. Registration will no longer be required for the services nor for other activities in the building. We will be able to sing, most of us behind masks but the choir may unmask if they choose. We still won't be able to use the hymn books or cushions, but you'll be able to choose your own seat and we won't have the same spacing requirements. In a few weeks we could even resume coffee hour if we wished, as long as everyone was masked while mingling and seated while eating or drinking.

The lifting of these restrictions is based on the very high vaccination rates and dropping caseloads and hospitalizations in the province. The Re-entry Planning Group continues to monitor all new developments and to advise Council and others about upcoming changes.

3 Surprising Little Valentines from Life

Elizabeth Moffatt

[This article did not manage to make it in the February issue of the Herald - Ed.]

“The heart has reasons that reason does not know.”

Blaise Pascal 1654

As a busy family, regularly coming and going from our home, we felt it would be unfair to have a dog. Dogs need attention and care. Could we be responsible pet owners? It seemed more reasonable to test ourselves first with fish. So we bought a

small tank, filled it with colourful swimmers, fed them regularly, and in wistful moments, enjoyed their graceful fins and circular journeys. But for all our minimal efforts, death came too soon to our tank, slowly taking each member of our aquatic family, until only one lonely guppy remained, and he was not right. His equilibrium had been effected to the degree that he could now only swim upside down. Yet, he kept swimming, raising his belly to the surface to take the food we sprinkled there. We were sure he could not last another day and in reverence kept vigil as a family anticipating the end. After school our sons rushed to the tank expecting the inevitable, but day after day he was there, bravely swimming, bravely living upside down, two days, four days, eight days! We named him 'Hero' for his valiant struggle and defiant refusal to give up on life. This little bit of a thing who swelled our hearts with the gift of a big lesson. Thank you, Hero.



* * * * *

Scrolling through the videos among the vast menu of unrequested options produced by our cell phones, I was stopped by a pastoral scene of a fenced farmyard with a lovely chicken coop close by, captured, no doubt, by a security camera atop a barn roof. An unsuspecting chicken was in view, pecking lazily about her yard minding her own business. When suddenly from the right side of the screen swooped a hawk, hell bent on a chicken supper, wide wings flapping and talons grasping, dragging that panicked chicken about the yard as feathers in every direction flew in profusion.



The farmyard leapt alive with frightened animals dashing to and fro in distress, except for an incredibly brave rooster who, with little hope of success, ran straight into the melee, ready to lose life and wing to save his woman. Yet the battle wasn't over. From off screen as if to the sound of trumpets, dashed a goat to the rescue, now aware of the imminent demise of his barnyard friends. With full goat

power of strong legs and ready horns he plunged upon the hawk, knocking him about and giving him a big piece of his own business. The hawk now fully overpowered, sought escape in the skies while he still could. The scene ended with the battered chicken running for safety into the hen house, leaving me with a beating heart to celebrate the solidarity of farmyard friendship and care shared among its many members. Thank you, pastoral prophets. (To view this valentine, Google: "Goat and rooster save chicken from hawk".)

* * * * *

It was the week before Easter and our congregation was honouring this holy time with a pot-luck dinner and a walk through Holy Week. The Christian Education committee had gathered a group of members, who in costume dramatically portrayed the events of that week, as the rest of us were ushered on a journey through our church building, visiting the key biblical scenes: the Lord's Supper, Jesus prayers in Gethsemane, his arrest, Peter's denial, Pilot's questions, the death sentence, and the crucifixion. Reaching the narthex, we had come to the place of Jesus burial, just outside the sanctuary, where, entering through the left door, we would end our journey with a worship service. A table blocking the other door to the sanctuary was covered with a grey blanket built up to look like the rock wall of the tomb with an opening under the table. Inside the tomb we could see and contemplate the empty grave-clothes that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary would have encounter early that first Easter morning. Our silent reverie, however, was interrupted by the energetic presence of the younger children, who chose not to stand in silence. Entering directly into the tomb, they picked up the grave-clothes, then burst through the back of the tomb, running into the sanctuary through the formerly blocked door. As adults we stood aghast at what our children had just done, yet transfixed by truth to which they bore witness, having punched a hole through death to the life beyond. Then slowly, one by one, we followed them, down on our knees, crawling through the tomb, freed on the far side to a whole new dimension of life quite beyond our former perspectives. It was an experience and then a celebration of worship we will not forget. You led us, children. Thank you.

* * * * *

May love reach you, as life continues to deliver many surprising valentines.

Food for the Journey - A Reflection on Lent

Kathy Magee on behalf of the Spiritual Life Committee



Already Lent is upon us. It seems as if we were just celebrating Advent and Christmas! Though those celebrations were muted by Covid limitations, their hope, peace, joy and love shone through. They carried us into a new year. Now Lent invites us to another form of celebration. It offers us a time for intentional reflection, to assess where we put our attention, our energy and our focus. It is a time to make changes that bring us closer to God and remind us of our commitment to Jesus' example.



Observations of Lent has changed significantly over the years. In the 1970s and 1980s “giving something up” for Lent was the focus I remember. For me that meant no chocolate, no cookies, no potato chips and no French fries for forty days. I used the absence of those treats as a reminder to think about Jesus and be aware of God’s love for us. My practice and theology have certainly evolved since then (though I

haven’t had a French fry since 1985 – more for health than religious reasons!). Experiencing Lent as a significant journey has deepened and enriched my experience.

Current Lenten practices are more focused on “taking something on”, rather than “giving something up”. They engage us in a Lenten journey that feed our souls, strengthens our bond with God, and encourages us to extend beyond ourselves. They help us draw closer to Jesus, to follow his example of kindness, compassion and caring for others.

“Taking something on” on for Lent is not about adding another obligation, or adding “shoulds” to our list of duties. It is about being intentional, about being faithful, about engaging in an activity that is centred in the Spirit. It is important to find a Lenten practice that is meaningful for you. Perhaps you will go for a walk each day or each week with the intention of being aware of the wonder of creation and rebirth. It may be supporting a cause close to your heart, either with money or time. It may be reaching out to someone you care about or for whom you have concerns. It may be attending church, either virtually or in person, for the Sundays of Lent. It may be a daily meditation practice. Harcourt’s Spiritual Life Committee is again this year providing a Lenten Meditation Guide.

You will find it on-line through Harcourt’s website, or on print copies in the grey bin by the church doors. Perhaps you will choose to meet with a Covenanted Spiritual Companion to explore your faith journey and deepen your awareness of God’s presence. Information is available on Harcourt’s website.



How ever you chose to mark this Lenten journey, know that this time of reflection, of devoting attention to make spacing for what it means to be a beloved by God, will be time well spent. The essence of Lenten reflection is beautifully captured by the Ojibway mystic and writer Richard Wagamese in a selection from his book “Embers”.

Wagamese writes:

**What’s needed are
eyes that focus with the soul.
What’s needed
are spirits open to everything.
What’s needed
are the belief that wonder
is the glue of the universe and
the desire to seek more of it.
Be filled with wonder.**

(Embers pg. 105)

May your Lenten journey be one of deepening awareness, an enriched sense of connection to God, and filled with wonder.

Facing an uncertain future: what can we learn?

Bill Lord

Introduction.

I wonder what questions you are asking about your future post Covid and about the church. Here are some of the things that I have heard being asked. What will the church of the future look like? What will faith look like for my grandchildren? What difference will chairs make? In what ways can we build new relationships with the community and change the ways ministry is offered, with the opportunities being available by the virtual world?



All these questions begin from a position of loss, change and uncertainty. Someone has stated that we do not fear change, we fear loss. We are lamenting the loss of an institution, the loss of relationships, and the loss of meaning and hope. Yet, at the same time we are discovering a new horizon, full of possibility for renewal and the fresh leading by the Holy Spirit. God is with us on the journey!

As I reflect on the current state of decreasing human and physical resources for the organizational form of church as we know it, I became aware that this is not the first time that the church has faced reorganization and re-purposing. In a reflective time of meditation, I became aware of a period of past renewal from the Methodist tradition, one of the founding denominations that formed the United Church of Canada at the time of church union in 1925. So, let us briefly explore the history of John Wesley, his ministry, his sense of the need for renewal, his conversion, and his experiments in evangelism.

Reviewing our heritage



John Wesley was an ordained priest in the Church of England, and he never left that denomination. He travelled to the USA and ministered for two disappointing years with little success. Travelling back to England he met people on the boat from another faith tradition-Moravian. One evening while attending a Moravian service in Aldersgate, he described it as, “I felt my heart strangely warmed.” He experienced a call to bring renewal to the Church. People were not attending Sunday services. He believed he had to go where the people were. He started preaching outdoors, even at the entrance to the mines. As he did this, he became aware of the need for people to deepen their relationship with Jesus. He started forming small groups-called “classes.” He shaped his movement around small groups meeting in homes. The main purpose for the groups was to provide individuals an opportunity to answer the question: “How is it with your soul?” Individuals were offered a place for confession, encouragement, admonition, discipline, support, and oversight. As the movement grew, he trained and commissioned lay leaders to move throughout the country, preaching and forming small groups.

Wesley ordained leaders and sent some to North America. When the Methodist movement came to Canada, it faced a much different environment than the UK. In response, the itinerant preachers travelled the much greater distance by horseback - Saddlebag preachers. They preached and formed societies. My home church in southern Ontario-Essex County, was founded by a preacher whose original circuit stretched from Niagara Falls to

Windsor. Over the years the districts became much smaller, the rides shorter and the visits became more frequent.

Conclusion

What can we learn from this exploration of our faith history? There are gifts for us to discover from reflecting on this ancestral story. Sometimes we believe that we are the first generation of church participants that have faced change and challenge. This quick survey has drawn our attention to the radical changes Wesley felt that God led him to make, in the face of indifference. To what changes are we being invited to explore as the church faces a mission field filled with indifference?

Change for the contemporary church means an awareness that the old ways are not working. It is being opened to an invitation to a revisioning experience not unlike Wesley's heart "being strangely warmed." Renewal is the work of the Spirit. However, we must believe and trust that the Spirit is at work reframing, and it will be a surprise. As was true for Wesley, the actions will be outside the walls of the church buildings and its current organizational structures. It will lead us to meet others through social media and movements for justice in our world. We do not have the power to control the work of the Spirit, only to respond faithfully both as individuals and joining with others around issues of compassion and justice.

As one of the leaders in another denomination once remarked, when we ask what is the church, we need to add one word and ask **What is the church FOR?**



Lent reflections

Karyn Davies



The definition of Lent as I have always understood is the period of preparation for Easter that begins on Ash Wednesday and provides for a 40

day fast which mirrors Jesus Christ's fasting in the wilderness. It is also a period of sacrifice leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection. We, as Christians, prepare for Holy Week by fasting, praying and reflecting.

As someone who has rarely participated in Lent, I come to an understanding without previous experience or consideration. As a child, I gave up chocolate or a tv show as a way of preparing for the big celebration of Easter. Easter was fun, musical and a time of family and celebration. My experience during this pandemic during these past two years has had me reflecting on how this time of Lent relates to me and my faith. Many readings about Lent describe it as a time of sadness as we are preparing for the death of Christ. Dark days with little food, are to be endured until the joyful resurrection where we can affirm our faith as Christians.



I have never experienced such darkness or sadness until recently when the world stopped. For the past two years the world has a shared experience with those who lived through other plagues but we have a greater understanding of disease which has helped us along the way. The creation of Covid vaccines have given us hope, but is it enough to help us overcome what we have just been through?

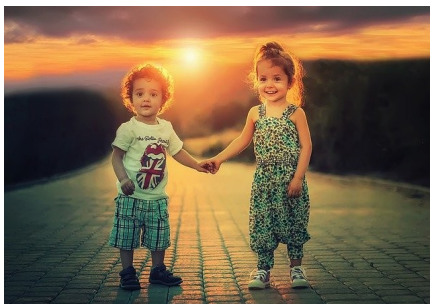
I feel like I have lived through two years of Lent. Every day not knowing what the future will hold, how many will die, will I be able to freely go places again and how will children learn to trust again? These are questions for the future, but for now I want to focus more on what this period has given me rather than what I have had to give up.

Walking

Walking has taken on a new meaning for me. It has become a need both physically and mentally. The act of putting one foot in front of the other has been an important action during these pandemic times. It has been an opportunity to develop new friendships and have a greater appreciation for nature and the constant beauty of each changing season.



Family and Friendships



This has been a very difficult time for some families and friendships as we navigate new understandings and changes in our lives. Through it all I have developed new understandings, developed listening skills and created closer connections to people I didn't really know before. We were told not to be close

but the human spirit is resilient and we have found alternate ways to connect, communicate and remain close despite our physical separation.

Faith community

The community of faith has survived. It is living and changing. It has been impacted, but what is at its core are the people who have shown great strength and resilience to worship, pray and sing together. I have grown more appreciative of this community and feel that even though it may be different, people still want to connect in faith.

Singing

We were told we could not sing together. I never imagined being told that I couldn't sing. We are so fortunate that we have a choir director who helped us continue singing. Through the use of technology and the new found skills she developed, we sang. At first a little and then it grew as an expression of our spirit and our faith. Thanks Alison!

In retrospect, as I reflect on Lent, I have not given up anything I needed. The activities that I was told not to do no longer interest me as much and may not ever. These last two years through this darkness has been my Lent and has given me new understandings of the season, my faith and Easter. The one thing I did not give up was chocolate, and I do not plan to. The Easter bunny will still arrive this year as will Easter Sunday and Christ's resurrection.

“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!”
Psalm 95



Lent as a time for Suspending Judgment and Growing Compassion

Joanne Hill

“Everyday, as long as this “today” lasts, keep encouraging one another.” Hebrews: 3:12-19;

As we enter the season of Lent in 2022, it is a time of enormous upheaval in our world. The pandemic has caused an enormous amount of suffering and sacrifice that has been the worst many of us have yet endured in our lives. The fear, the lost lives, lost jobs and businesses, and the stress and strain of essential workers has resulted in an increased mental health crisis on an already overly burdened system. Children have been in and out of school and all the while wearing masks and missing the form of learning that comes from facial expression and body language. We have learned to keep a six foot distance from one another, and hugging will probably need to be relearned without guilt.

In the past two years we have been forced to awaken to the too many injustices that go on around us each and every day. We have seen an enormous increase in mental health issues with a lack of adequate resources and funding. Our Long Term Care homes are sorely lacking essential staff required to provide the care required not only for health, but for the dignity of our elders. There are far too many children who go to school hungry. Domestic abuse has risen, and one of the saddest commentaries on living through this pandemic is the increase of the abuse of children. The ongoing plight, and findings of children's graves of our indigenous communities has been heartbreaking, and we are far from clarifying truth and affecting reconciliation.

Covid 19 has taken a toll. The grief we have suffered in our communities and in the world is real. It is deep, and has caused a divisiveness amongst us that is truly frightening. As we approach Lent this year, there are so many wounds to heal; wounds that are too numerous to mention that we have endured both as individuals and collectively.

As restrictions and mandates abate, we may all be able to begin to process the strange times we have been through, and as we do so it is my hope that we begin to grow in compassion for ourselves, as well as those not only closest to us, but to the wider human family. This is worldwide grief that requires deep repair.

At this writing, we have just witnessed the Convoy in Ottawa being dismantled, and the wrenching conflict and anxiety this has caused. We have witnessed or experienced a deep divide between families and/or people who do not hold the same viewpoint. When did we stop listening to one another? Really listening. When might we have not addressed our personal issues, and used this as a time and opportunity to avoid family and friends? What might we practice within ourselves and our relationship with spirit to heal this fractured time and space?

This Lenten time is a perfect opportunity for us to begin to reconcile with ourselves, a time to truthfully observe, reflect and perhaps acknowledge our part in the divisiveness. I have noticed myself becoming more rigid, opinionated and judgmental as I watch the world unfold, and my reactions to "how it is handled".

If we are to truly recognize the sacrifice that the world needs us to make at this time, and in this season of Lent, surely it must be to observe ourselves honestly, to acknowledge our grief, fear, and what seems like a never ending uncertainty. Unconsciously, we may believe that an entitlement to our opinions is our basic right. But what is our obligation as the human we find ourselves to be when we bring ourselves into awareness and consciousness. When we remember our true and real values, and commit ourselves to 40 days of a Lenten practice that reminds us, each day, of our devotion to the divine spirit, to kindness, compassion, and true space and respect for the “other.” What did Jesus do?

“Taking on” The Ignatian Exercises

Andre Auger

When I was a child in the Roman Catholic Church, Lent was a time for “giving up” something we really liked. Apparently, it was supposed to help us suffer alongside Jesus who was dying for our sins. Later in life, I learned that we could use Lent to “take something on” that we would not normally do: a spiritual practice, a diet, a spiritual reading program. Then I learned that “Lent” itself meant lengthening, and referred to the longer days and the welcome approach of Spring. We used Lent to plant our seeds indoors (always too early, yielding spindly little plants trying to find the sun).

In more recent years, I have come to associate Lent with the Ecumenical Week of Guided Prayer, offered each year just around the time of Ash Wednesday. That was my personal introduction to the whole notion of intentional spiritual disciplines. I did my first Week in 1984, and it has continued to feed me ever since.

Then I discovered the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life. Harcourt’s former minister, John Buttars, was a fervent believer in the transformative power of these Exercises. I took them in 1995, at Harcourt, under the direction of Tarcia Gerwing – who subsequently became my mentor and my supervisor in my own practice of spiritual direction. I cannot think of a better introduction to the discipline of intentional spiritual practice than these Exercises. Yes, they’re long (around 40 weeks) and require commitment. But they are indeed transformative.

Harcourt’s Spiritual Life Committee has been offering the Ignatian Exercises every two years since the turn of the century. I estimate that, over the years, some 30 to 40 members of Harcourt along with many from the broader community, have taken the Exercises. We will offer them again in 2022. Looking for something to “take on” during Lent? Take on the commitment to try the Exercises when they are offered (they usually start in June). I can’t think of anything more rewarding and life-changing than this daily disciplined approach to walking with Jesus through his life and ministry. Do you go to a gym? Do you practice yoga? Well, you’ve already

found half an hour to an hour a day for these exercises! You can find the time for the Spiritual Exercises. What the gym is to your body these Exercises are to your spirit.

So, what's involved, you might ask? Setting aside half an hour to an hour each day in a quiet place, guided by clear exercises that have been carefully designed, you spend several weeks realizing that God loves you just as you are. With that conviction in hand, you spend some time mourning the brokenness of the world, and its need for a new way to be. With that longing in mind, you walk in imagination with Jesus through his life and ministry, sitting lovingly with stories from Jesus' life, living them out as if you were there. You walk in imagination with Jesus through his final confrontation with Temple and Roman authorities, and you imagine what His resurrected existence might be like. Throughout, you learn to open yourself to God's loving Presence within you until you are comfortable to walk with God through your daily life. Can you see how this might be transformative?

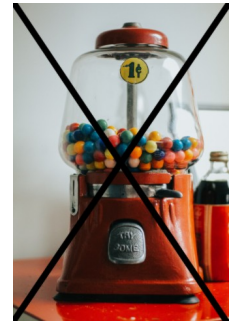
Thinking about it? Talk to me or to someone who has done the Exercises. Then sign up at least for the six-week "Disposition Days" which start in June and would give you a "no-obligations" taste to see if it's for you! Drop a line to our Registrar, Marion Auger.



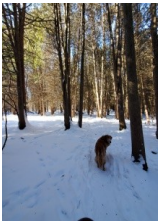
Recollections of Lent

Lisa Beattie

When I was growing up in Sunday School I don't remember being aware of Lent, except as a general waiting period before Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday with hats and flowers and smiles and great deal of joy at the church. I do remember Catholic school friends talking about what they were giving up for Lent – it seemed that the specific point was to choose something they really liked - like candy. I felt rather relieved the same requirement wasn't expected of me! As a kid it seemed kind of strange “to give up something for Lent”. Wasn't it all about the joy of Easter Sunday?



As I have matured I have come to deeply appreciate the wisdom of the liturgical year; the way Lent is a vital part of the overall season of Easter and of Holy Week. This year, when I think of Lent it is not so much with the idea of “giving up something” but rather “noticing something I have taken for granted and choosing specific action to remedy that”. What I take from my childhood experience is that it is important to define a specific Lenten practice. I have chosen two - both involve walking.



First - My dog is elderly now and doesn't like to walk very far. We usually just go around the block. However he adores the snow so I have chosen to pay attention to the joy this brings him and put him in the car for a walk at the park where he can enjoy the new smells and fresh snow. He frisks around like a puppy there.

Second - I will continue to regularly attend the Zoom Holy Listening Circle at 9:00am on Sunday mornings. I would like to better understand and pay attention to Lent as a whole - as a season of weeks. I feel I have never really looked at this way. My practice will be to set aside an extra 2 hour period each week to be outdoors in nature to walk and absorb, notice and reflect on the scripture and sharing of others that week.

I look forward to it.



Harcourt's Decade of Crafting Easter Pysanky

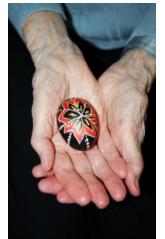
Susan Murray

For more than 10 years, Mary Peleschak and Ciska Vanderkamp brought the joy and symbolism of Easter to Harcourt in a unique way. They raised funds for church activities while teaching people the art of pysanky, or Ukrainian Easter egg 'writing'.



Pysanky is a centuries-old tradition that uses a wax-resist method to decorate eggs. Mary's involvement in this art doesn't go back quite that far, though. She had no awareness of pysanky growing up, but after marrying her husband, Mike, in the early 1960s, she embraced his Ukrainian heritage. When their three children were born, Mary began teaching them the art of pysanky.

The wax-resist method used to create pysanky is the same method using in the fabric art of batik. Beeswax is applied directly to an unwashed, raw egg with a tool called a kistka, and the egg is then dipped in the first dye. The wax seals off parts of the egg so that area remains free of dye. Wax is continually added between dipping of the egg in different dyes (starting with lightest and going to darkest). Once all patterns have been drawn onto the egg, and all colours used, the beeswax is melted off with a candle, revealing the stunning colours and designs.



As much as the method appealed to her, it was the symbolism found in pysanky that really captured Mary. The eggs are decorated in the spring as a symbol of the rebirth of the earth, and each element drawn on the egg has meaning. For example, wavy lines symbolize life-giving water, pine needles symbolize health, ribbons are a symbol of everlasting life, and different styles of crosses are used to symbolize Christ. The deep, symbolic meaning you create on the egg makes it even more meaningful as pysanky are traditionally give to family and close friends.



Spring time on the Farm

Dot Daynard



During the bleakness of winter, we despair that we'll ever see spring again. But soon I'll hear the songs of birds returning from the south, bugs swarming and I'll watch flowers burst open with their wonderful fragrances. No matter where I look, there will be colour against a background of green, green and more green.

Recently I read a poem titled "The First Signs of Spring." I wondered how many signs I could think of. In 15 minutes ...I easily listed 25, such as the snowbanks will soon disappear and daffodil leaves will peep through the cold soil.

Back in high school days when Terry and I were dating, we both declared we hoped to spend our lives in a rural community. You see we were both born as "FARM" kids in the Mitchell area of Perth County and what wonderful lives we had with pets like horses, cows and even pigs. Our parents even expected us to pick stones off the fields, remove weeds from crops and fork manure and we didn't usually complain too loudly..



Fifty years ago, our dream came true when we purchased our first farm on Paisley Road- then a very quiet rural area, unlike what it is today. We have enjoyed 50 spring seasons there. A neighbouring farm came up for sale and there was an option by another group to buy that farm for sewage lagoons. To save ourselves and our community, we decided to add that farm onto the one we already owned. That was 42 years ago.

Our first task each spring is cleaning up the roadsides in front of both farms. The variety of garbage is beyond imagination-- lots of poop and scoop, dead pets wrapped in plastic, hundreds of cups and bottles of favourite drinks, the yearly 10 Quaker State jugs of used oil, old carpets, books, clothes, broken furniture, paint cans, remains of construction projects and so many car parts. Nothing surprises us.

After checking the soil each day, the time to plant our four crops would arrive. Yes, there were long hours but spring was and still is fun. Each year I declared that I did all my "thinking" for the entire year while driving up and down the fields. Of course, I had to pay close attention to where I was driving as there was no auto steer in those days, but I often had a front row seat to the performances of wildlife. From the tractor cab, our young son and I were once the

audience to the antics of several frolicking baby coyotes. Another time we watched a very unhealthy coyote stop every few feet to scratch the terrible mange that covered its whole body. However right from my sunroom, deer, coyotes and wild turkeys are often spotted. Last spring, our two young grandchildren watched in awe as a large Buck protected five younger deer from a huge coyote that wanted a meal of venison. Eventually, the coyote gave up and slunk into the neighbours' field.

Over the past 3 years, Terry and I, as well as our equipment, have reached the BEST BEFORE DATE so we now hire others to do much of the field work. Even though that makes springtime somewhat different, my many flower beds still receive tender loving care, rows and rows of vegetables get planted, lawn furniture comes out of our stately old barn, and benches will spend a few months beside our farm ponds for visitors who relax here as they enjoy the gorgeous wild flowers, the many varieties of shrubs and trees in our very own Arboretum and of course watch for the bass swimming around in our pond hoping to avoid becoming a meal for the herons. We still walk around our fields looking for illegal marijuana and wonder who this year decided our fields were perfect for their grow ops. There is always something of interest to see and do each spring.



Yes, those long-ago dreams of two teenagers, have come true and no one could be happier than we have been as genuine farmers in a rural community. Very soon the next spring season will be here and we'll enjoy old, and likely some new, adventures. Spring is certainly a time to Think, Observe and Enjoy.

Roz Stevenson's Illustration



Gardeners prepare for spring

Sarah Lowe

Spring seems a long way off, but many gardeners have been planning for weeks: pouring over seed catalogues, reading gardening books, and dreaming.

For those with fruit trees, preparing for spring means getting outdoors now, while plants are still dormant. Unwanted branches are pruned back, leaving the best buds to flower and bear fruit in the coming seasons.

Many flower and vegetable gardeners have also got a jump on the season already. They've started seeds indoors under lights, or in greenhouses, polyhouses and cold frames. Others will have collected seeds and fertilizer, figured out planting dates, checked the compost pile and water barrel, cleaned up pots and trays, potted up overwintered tubers and bulbs, sharpened tools and tuned up equipment. Gardening can be tiring, so some are even tuning up their bodies!



I long to get out in the garden in March and April once the early bulbs start to flower. Twigs and branches brought down in winter storms need to be picked up. There's also a great temptation to tidy up the "messiness" of the flower beds so the early blooms show to their best advantage. But then I worry about the bees and butterflies still sheltering in the leaves and dead stems. Perhaps the best plan is to find a compromise: tidy up some areas while holding off on others. If left undisturbed for another month or two, the annual miracle

of spring can unfold naturally.

We're planning Harcourt's annual spring gardening session for Saturday morning, 7 May. Your ideas and help are welcome in this uplifting season of renewal! Please come and join us.

Longing for Spring

Janet & Frank Webster

Harcourt editors asked us to share our thoughts on what “spring means to us”. Now, I must admit that fall is my favourite season, but spring is certainly very special. As I collect these thoughts and type them into a document, it is a sunny but cold, blustery, winter day so the idea of spring waiting just around the corner is a very welcome vision.

Last Sunday, the choir sang that beloved song, “All Things Bright and Beautiful”. The lovely words of the second verse said “SPRING”!

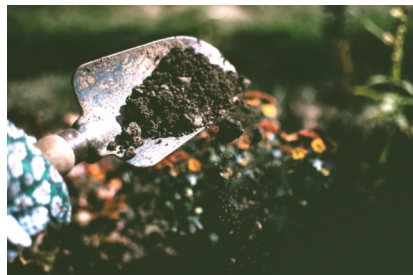
*“Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings.
He gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we might tell”*

So here are a few things that spring means to us:

S ---snow drops, starting seeds, picking strawberries,
P--- planting, peonies, periwinkle, primroses, pancakes,
R---renewal, rhubarb, robins, roses, red bud blossoms, rain showers,
I--- insects, indian pipe, iris, incentive to start projects
N---nests, new beginnings
G---green grass, garden tours, graduation

Then of course there are tulips, bunnies, lilacs, butterflies, hummingbirds, daffodils, crocus flowers, and so many more things coming to life.

By the time you read this, a few of them might actually be here to remind us that spring is a time of regeneration and that “’Twas God that made them all.”



Reflections on Spring

Angela Jimenez-Harding

[Angela has belonged to Harcourt's community since birth. She currently is in 1st year at Confederation College in Thunder Bay taking the Film Production course. - Ed]

Springtime. This is when all that appears dead or hibernating comes back to life. Leaf buds on trees, flower buds begin to form on bushes, some popping their heads out of the ground and new babies born into a beautiful world. Everything seems brighter. It offers a new sense of hope. As said in "Here Comes The sun" it's been a long cold lonely winter.

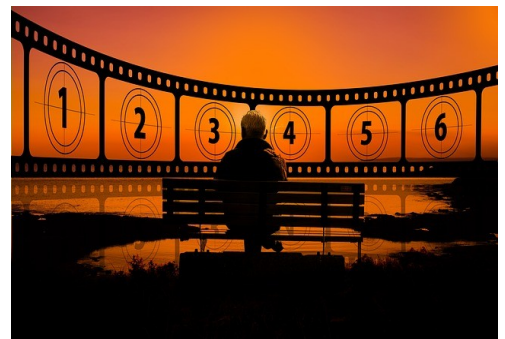


According to our groundhog friend Wiarthon Willie, we are set to get an early spring. I have yet to see this to be true ... nonetheless, I think there is a small bit of hope in all of us that Wiarthon Willie is right.

With spring also comes spring break (for those of us in school). Being in college I've learned that my professors refer to it as student success week. Some have even gone as far as to say that it is not a break but a time for us all to get caught up on schoolwork and any projects that need to be done. They really know how to ruin the definition of a break. Regardless, I will make the most of it by leaving school and going home.

I do find it odd that "spring break" for college is at the end of February. On the school calendar, it is stated as winter break but that is what I consider Christmas. Part of me wishes spring break was in March like elementary and high school. Alas, we all know the school system is messed up, so I guess we'll just continue on living as is.

When it comes to films and education, reality is incredibly different. While I am unable to speak for those who live in our neighbouring country, films give us, or at least me, the impression that school is a fun place full of singing and dancing or that spring break is a time for all of us to party on a beach. I've found all of this to be false, which is understandable because it isn't a reality (unless the film is based on a true story or true events, like the loosely factual "The Crown," a show around the Royal Family.) As pessimistic as that might sound, it is not my intention. Much joy is brought when it comes to spring.



Lent and spring are closely associated. Personally, when it comes to Lent the things that come to my mind are the colour purple and the time when something in our daily lives is meant

to be given up. I have heard of instances where instead of giving up a practice for the time of Lent that some people begin a new practice which I find interesting. It seems to be difficult for human beings to give something up. With each scenario, it is a challenge and comes down to restraint and temptation. Temptation comes into play when giving up something. For example, not eating chocolate for the season.

Both lent and spring offer opportunities to look forward to rebirth.



Stories about Grandmothers – A Request

Judi Morris



I am working on a book about Grandmothers and need to gather as many stories as possible about them.

I am looking for anything about your Grandmother(s). What you called her, what her character was like, what she meant to you...things like that, and what effect she might have had on who you are today. Please, if you can send them to meadowrockfarms@gmail.com and/or feel free to call and talk with me about what you might like to write if you are not sure. 519-836-9300.

If you know anyone else who might like to share their Grandmother's story please pass the information along.

Thank you so much for anything you can do.

The Bird Man of Harcourt

an interview with Judi Morris

I had a most enjoyable telephone conversation with Dr. Alexander Middleton (known to Harcourt folk as, Sandy, and I was able to ask him questions that I have always been curious about.

Judi: *Sandy, you are known as the Bird Man of Harcourt (he did laugh when I said that). I have always wanted to know what grabbed your interest and brought you down this path?*

Sandy: One of my earliest childhood memories is of my father showing me a Skylark's nest, with young, neatly camouflaged beneath a tussock grass. Dad was a very competent natural historian who knew the fauna and flora of our native Scotland. On the many rambles we took together, he fostered that interest in me. This interest expanded when we immigrated to Canada in 1952, where I found a whole new and exciting realm of natural history to explore.



Judi: *What education did you have to seek to follow this interest?*

Sandy: Following my completion of Grade XIII, I really didn't know what career I wanted to follow. Under parental persuasion, I enrolled in the pre-medicine programme at Western University. During my two years of pre-med., I was introduced to the formal study of Zoology, of which 2 courses were a required part of the curriculum. I found, to my delight, that Zoology was fascinating. This new-found interest was encouraged by my Zoology professors who took time to engage with me in discussing and answering my endless questions. Subsequently, at the end of my second year, Dr. Scott, my professor in Comparative Anatomy, and an ornithologist by profession, offered me a summer job in his research programme on Cardinals. This resulted in my decision to switch from Medicine to the Honours Biology Programme. Upon graduation (Hon. B.Sc.) I went on to complete an M.Sc., followed by a Ph.D. in Ornithology at Monash University in Australia.

Judi: *What brought you to U of G and what did your job entail there?*

Sandy: In 1966 the Canadian university system was rapidly expanding. I was fortunate to have completed my formal education in time to take advantage of the many jobs

that were now on offer to fill the needs of the expanding system. When it was offered, I accepted a position in the Zoology Department at the University of Guelph. Here I had a 35-year career in which I taught Introductory courses to first-year students, an Ornithology course for senior students, and maintained an active research program which attracted graduate students to my lab.

Judi: Can you tell us what birds we should be on the lookout for returning to the Guelph area in March?

Sandy: The bird world is always dynamic. No two years will be identical, but general trends hold from one year to the next. In Guelph, some species can be seen in every month of the year e.g., Canada Goose, Chickadee, but many others are migrants. Among songbirds the early returning migrants in March include such species as the



Horned Lark, and the Blackbirds (Grackle and Red-winged Blackbird). Among the non-songbirds the dramatic return of Tundra Swans (flocks of up to 6,000 individuals) and in recent years, Sandhill Cranes, are exciting events to be aware of. These early migrants are soon followed by the steady stream of returning species, including waterfowl, thrushes, sparrows, and warblers, among others.

Judi: If we want to feed birds is there something we can make ourselves to put out or should we be buying only from a store?

Sandy: People often think that any old kitchen scraps can be placed on the bird feeder, but this is not to be encouraged. Birds are adapted to feed on foods that meet their specific needs. Thus, table scraps, such as bread and other processed foods, will do them more harm than good. Likewise, many of the bird foods sold by supermarkets contain a wide mix of seeds that have limited appeal to our native birds, e.g wheat, cracked corn, and sorghum. Accordingly, much of the unconsumed seed is wasted as it often becomes wet and mouldy, thus contaminating the feeder and often harbouring disease producing organisms. So, even though it is much more expensive to buy, it is better to obtain your seed from a specialty store that caters specifically to birds. Such stores provide carefully formulated blends to meet the needs of our native species, along with suet balls that will attract woodpeckers.

Judi: What do you want us to know about birds and what advice would you give to a person interested in birds?

Sandy: I think we take our birds for granted, simply because they appear to be so abundant, and fill our world with their music. Alas, things are not well in the bird world as many species are in steep decline and increasing numbers are threatened by extinction. In our region this is particularly true for insectivorous birds (swallows, swifts, and warblers) and many of our grassland species (sparrows, and finches). The causes for these declines are complex and not always clear. In general, the root causes are environmental in origin, connected to climate change, habitat loss and the harmful effects of chemicals (e.g. fertilizers and pesticides).

For people with an interest in birds, I suggest the quickest and most effective way to encourage their interest is to become involved with local Field Naturalist Clubs, or Bird Clubs. Here, they will meet like-minded folk who can act as mentors. Further, such clubs arrange regular field outings and regular meetings that often feature interesting talks by knowledgeable naturalists. In Guelph, the Arboretum offers a wide variety of hands-on workshops, including many on birds.

Judi: I have always been curious of this one - do you have a favourite bird?

Sandy: Yes. My favourite bird is the American Goldfinch, which I studied for many years.

Judi: Thank you Sandy for all of this interesting and useful information.



REMEMBERING ELLICE OLIVER

Lorraine Dykman



As we enter Lent, “the lengthening of days,” that traditional time of reflection and renewal in the Christian church year, I will be remembering the many Harcourt members who slipped into the Communion of Saints during the past Covid 19 years. I will be praying that their lives of faith and commitment will be a source of strength and guidance for us all as we rebuild our covenanting community of faith by gathering in person again and listening to how we are called to be church together in this new and challenging time. Among all our saints, Ellice Oliver, who recently passed away on February 10, 2022, has had a deep personal impact on me.

Ellice Oliver’s long association with Harcourt Memorial United Church will mean that each of us will remember her differently, each having special memories tied to her rich variety of interests and the many roles she has had in our community. My own memories of Ellice begin in 1978 when our family moved to Guelph so my husband, Henk Dykman, could take up his ministry as the protestant chaplain at the Guelph Correctional Centre. I was beginning my work as teacher-librarian at College Heights Secondary School and there I met Ellice Oliver in her role as School Psychologist for the Wellington Board of Education. Ellice provided the psychological testing that helped teachers create appropriate programs for children with learning exceptionalities. Ellice was a person with a keen interest in and understanding of children and was their untiring advocate.

My next memory of Ellice is around Guelph’s Week of Guided Prayer which had its origins in an introductory event at Harcourt in 1983 when John Buttars invited Jesuits from what was then Ignatius College to bring their “Retreat Goes To Parish” into an ecumenical setting. Both Ellice and I were beneficiaries of that program and shared a long-term involvement in seeing it continue into the future, both of us eventually becoming prayer guides.

My strongest memory of Ellice Oliver is being part of Harcourt congregation as she responded to a call into United Church ministry. Ellice knew she had a strong call into ministry but she did not feel a call to ordination. She was seeking instead a diaconal-like ministry, one that would allow her “hands on” work among marginalized people. In fact, Ellice did, in the course of events, become a congregational minister after all, but what perhaps gave her deeper satisfaction was her work for the Drop-In Centre in Guelph, her time representing the United Church as chaplain at the Guelph Correctional Centre and her chaplaincies in Homewood.

Health Centre and later The Elliot Community. Both of these important Guelph institutions serve people in practical ways with issues such as mental health and aging. These were places where she could use her strong skills as a listener and an advocate.

Finally it is with gratitude that I remember Ellice Oliver joining me in 1997 in becoming a covenanted spiritual companion with Harcourt Memorial United Church. The ecumenical movement of the 1980s introduced many protestants to the ministry of spiritual direction, but there was a real problem for those of us who were called to that “new-to-us” ministry. It was almost impossible to find structures of support and accountability within our own protestant denominations and churches. Harcourt was a wonderful exception by providing both a covenanted relationship with the congregation as well as support and supervision from the Spiritual Companionship Sub-Committee of the Lay Ministry Committee. Ellice worked many years with that “sub-committee” as it morphed into what is now the Spiritual Life Committee.

A thread throughout all my memories of Ellice Oliver is her diligent exploration of any spiritual practice that fosters inner healing and growth. In the early 1980s she was among the first Harcourt people to go to Loyola House to do the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in their 40-day silent retreat version. She kept journals that contained both her reflections and her art, and started every calendar year with a week of silent retreat. Ellice felt keenly our human responsibility to attend to the healing of life’s inevitable bruises and wounds. Doing the inner work that many spiritual practices foster helps us avoid projecting our inner pain onto other people. It also opens us to the loving presence of God. More than one person has told me that if Ellice offered to pray for you, you knew she actually did pray for you. She would take your concerns into her daily quiet time.

Ellice’s family end her obituary with a quotation from her favourite mystic, Julian of Norwich: “All shall be well. And all shall be well. And all manner of things shall be well.” Ellice’s friends remember that her own most frequent saying was: “Life is good!” May the memory of her wise presence and deep faith be with us all at Harcourt as we discern the path ahead. May those words, “All shall be well” and “Life is good,” sing in our hearts.

Ellice Oliver – Testimony

Marilyn Whiteley

One day last May, Ellice Oliver phoned me. For several years after she was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, she had done remarkably well, finding joy and richness in life. Now, however, she recognized that her health was declining and her time was limited. But she faced this with the



same adaptability and hope that she had shown many times in her earlier life. She told me about an idea she had.

She wanted to prepare for a Celebration of Life. There might be a family gathering even while she was alive. That could not be certain, considering both her health and the unpredictable nature of the pandemic. But she could prepare a booklet. Years earlier I had helped her format a booklet about her early family history. Would I help with this, too?

Of course I said yes, and so we began a remarkable journey. One of her granddaughters had asked Ellice about her faith and spirituality, and Ellice wanted to respond, not only to her granddaughter but as a legacy for all her family and for her friends.

This was but one more instance of her desire to serve and minister to others. It was while I was working part-time at the United Church Archives many years ago that Ellice began studying at the University of Toronto. She offered to pick me up and take me along on the days that her classes meshed with my work days. I was enriched by her companionship, and I counted it a privilege to be present as one of Harcourt's presbytery representatives at the Hamilton Conference ceremony when Ellice's studies were complete and she became a commissioned minister of the United Church. In the years that followed, she served in chaplaincy at Homewood, at the correctional centre, and at the Elliot, and in ministry at Mount Carmel Zion Church in Morriston. She also spent many years in Harcourt and beyond as a spiritual director.

Her outer ministry flowed from her rich inner spiritual life. I had the opportunity to learn of it through the spiritual companionship group of which we were both members. I learned of her journalling, her mandalas, her prayer life, and her retreats. What inspired me even more was her recognition that our beliefs and our practices at one time in our lives may not "work" later on: we need to be open to change and growth. Over the years, Ellice continued to change and to grow.

Ellice invited her family members to contribute to the booklet, and their contributions testified to two of Ellice's great loves: family and nature. When each of her grandchildren turned ten, she took them on a trip suited to their particular interests. Her granddaughter Laura also loved nature, and so when Laura turned ten, she and Ellice came with me to our summer home in Door County, Wisconsin, so that we could visit the several state parks and other natural attractions in the county. Ellice was an active birder, and as we explored the countryside, she seemed able to identify every bird on every wire, tree, or shoreline that we saw. The completed Celebration of Life booklet contained five of Ellice's mandalas and her reflections on them. Family members contributed poetry, prose, and art, and Roz Stevenson's calligraphy added beauty to its pages. The booklet was for Ellice a source of affirmation and satisfaction,

and through it her sons, daughter, and grandchildren were able both to express their appreciation and love for Ellice and to gain from her wisdom.

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to express their appreciation and love for Ellice and to gain from her wisdom. The booklet includes three songs. One of these was "You raise me up ... to more than I can be." It spoke to Ellice as it was written, but she also wanted to change the words to "You raise *us* up." Ellice helped raise many of us up to more than we could be. I give God thanks that she was part of my life and of the lives of many others. Rest in peace, Ellice.

A Celebration of Life



Ellice Oliver and family

For Ellice

Andre Auger



In 2005, I joined Lorraine Dykman and Ellice Oliver, along with my wife Marion and two others, as Covenanted Spiritual Companions at Harcourt. I was a relative newbie in the whole field of spiritual direction, and learned such a lot from Ellice. Her daily spiritual practices and her obvious closeness to God made her one of the most spiritual persons I have known. Her faithfulness to her daily spiritual practices was remarkable, and out of her intimacy with God, she had a humility and a love about her at all times. I never heard her

speak a harsh word about anyone. Her perspective on everything seemed to reflect an intimacy with God's love and perspective.

I can't count the number of small groups I have participated in – at Harcourt and with the Guelph Ecumenical Guild of Ignatian Spiritual Directors and Loyola House - which included Ellice as participant or presenter. She was always learning – always a beginner, just as the Zen Buddhists would say.

When Marion and I attended the 9 o'clock service – our preferred service because of its intimacy and meditative nature - Ellice was a mainstay in the Holy Listening Circle which followed the service. During the pandemic, she was a regular on the Zoom version of the Holy Listening Circle.

Her theology was progressive and evolutionary. She loved Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit paleontologist and mystic. How many times did we share ideas and revise our understanding of our Christian faith in light of new writings! One of her favourite books was *The Tao of Liberation* by Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff, the latter a Liberation theologian from South America. I remember struggling through it, so rich was it in new perspectives and concepts.

I will miss her steady and quiet presence. And as example of someone who truly lived “in Christ.”

Passages

Clarence Comfort



July 10, 1921 - February 7, 2022

It is with profound sadness that our family announces the passing of Clarence peacefully in his sleep at Arbour Trails in Guelph in his 101st year.

He was born in Vineland and predeceased by his parents Ellwood and Lottie Comfort, siblings Rodger (Myrtle), Elva (Francis Moyer), Ralph (Margaret), Helen (Hugh Arthur), Eldon (Elizabeth), Maurice (Jean), and grandson Chris Fletcher.

He is survived by his bride of 71 years, Dorothy (nee Oakes) and daughters Linda Myers (Robert), Sharon Fletcher, and Beverly (Jim Craig).



Ellice A. Oliver passed away on February 10, 2022

With sad hearts and abundant love, we say goodbye to our mom, grandma, and Great-grandmother: Ellice Agnes (nee Scarrow) Oliver.

She was the cherished mother of Richard (Sherry), John (Joanna), and Heather; the proud grandmother of Beth, Laura, Alison, Kacie, Rachel, Alex, Jazmine, Molana, Myriam and William; the much loved great-grandmother of Sebastyn, Athena and Evelyn.

Ellice was born in a small log cabin in Grey County, Ontario on June 2, 1933 to loving parents, Alice Henderson and James Alexander Scarrow. Her life was well-lived and joyful: full of learning, service, adventure, love of creation, spirituality, and friends and family.

An early feminist pioneer, she was one of only four female students of 75 in 1950 at the Ontario Veterinary College. After second year, she made the decision to move to Paisley with then husband, Dr. Peter Oliver where they started their family before eventually moving back to Guelph in 1967.

An avid learner, Ellice went back to school completing her BA and Masters in psychology in 1971. After several years and becoming more involved with the church, she elected to dedicate more of her time to the drop-in center in Guelph and entered a spiritual direction program with the Jesuits at Ignatius College. Returning to school again, she earned a master's degree in religious studies at the University of Toronto and then committed a significant period of her life to religious and spiritual service: a chaplain at Homewood Health Care Centre; a minister at the Mount Carmel Zion United Church; a chaplain at the correctional center in Guelph; and finally, a chaplain at the Elliott, a long-term care facility in Guelph. She was a life-long learner and her service continued as a spiritual director for many years.

Ellice was an adventurer. She travelled across both Canada and the US with friends and family. At various times, she experienced Europe, saw the wonders of the Galapagos, explored Jerusalem and also embarked on a homeless solo trip to western Canada. She hiked the Bruce Trail from end to end, finishing the last stretch at age 71. Each grandchild, at age 10, was taken on a trip of their choosing; cherished memories for them all.

Her lifelong respect and admiration for all creation included every living plant and creature. She adored the majestic Great Blue Herons, the fluttering butterflies, the twinkling fireflies, the deep eyes and wet kisses of a dog. She was never far from a pair of binoculars, a requirement for her birding passion. Thank goodness for all her grand-dogs: we're sure they helped give her a much-needed dose of canine energy when she was missing the gentle spirit of her beloved schnauzer, Zeke.

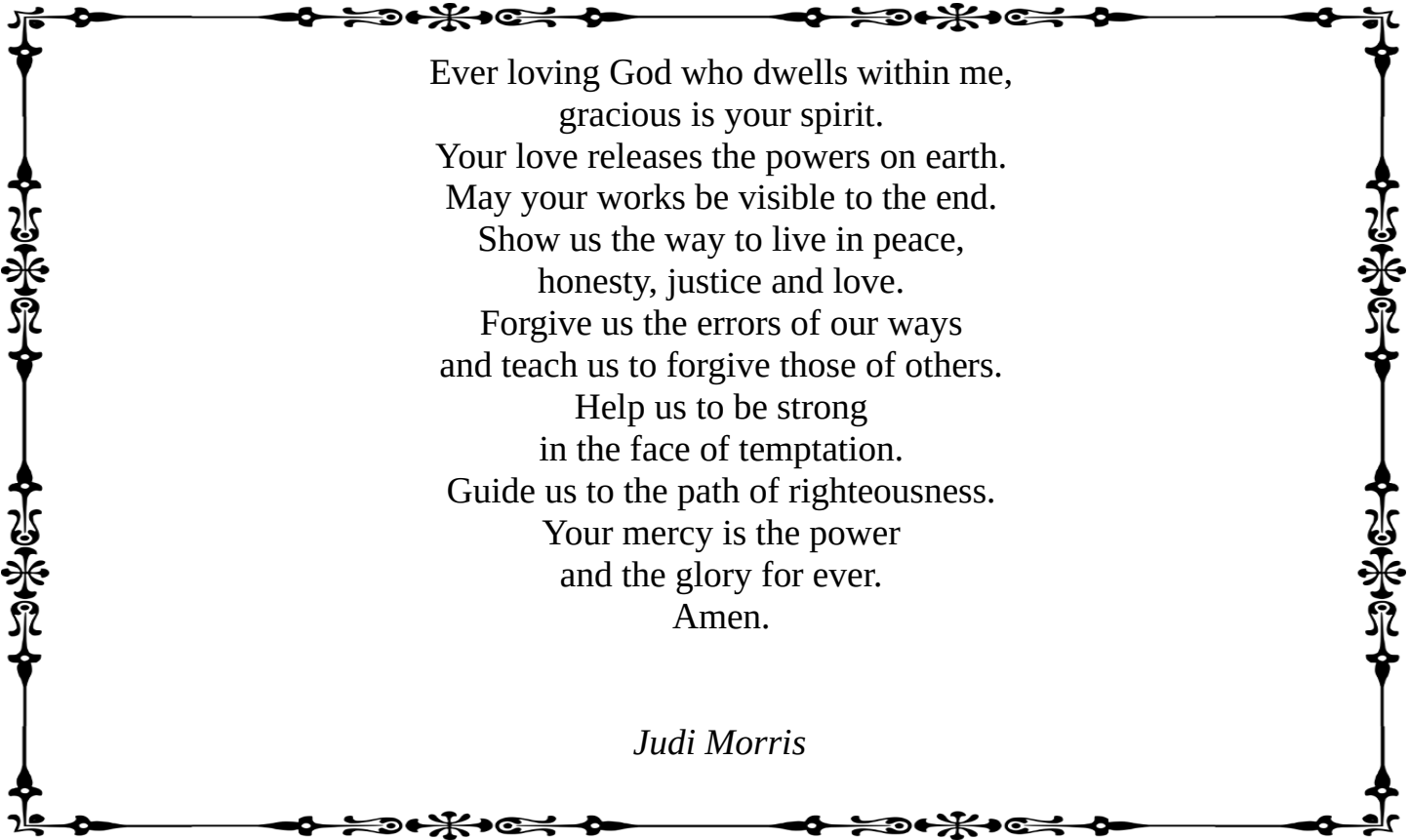
The spiritual connection to and presence of God in her life was of utmost importance to her. Her spirituality was very inclusive and incorporated different beliefs, including indigenous and all living things, balanced, blended, and working as one with God.

We are so blessed to have had Ellice as our Mom, Grandma and GG and very fortunate to have had her in our lives for as long as we did. As children, she encouraged our imagination, celebrated our successes and comforted us when we were sad. As adults, she anchored us when we were adrift and taught us to nurture our inner child. She was constantly there for us – providing counsel, reassurance, and a voice of wisdom for our entire lives. We never doubted we were loved fiercely from the deepest part of her soul.

Her passing leaves a large hole in our lives. We conclude with one of her favourite quotes: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."



The Lord's Prayer



Ever loving God who dwells within me,
gracious is your spirit.
Your love releases the powers on earth.
May your works be visible to the end.
Show us the way to live in peace,
honesty, justice and love.
Forgive us the errors of our ways
and teach us to forgive those of others.
Help us to be strong
in the face of temptation.
Guide us to the path of righteousness.
Your mercy is the power
and the glory for ever.
Amen.

Judi Morris