

The Harcourt Herald February 2023

The Harcourt United Church Community





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

Reverend Kate Ballagh-
Steeper,

Pamela Girardi:
Manna Lead Coordinator,

Alison MacNeill:
Director of Music Ministry.

87 Dean Ave.,
Guelph, ON
N1G 1L3
519.824.4177
harcourtuc.ca

The Harcourt
Herald is
published 10
times per year (in
paper and digital
formats).

Submission
Deadline: 20th of
each month.
theherald@
harcourtuc.ca

Herald Team:
Marion Auger
Judi Morris
Andre Auger
Lisa Browning
Marilyn Whiteley

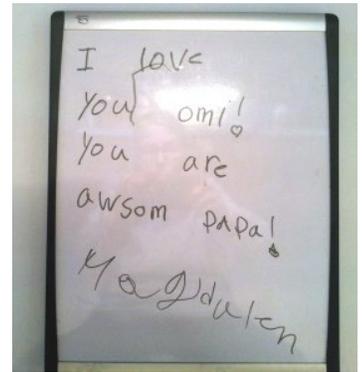
Table of Contents

From the Editor's desk.....	4
Letters to the Editor.....	4
Paul in the first Letter to the Corinthians writes: by Reverend Kate Ballagh-Steeper.....	4
Council News by Lorraine Holding, Chair.....	6
We did it! Thank you! by Carolyn Davidson.....	7
Harcourt: Space We Love and Love to Share! by Nancy Ryan.....	8
SAVE THE DATE! by Janet Webster.....	9
Attention Harcourt Bakers by Heather Hoag.....	10
Food for the Journey by Kathy Magee for the Spiritual Life Committee.....	10
Deep love received by Susanne Wilson.....	12
Toddler's Hug by Wendy Guillemette.....	13
"There Are Many Ways To Say I Love You" by Marilyn Whiteley.....	13
My choir experience by Holly Hu.....	15
Deep Abiding Love by Julie Ashley.....	16
Drooping Flowers by Edna Miller.....	17
A Nun's Love by Jane McNamee.....	17
An Unexpected Birthday Date by Rosalind Slater.....	18
A Touch Of Love When I Least Expected It by Deborah Murray.....	19
Hunting and Gathering in 2022 by Peter Gill.....	20
An Interview with Theresa Daly by Judi Morris.....	21
An Angel That I Know by Lisa Browning.....	26
Scouting at Harcourt by Marilyn Whiteley.....	29
Love thy neighbour by Peter Gill.....	30
Refugee Sponsorship – Update Peter Gill.....	30
Items for refugees by Anne Day, via Janet Webster.....	31
Week of Guided Prayer 2023.....	33
Quite the Week by Arlene Fuhr.....	33
Blessing by Jen Auger.....	34

From the Editor's desk

In this February 2023 issue of the Herald, we find many examples of deep love shared: received and given.

There is the love in families and friendships. This photo is a note on our fridge, written to us by our little granddaughter – her spontaneous drawing on the whiteboard. How many of you have received similar notes from your grandkids!



Love is shared between people and also with pets. But foremost of all there is the love of God for us expressed in our faith community, Harcourt. As Kate reminded us, the Bible speaks to us about the love God has for us. God seeks to connect with us so that we can feel God's love. And when we feel it, we expand, we can see God in everyone, and we can give love to the God in everyone. And, as you will read in several submissions, we also can receive love from people outside our close circles.

We hope you enjoy this issue, feel the vulnerability and the trust writers showed in sharing, and feel encouraged to give and receive many more acts of love.



Letters to the Editor

YOU do such a great job with The Herald, Marion. LOVE ❤️ the themed approach. Helps us as contributors a lot.

Arlene

Paul in the first Letter to the Corinthians writes: by Reverend Kate Ballagh-Steeper

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or clanging symbol." (1 Cor. 13:1)



Love is what shapes us, calls us, strengthens us, humbles us, and fills us as humans and on our journey in faith. As so much public discourse has deteriorated to name calling and egotistical boasting it seems clear that there are many noisy gongs or

clanging symbols. The isolation, loneliness and fear that wraps around so many lives, particularly through the pandemic, had demonstrated how important love and relationships are to us individually but also collectively. Now more than ever we realize the importance of love and the relationships it blooms.

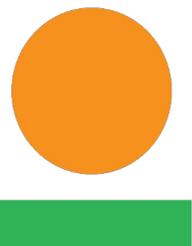
I worked at Camp Kintail (on the shores of Lake Huron, run by the Presbyterian Church) and we often told a story to our campers about the warm fuzzies and cold pricklies. Here is the link to the original story written in 1969 by Claude M. Steiner, <https://reenchantements.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/warm-fuzzy-tale.pdf>

While this is a children's story there is much wisdom to glean. It is not always easy to trust that love will be there when we need it. By the time we hit adulthood, too many have endured hurt, disappointment, loss, or abuse to trust that love can be offered unconditionally. Sadly, we know the church has not always been a place of warmth, love, and acceptance.

Though there are many examples of the church's failure to be what God calls, there are also many examples of when the church has offered love unconditionally and reflected some of God's love and grace.

I think of the small Presbyterian church in Montreal that welcomed me when I wandered in, while participating in a government youth program, Katimavik. I was 19 years old, homesick and lonely. I ventured into their worship one Sunday morning and was greeted with warmth. I was invited to their potluck and members picked me up to bring me to church (even though it was across the city). Their warmth, hospitality and love strengthened me, encouraged me and assured me that I was not alone, even after I left Montreal. Circumstance had brought us together and I'm certain the Spirit did as well.

Katimavik



I think of all the church folk I have had the honour to know over the years – those who tirelessly sat on committees, visited the lonely, cooked up a storm to feed the hungry, wrote cards, made phone calls, gave of their financial resources along with their creativity, skill and time. As I reflect and remember, I am humbled by the acts of love demonstrated by so very many in the church. I know it is no different at Harcourt. Love has built this church, and love will continue to keep its witness in this community. How we witness to and share God's love and our love for one another has and will continue to shift and change – to meet the needs of those beyond the doors.

The love we know from God, frees us to love one another deeply, and that love strengthens us to build the community so that others may be welcomed in – even lonely, homesick 19 year olds!

Council News by Lorraine Holding, Chair



There is much happening within our Harcourt Community of Faith, as evidenced by planning for upcoming events at Council's January 18th meeting. Our focus on the future provides these opportunities for you (*Herald* readers) to hear and learn more about our visioning priorities, and to consider how you can contribute to projects that call to you.

- On Sunday, February 12th, Worship Committee is planning one joint service at 10:30 a.m. for the Music & Message and Manna communities. Council is building on that by hosting a Harcourt Town Hall afterwards, following a short snack time. Our focus will be updates on our four visioning priorities and the task groups who are working on “next near steps” for action. Watch for in-person and Zoom details soon. This will be another experiment in using interactive technologies to provide remote participation.
- Council is grateful for the tremendous financial support received during December, including the “Christmas Gift to Harcourt” initiative and the Chairs Fundraising Initiative. The projected deficit for 2022 has been reduced to \$67,000 and the fundraising goal of \$60,000 for the chairs has been reached. We look forward to the final shipment of chairs in early March.
- Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 5th, in person and on Zoom. This will follow a joint worship service. Timing, agenda and other details are still being worked out. Council has approved presentation of the proposed 2023 budget to the congregation, as prepared by Finance Committee. We emphasize that planned expenditures are investments in Harcourt's future.
- Watch for the Annual Report and other information prior to the meeting.
- Council ponders what encouragement and mentoring we can offer to people who are hesitant to say “yes” to leadership opportunities in Harcourt. These key vacancies are available: Council Vice-Chair; Umbrella Councillor for Stewardship; Finance Committee Chair. Other committees and teams also welcome extra hands and hearts. Offering your gifts of time, energy and skills are ways to learn more about Harcourt and make new friends while contributing to our future. Kent Hoeg or I are willing to answer your questions if you have interest in any of these.

Come, participate! Together, we are moving forward on our visioning priorities: supporting the growth of Manna; worship; spiritual life; and building partnerships/community hub. We are living out our mission as God's people. With faith and hope.

We did it! Thank you! by Carolyn Davidson

On Sunday, January 15, we reached our goal of raising \$60,000 for the Chairs Fundraising Initiative!



How'd we do that?

Fundraising kicked off in December 2021 with a \$5,000 grant from the United Possibilities Fund. The United Possibilities Fund provides loans and grants to Communities of Faith within the bounds of the former Waterloo Presbytery of the United Church of Canada for both capital and ministry projects.

Over the next 13 months, the Chairs Fundraising Initiative received more than \$54,000 in donations from **70 individual donors**, several of whom donated more than once over the course of the campaign. Donations ranged from \$50 to \$5,000. Proceeds from the puzzle fundraiser and the sale of pews and chairs made up the balance. We are deeply grateful for each and every contribution, regardless of the amount.



When did the first chairs arrive?

The first shipment of 145 chairs arrived on Wednesday, December 21. Given the huge snow storm that came the following day, we could hardly have asked for better weather! Thanks to the delivery truck's hydraulic lift gate and a few willing volunteers, the chairs were quickly offloaded and brought into the Sanctuary. We have set out as many chairs as we currently have room for in the choir loft, at the front of the Sanctuary, and at the ends of rows beside the garden window.

When is the final delivery?

Due to production issues, the remaining 195 chairs are now expected to arrive in early March. More than 100 of these chairs will be equipped with arms.

What will become of the pews?

An art teacher who purchased a pew for an interior design class intends to upcycle it to make over a space for a café.

The five pews that were removed from the front of the Sanctuary last spring were purchased by two local woodworkers, George and Gerry Larose. Here are some pictures of furniture they have made from repurposed pews. The three small tables on the left were made

from Harcourt pew wood. The bench and the table with the hairpin legs on the right were made from pews from the former St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Kitchener.



You can see more of George and Gerry's work on Instagram at www.instagram.com/gandgpuffnstuff/. And you can contact them at g.larose35@yahoo.ca or at 519-497-9585.

Pews and old choir chairs remain available for purchase for a limited time. If you are interested, please check out our [Kijiji ad for pews](#) or our [Kijiji ad for chairs](#), or contact Brian Magee.

Once the remaining chairs arrive, a company that specializes in salvaging and repurposing building materials will come and remove any remaining pews.

What's next?

On the afternoon of **Sunday, February 12**, Council is hosting a Harcourt Town Hall. The focus will be updates on our four visioning priorities from the task groups who are working on other "next near steps" for action. Please mark your calendars, and watch for in-person and Zoom details soon.

We are grateful to everyone for your moral, practical and financial support of our initiative to implement flexible seating.

Harcourt: Space We Love and Love to Share! by Nancy Ryan

As we transition towards a Harcourt Community Hub, our spaces – the sanctuary, chapel, Friendship Room, kitchen, gym and smaller rooms – will, we hope, be used more extensively by groups in our community.

We know the benefits of renting spaces in our building. It can even be considered a form of outreach where people who are not necessarily church-goers mingle with our staff and members, and get to know us better. I would likely not be coming to Harcourt now except that many years ago my daughter attended Royal City Nursery School and one of the speakers on a "parent night" was the minister, John Buttars. His topic was *What do you say to your child when they ask about death?* He was great, and I was hooked.



Aside from the goodwill generated by relations between the church and its renters, rental income is an important, even vital, source of our revenue. Although rentals all but disappeared

during the Covid lockdown, in 2022 they picked up nicely and contributed almost \$63,000 to the Harcourt coffers. We expect this increase to continue into the new year, especially as we evolve to embrace more community groups.

2023 is off to a great start! Check out these upcoming programs and events at Harcourt:

- Beginning March Break 2023 (Monday, March 13 to Friday March 17) **Eramosa Learning Academy** will be offering school break camps for children in JK to Grade 6. Camps will also be available for 8 weeks in July & August. The program will operate from the gym and Friendship Room from 7am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday. Eramosa Learning Academy is managed by Noma Vales along with a team of qualified educators. Long-time Harcourt member Noma is the founder of GS CARE which has organized before and after-school programs in Guelph for nearly 20 years. For more information, please send an email to contact@eramosala.com or call our office at [519-829-5124](tel:519-829-5124).
- The **Kitchener Waterloo Symphony** will be at Harcourt for two Baroque and Beyond concerts this spring. Enjoy *Bohemian Rhapsodies* on Friday March 10 and *All Haydn* on Friday May 5. For tickets and more information check the KWS website: <https://www.kwsymphony.ca/>. I think we can count on chairs for at least one of these concerts!



- An all-day **Guelph Antiques, Vintage and Collectibles Market** will be held on March 25 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm in the Harcourt gym with several vendors featuring a variety of items including art, quilts, glass and even railroad memorabilia. The entry cost is only \$3.00 with a bake sale in the greeting area open to all. Janet Webster and her business colleague Ron Loncke are organizing this sure-to-be-popular fundraising event for Harcourt. Let's spread the word and show our thanks to this enterprising team.

SAVE THE DATE! by Janet Webster

**A NEW FUNDRAISING EVENT
SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 10-4**

**SALE OF ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES AND VINTAGE
(in the gym, Adult \$3 admission)**

also, a Bake Sale in the Greeting Area. More information to come. Support this new initiative to help support Harcourt.



Attention Harcourt Bakers by Heather Hoag



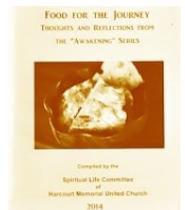
We are going to have a bake sale in conjunction with the Antique sale on March 25th. So all those yummy Christmas recipes, special family recipes of cookies, cakes, tarts, homemade bread or simply a favourite or special recipe need to come out of the cupboard once again. With your donations, this bake sale will be another great success. Please drop off items, packaged, ready to sell.

If the item contains nuts or is gluten-free please list it on the label. Drop baked goods off Friday March 24th before 4:00 pm, or before 9:00 am on March 25th.

Any questions, please call Heather Hoeg at 519-265-5956, or email at hoeg@rogers.com.

Food for the Journey by Kathy Magee for the Spiritual Life Committee

The theme of this month's Herald is Deep Love. How appropriate for this month that brings us more grey days but also Valentine's Day and Family Day. Both bright spots for many of us in what can seem like a long winter. It got me thinking about love, in all its facets and complexities.



The love of God and Jesus Christ have been part of my life since I was born. The love of family is ever present. How fortunate am I to have had two loving and beloved parents. I know the love of one special person with whom I share my life. I know the love of precious children and grandchildren, with all its joys, challenges, worries and blessings. I know the love of good friends. Through my work as a psychotherapist and now as a spiritual director, I know about the importance of love to our sense of self and our place in the world. I know about love that gets lost or buried, love that is misused, and love that is misdirected. But I also know about love that gets rediscovered, renewed and enhanced. I know you know about love too. Together we can explore what love means in our lives and how God's love for us is foundational to our love for each other, this earth and the world around us.

Erich Fromm's book, *The Art of Loving*, is a hallmark in the world of psychotherapy and philosophy. It speaks to the heart of what love is. Fromm describes love as an activity, an attitude, an orientation of character. He describes the basic elements of love as care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge - of ourselves and of others.

Love is a constant theme in scripture. One that comes to mind immediately is Paul's description of love (1st Corinthians 13:1-13). It strikes me that Fromm identifies precisely the qualities Paul describes in the Corinthians passage. Without those interdependent elements of love (care, responsibility, respect and knowledge) we are noisy gongs and clanging cymbals, gaining nothing and being nothing. Paul so beautifully describes the qualities of the **action** of love. He doesn't suggest we sit and wait for these to fall on us, but encourages us to DO and BE these things - patient, kind, not envious or boastful, not irritable or rude or bossy. To love as Jesus loved we must live a life centred in faith and grounded in love.

We know this. We have experienced this - both in giving and receiving. Think for a moment about someone you love or have loved. Think about a time when you did something loving for them, or when you experienced a loving action from them. The feelings that those memories evoke are precious and life-giving, whether we are the receiver or the giver. Love and connection are essential to our sense of ourselves, and of the world around us. God's love for us exceeds our expectations and limitations. It helps us through the bad times - the times of isolation, loneliness, despair. Times when the people we love are unable or unwilling to respond with care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. In the words of Paul, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. God's love for us never ends.

What a wonderful example for us to follow. What a daunting example for us to follow! It's great in theory, but what about in daily life? How do we **do** that? How do we love like that when people can be so frustrating and annoying? When the responses that we get are not what we expect or hope for? When there is so much turmoil and strife in the world? That is when we need to remember that love is an act of giving. That by sharing love for God's people, there is an effect that we may never know, but our faith tells us it is worth the effort.

Being willing to put aside what our social context tells us - that power and authority take priority, that might is right, that some people are of more value than others - takes courage and commitment. To live the beatitudes and bring Paul's description of love to life is not for the faint of heart. But you know that. You have experience trying to follow those examples and wisdom that comes from giving and receiving love when it comes easily and when it does not.

So let us remember Jesus' call and God's promise. Let us be the eyes of kindness, the ears of patience, and the voice of love. May we see God in the eyes of those we meet and may those we meet see God in our eyes. That is when we will know and experience God's deep love that passes all understanding, that lifts us up and carries us forward with courage and faith and love.

Deep love received by Susanne Wilson



It was going to be the trip of a lifetime and a two year's delayed celebration of Tom's 80th birthday. We would do a four-day pre-cruise tour of Greece followed by a 35-day cruise from Athens around the Mediterranean ending at London.

On the second day I was not feeling very well and suspected a bad migraine headache. While Tom went on the shore excursion, I went to the ship's medical centre where it was discovered my blood oxygen levels were low. I was put on oxygen and given several medications. I have no memory of this and the following 10 days.

On the third day Tom went on the shore excursion at Rhodes and I returned to the medical centre. When Tom returned to the ship he was intercepted at the boarding station and advised to attend Passenger services. They advised that I was being deboarded by ambulance to the Rhodes General Hospital.

On day four (Tuesday) I was intubated and a search across Greece was implemented to locate a non-COVID ICU bed. On Friday I was flown to a hospital in Heraklion, Crete.

At this point Tom alerted friends and family of my situation. This stimulated prayers and healing energy actions by many people including members of the Harcourt community.

On the following Tuesday I was extubated and my sedation ended. We were given a diagnosis of heart failure and severe pneumonia of unknown cause.

As I awakened, I became aware of two people at my bedside. My daughter was on one side saying, "Mom, I love you, you are the strongest woman I know." On the other side was Tom saying "I love you. We are going to get through this." I felt helpless: I couldn't move, I had no strength. I could only lay back and feel the prayers and energy being sent to me. I felt enveloped in peace. This made me know that everything was going to be okay.

It was another two weeks before the logistics for travelling home were finally worked out. On arrival in Guelph, I went directly to the hospital ER. I was admitted and a week later discharged to home. I was still very weak and only able to walk a few steps with a walker.

It is now 7 months later and I am making slow progress regaining my strength. I can now walk about 200 metres unassisted and can visit with a small group for about an hour before becoming exhausted. The cardiologist and the respirologist have assured me that there is no

residual damage to my heart and lungs from my illness. The outpouring of healing prayers and healing energies has been an experience of deep love for which I am truly grateful.

Toddler's Hug by Wendy Guillemette



Below is my beautiful experience. I am blessed to have several grandchildren. One day my 3-year-old granddaughter visited me at work, at Harcourt, where I am the Church Administrator. When my daughter in law pulled into the parking lot, the little one asked if this was a castle. It brought a great smile to everyone who heard the comment.

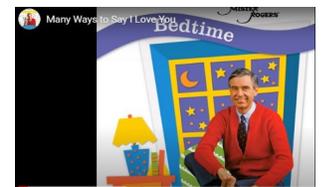
My daughter in law told her she was coming to see grandma and was taking me out for lunch. My granddaughter had never been here before and was a bit apprehensive coming up the stairs to my office.

When she saw me she ran into my arms, and would not let go. I picked her up; she had a death grip on me and held on for about 15 minutes, she was snuggled into my neck.

My colleague Casey was fortunate enough to witness this. Even the little ones can give such great acts of love. I'm so blessed to be on the receiving end of the hugs.

"There Are Many Ways To Say I Love You" by Marilyn Whiteley

Did your children watch *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* on television? Or did you? If so, you may remember the song "There Are Many Ways To Say I Love You." In it Mr. Rogers suggested that "Cleaning up a room can say I love you," and so can "Hanging up a coat before you're asked to." So can singing a song someone especially likes, and drawing a special picture.



As our sons, Paul and David, listened to that song, I was reminded of something long ago. During my last year in high school, I was in the cast of our class play. We did *The Curious Savage* by John Patrick, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his drama *Teahouse of the August Moon*. *The Curious Savage* isn't nearly as well known, but it's a good play, and I think we did as good job as could be expected of students in a small-town high school.

In the play, Mrs. Savage is placed in a private hospital for the mentally ill. She is put there by her sons and daughter, who want control of Mrs. Savage's fortune. The audience quickly realizes that the patients in the home, for all their limitations, are much nicer people than Mrs. Savage's children.

I played the part of Fairy May, one of the residents. (Several years ago, when the Guelph Little Theatre did the play, Gay Slinger's daughter, Abigail, played that part and did it very well.) In one scene, Mrs. Savage asks Fairy May what is bothering her. She replies, "It's just that no one has said they loved me this live-long day."

"Why, yes they have, Fairy."

"Oh, no they haven't. I've been waiting."

"I heard Florence say it at the dinner table. ... She said 'Don't eat too fast.'"

"Was that saying she loved me?"



And Mrs. Savage explains: "Of course. People say it when they say, "Take an umbrella, it's raining"—or 'Hurry back'—or even 'Watch out, you'll break your neck.' There're hundreds of ways of wording it—you just have to listen for it, my dear."

From Mrs. Savage, Fairy May—and I—learned to listen for things that show caring, not just the words "I love you," but little things: offers of help, words of caution, simply, "How are you doing?" We just need to listen.

Mr. Rogers came at the same thing from the other direction, showing the children in his audience—and us—what we need to do to say "I love you." For a child it might be cleaning up his room or hanging up her coat. What might it be for grown-ups? I'll let you fill in the blanks. It might also be to say some of those things that Mrs. Savage tells us to listen for—to give a compliment, a word of encouragement. It might mean offering to listen. It might even mean *not* saying something that might be true but might not be helpful.

During the first part of February, it is especially easy to fall into the trap of thinking that love is expressed by fancy greeting cards, flowers, candy, and romantic evenings out. Of course none of those things is bad; in fact they can be rather nice! But let's try to remember to

express our love in other ways, in what we do and in what we say. And let's also try to listen for the other ways that people are saying to us "I love you."

And now, appropriate to much of the weather we've been having this winter, I say to you: "Take an umbrella, it's raining."

My choir experience by Holly Hu

I fell in love with Harcourt United Church at first sight when attended a Rainbow Choir concert. I was attracted to its beauty and outlook, especially the glass window connecting to the garden. I met Elice Oliver and she introduced me to the Sunday morning service. Then I fell in love with the beautiful piano music played at Alison's hand.



Since I grew up in China with a different culture background, I had never heard this type of music. It was new, yet seemed familiar to my heart. Then I became a member of our choir. From then I entered a new world. Singing in a big group is blessing and I always feel warm and connected after every Thursday evening rehearsal.

Talking about my choir experience in Canada, The Hymn "I heard the voice of Jesus " was echoing in my head;

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one,
lay down your head upon my breast
I came to Jesus as I was,
so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
and he has made me glad."

I did hear the voice of Jesus through the music, and through the people in my church.
Amen

Deep Abiding Love by Julie Ashley

I often think about my Aunt Rae, my mother's sister. She never had any children of her own but I believe she may have been the first person to ever hold me. You see, she was a nurse and went in the ambulance (which was also the hearse in our small town) to accompany my mother when she went into labour with me, 6 weeks earlier than anticipated. My parents gave me her name as my middle name. Rae. I liked it. It was unique. It was the name of a woman I love.

I don't remember her ever being angry with me but once she was annoyed as I cut some of the hair off our dog, Toby, with scissors, leaving bald patches on his rump. Aunt Rae playfully suggested that Toby was quite embarrassed to have his sorry behind seen, so would manoeuvre himself to ensure nobody saw it. Although, as an animal lover, it distressed her, she teased me yet never made me feel "less than."

We would sit at each end of the couch and massage each other's feet and talk about real things. She would gleefully share stories of her adventures in Africa that inspired a love of African countries within me. She never imposed herself, only offered and allowed.

In her final chapter of life, she reached out to me for help at a point where she was failing to thrive. I was able to facilitate a move for her to ensure she was in a safe place. I remember in final days in the hospital, she awoke from unconsciousness and looked up with a big smile on her face, exclaiming "Julie, you're here. An angel. I must be in heaven!"

The fact was that she was my angel. I recorded her on her second last day with my cell phone. I asked her if she had anything to say. She said "I love everyone, and with God's help, I will get better." She died one day later. That was my Aunt Rae's and my deep and abiding love – we journeyed together, never wishing for anything to be different; to just be ourselves. That was enough. The remarkable thing is although I want to believe I was special, she extended that unconditional love to everyone, never expecting anything in return. Her deep abiding love remains with me, even now.



Drooping Flowers by Edna Miller

He was a young man standing by the door on the subway. His clothes were shabby. His hair too long and stringy. In his hand he carried a bouquet of yesterday's flowers- a gift for a loved one perhaps. How I wished I could do something for him. I could not think of anything that would not seem demeaning so I did nothing. As he turned to exit the car he handed me one of his drooping flowers. HE gave to ME, a kind of valentine. Wow! I had given him nothing. Or had I? Had he somehow felt and responded to my genuine concern?



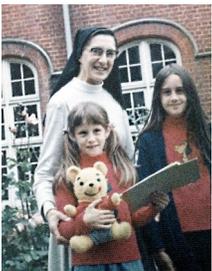
It happened years ago but I have never forgotten it.

We don't always know the impact we have on others or acknowledge the impact they have on us. I was debating responding to the request to submit to the Herald this month. If I am being honest I was more inclined to demur. Then an e-mail arrived in my box thanking me for a couple of messages I had written in the past that the sender was keeping as helpful and inspiring. That e-mail was both gift and message to me. Maybe my story would have meaning for someone. Maybe it could be a valentine for someone. It never would be if I didn't share it.

So share your drooping flowers. You never know what message they might carry.

Happy Valentines

A Nun's Love by Jane McNamee



I remember Sister Mary Damien. She was a nun at my boarding school. We met when I was 10 years old. She received me into her care on the first day. It was the first time I went to boarding school. It was a momentous time for me. I had never been away from Home before!

I was a miserable homesick frightened child.

She had a funny French accent which was different from mine! But I understood that she meant well, even if she was difficult to understand! She mothered that homesick child, and cared for her over many years! Especially as I grew from being a conforming child into a rebellious teenager and beyond!

She also taught me art and art history. She encouraged me to to draw and paint, and how to carve a goose quill pen. She taught me art history from ancient art history books where anatomical body parts were covered with tiny white squares!

She was an artist in her own right! Our school notices and special announcements might be illustrated by one of her designs. She came from an aristocratic Belgian family and never lost her French accent. I can still hear her saying "Ah Jane" whenever I might be about to do something dubious!

After I came back from Africa, I went to introduce my two daughters to her! They realized she was someone special in my life! I always knew she loved me as a beloved daughter. I regret that I missed going to her final jubilee celebration. But I know that she knew I was there in her final moments! And now she lives still in my final years, and painting moments, as someone who was special, and beloved, in my life!

An Unexpected Birthday Date by Rosalind Slater

It was one of those dismal nights when Keith was very ill. I received a call from Bayshore saying that they couldn't send me a P.S.W. that night, that I was going to be on my own. The fear entered my heart as I thought what that news could involve as the evening moved along. What could I do. I remembered one of the P.S.W.s who used to be on Keith's schedule but had been 'let go' for some petty reason or other, I was not made aware of. The last time she came to our house she gave me her phone number and said if we ever wanted or needed her she would come and help because she loved Keith and me, and would help us whatever happened. I called her and left a message on her machine. When she called back she admitted that it was her birthday and she had dinner plans with a new boyfriend. She would not let us down she said and would come over to help Keith first.



They arrived together, a dewy-eyed couple in the first experience of new love. This brought back memories of our own first love. The three of us made Keith comfortable for the night, then they stayed a while to chat. They didn't want to leave: they said they were having so much fun with us and the boyfriend said he'd heard so much about us and hoped he'd have a marriage like ours one day. I couldn't leave them hungry so I prepared a special meal for them and joined them as they enjoyed it together. It was one of the happiest nights of my life and they were kind enough to say it was better than a restaurant meal. I couldn't believe how that young woman's kind generosity had changed our night from sorrow to joy so quickly and I'll never forget her act of love and a night I'll never forget.

A Touch Of Love When I Least Expected It by Deborah Murray

The journey of life has the most interesting challenges and God works in the most mysterious ways creating events and experiences to occur when you least expect it!

For the past twenty years I have learned to live a singly on my own and there have been many times when loneliness becomes so strong it makes me convinced that there is no love left to receive in my life! This past Christmas, I was feeling that loneliness, because I didn't have a partner at that time. I felt all by myself and that's when I honestly believe a touch from God occurred when I least expected it!

I had one evening of extreme emotional loneliness where I was crying by myself and feeling convinced that I would be alone for Christmas and that's when it all happened!! Only a week later, I stumbled across a friendly gentleman in a restaurant and started a conversation with this man. I was not aware that this conversation would build into attraction for one another and become a relationship over the season of love and joy and happiness (Christmas), but as the month progressed, both myself and my new boyfriend (Steve) became more and more attracted to one another through all that we had in common and through our ability to be open minded and honest with each other from the very beginning!

What we both felt made things so special was the fact that this beginning was so unexpected and both of us believed the souls of our past parents who had passed two years earlier had matched us together from heaven!

As the weeks continued, our love for each other continued to grow and progress erasing our loneliness and we both continued to learn and love the amount of things we have in common. Both Steve and I feel our new relationship is a gift from God and we continue to build a foundation for our relationship out of the love we've received from God in matching us together.



Thanks! by Elizabeth Bone

Thanks, and Thanks, and Ever Thanks

A huge Thank You to everyone who gave a gift to Harcourt this Christmas. Your generosity is amazing.

All of your gifts totalled \$10,680 !

Our congregation received support for music, Manna, piano tunings, there is money to heat the building all Winter, keep the phones ringing and buy music supplies and worship candles! Your gifts will go quite a long way towards all those little and often overlooked expenses that still accumulate.

We are blessed. Thank You.



Hunting and Gathering in 2022 by Peter Gill

Chalmers is a local nonprofit organization serving those in our community who are experiencing food insecurity. When I first started volunteering there over ten years ago, a friend of mine with much experience in the food insecurity space described our guests as using hunter-gatherer methods. This was not meant in a derogatory way; in fact, it was quite the opposite! Until about 10,000 years ago society revolved around hunting and gathering which required families to be mobile in their quest for food. Hunter-gatherers were resourceful, resilient and provided for themselves and their families when food was often scarce. In this context, my friend was referring to the fact that many folks who experience food insecurity spend a lot of time gathering food from various locations in Guelph. In one week, they may visit Royal City Mission for meals, Hope House for packaged foods, and Chalmers for protein and fresh produce items.



Today, we face an inflationary crisis we have not experienced for decades. The prices of rent and food – two absolutely non-discretionary items – have soared over the past twelve months. Those who live with scarcity, many of whom receive government assistance or are paid minimum wages, have seen the purchasing power of their incomes eroded. Many have no

choice but to use hunter-gatherer methods by spending their time and their energy accessing a variety of emergency food services across the city. While we do not keep statistics on this, we estimate that 50% of those who access our services at Chalmers are employed, which means that time spent using these services is on top of their working hours. When we take into account the folks who work an additional part-time job (or two), or have to bus to different ends of town to access these services, we begin to understand just how big a toll food insecurity is having on our neighbours.

Chalmers' commitment to our guests has always been to offer the most fresh and nutritious food we can afford. This means the majority of our budget is spent on fresh fruits and veggies, meat, cheese, milk, and eggs. Unfortunately, we face the same inflation crunch as our guests. A recent comparison done by our staff shows an overall increase of 23% in the costs of the produce we purchased from the summer of 2021 to the summer of 2022. The price of cabbage has increased by 30%, green peppers by 66%, apples by 18%, and oranges by 11%. As a result, our food budget has been stretched beyond capacity at a time when people are in need of our services more than ever.

Chalmers is funded entirely by in-kind and financial donations from our community right here in Guelph. Like many other local emergency food providers, we don't receive any government funding. When times get tough, as they are now, we depend on the generosity of our community to continue serving those who are in need. We are encouraging those who are able to make ends meet to donate so that others may do the same. To learn more about our services and history here in Guelph, please visit our website at chalmerscentre.ca.

An Interview with Theresa Daly by Judi Morris

I was especially pleased to catch up with Theresa Daly. Theresa attended the 9:00 a.m. service and now participates regularly in the Spiritual Listening group on Sunday mornings. You will enjoy reading about a woman, named after Mother Theresa, has made her way through life showing she has well lived up to her namesake.



Judi: Theresa....you have come to Harcourt Via the closing of St. Mathias Anglican church. I met you at the 9:00 a.m. service where you joined in the sacred circle discussions after the service. You have settled in with the Harcourt community with ease and have been a complete fit for us. How has the transition been for you?

Theresa: Aside from the quiet and intimacy of the 9 am services at Harcourt when I first attended, years ago, I was touched by the gracious tea service that followed (*thank you Judi*) and by the Holy Listening Circle. I had never experienced anything like that. I have not become a member of the United Church, exactly. Although at Harcourt, I have become a more educated and committed follower of Jesus and I have found my spiritual home in the Holy Listening Circle.

Judi: From your contribution to the Holy Listening Circle after the 9:00 a.m. service and now the weekly Spiritual Listening Circle, it is abundantly clear you have a deep spiritual inclination to scriptures. Can you tell us about your Christian upbringing and education before joining Harcourt?

Theresa: I grew up in a strong Catholic family, with a mother who read me stories about St. Theresa (who I was named after, but had to drop the "Saint", for now). When my own children came along, I realized I could not expose them to church teachings that did not hold the values of my husband Kerry and me. We valued equality and inclusiveness in our life together. We searched a bit and felt much more at home in St Matthias Anglican church where our children could see ordained WOMEN clergy sharing the pulpit equally. When St Matthias closed, I entered a spiritual desert, convinced there was nothing for me. Not only did I lose a church, I lost my spiritual companion, my husband Kerry, who decided then to pursue studies in Buddhism. He joined a sangha (community), attended Buddhist retreats and even spent time studying the original texts of the Buddha. For a time, we had no common language to share our spiritual life with each-other. That made me sad. With lots of talking and study together, we are companions once again, as "spiritual seekers" rather than as Christian and a Buddhist. I have embraced several Buddhist notions:

- The prayer practice of loving kindness (metta) - a simple and powerful focus of kindness directed to myself and others
- The 3 Jewels of Buddhist practice - "taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha"
As Thich Nhat Hanh explains this practice:

" I take refuge in the Buddha (as I do, in Jesus), the one who shows me the way in this life
I take refuge in the Dharma (for me, the Gospels and teachings), the way of understanding and love.

I take refuge in the Sangha (my HLC community). the community that lives in harmony and awareness" (from Living Buddha, Living Christ)

Every Sunday, I take refuge in Jesus, His teachings and my community in the Holy Listening Circle.

Judi: I believe you are a retired nurse and currently involved with educating and supporting people with Parkinson's. What has brought you down that path?

Theresa: As I said, my parents were strong Catholics. My father was also a doctor and my mother, a nurse. I adopted their life of service as my own career. I became a nurse in 1973. Later I added a degree in social work because I had developed an interest in the social and emotional consequences of illness. From the 1970's onward I facilitated groups and did individual work with people facing chronic and sometimes a terminal medical condition.

Judi: At one point I shared with you in Harcourt's kitchen, as I readied the tea for the 9:00 a.m. service, that I was experiencing symptoms of Parkinson's...all but one actually. I realized in that moment you are thoroughly educated about the disease as much and in some manner, more than most GPs. During that conversation with you that morning, I felt the hand of God on me. Shortly thereafter, you gave me the latest information on the disease to take to my GP. It had just become available and not yet released to doctors. My GP was very pleased to have received that information. Your connection and dedication to the disease and people that suffer from it is more than impressive. It clearly is God's work....it clearly is an expression of deep love for Humanity. How did you go about securing this most important capability and position?

Theresa: When I retired from paid work in 2018, I still had energy and a desire to serve, so I became a volunteer facilitator to the *Parkinson's Support Group in Guelph and Wellington*. It was a small and struggling group then, with no professional support. Now the member list is more than 140 individuals. Parkinson's Disease is rising in Canada. 10 Canadians are diagnosed with PD every day. Parkinson's disease (PD) is a cruel and heartless disease (much like ALS and MS - degenerative neurological diseases). PD takes a normal, functioning adult and slowly chips away at their ability to move, to speak, and to be independent. Care "partners" become care "givers", over time, as they provide more and more physical care. This all happens as a caregiver is dealing with their own ageing.

Judi: Within Harcourt we have seen Parkinson's take over and eventually take the lives of our members. Ellice Oliver, and Brian Clark. I attended Park N Dance with them, certain at the time I was going down that path. While it turned out I did not have Parkinson's, through embracing it and its victims, I will forever remember I met the bravest people that anyone could want to know. In that period. I met patient and loving caretakers helping those they loved...I met a dedicated woman providing a day of exercise in the way of dance and socialization by providing a refreshment for them after. When you see them together... carers, volunteers, and family support and the afflicted, struggling and fighting to maintain and hold onto every bit of freedom remaining in their bodies, you see love crossing many lines. It is

heart wrenching and eye opening. What would you like us to know about people who suffer this debilitating disease?

Theresa: I am committed to this volunteer "labour of love" because:

1. I believe "knowledge is power" and if I can present the group with as much information as possible (education, literature and guest speakers), they are in a better position to direct their own care .
2. The health care system now is large and unruly. There is help, for people with PD, but it's quite a challenge to find it. Because I have worked in this health care community for so long, I can still pick up the phone and call a colleague to make connections easier.
3. And in this month when we think of love received and given, It dawned on me, how much I love these humans. I love their quiet strength to get up in the morning and try again. I love that people can still laugh, in meetings, even with such a dire prognosis. I love the compassion humans show others who are suffering, even as they too are suffering. I love these humans.
4. Because I believe the saying by Rabindranath Tagore

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy"

For me, the service and continuing learning , gives me energy.

I also believe as St Theresa of Avila says...Jesus no longer has hands, feet, eyes, compassion, kindness, and the ability to serve, except through me. My actions are a continuation of HIS actions. My life is my prayer.

Judi: Skipping along... In your spare time, you also support the Humane Society by taking in kittens until they are ready to go to homes. How often do you do this?

Theresa: This too is a labour of love - there is nothing like holding a wee bundle of fluff and looking into the eyes of such a small creature, looking back at me. There is nothing like finally having a hissing, terrified kitten slowly approach me and finally become friendly. And somewhere I read, that the international sound of peace is...the purr. As much as I care for them, warm cats and kittens enhance my rest times. A win-win relationship, I'd say.

As members of the Holy Listening Circle experience on Zoom, I sometimes have small kittens surrounding me on a Sunday morning. I volunteer as a foster home for the *Guelph Humane Society*. I take in very young stray kittens (and occasionally their mother) who need weighing, monitoring, sometimes medication administration. I take in stray kittens who have never interacted with a human before, to socialize them. They may growl and hiss at me, in fear. It is a personal challenge to take the hours and days to slowly build their trust.

Judi: Is or are there any particular book/s you have read that you can share with us?

Theresa: On the health care front, I recommend *Being Mortal (2014)* by Dr. Atul Gawande “This is a book about the modern experience of mortality” he says. He explores what medicine can and cannot do, at the end of life and how we can play a larger role in our end of life care.

The book *Living Buddha, Living Christ (2007)* by Thich Nhat Hanh allowed me to explore the richness of both Buddhism and Christianity instead of just feeling sad that my husband was no longer identifying as Christian.

And an earlier book, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter “A Woman’s Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine”* 1995 by Sue Monk Kidd helped me when I was leaving the Catholic church by connecting with another woman as she “ searches for and finds a feminine spirituality that affirms her life”

Judi: I forgot your name when you first arrived to the 9:00 a.m. service. You joked and said to think of Mother Theresa. You have unequivocally proven yourself to have lived up to whom you were named for...giving love in the way of patience, kindness and listening, to helpless people and animals who desperately need it. What would you like to leave Harcourt members with regarding Parkinson’s, kittens without a home?

Theresa: If there was anything I wanted the congregation to know about helping those with PD., my answer is more a general one...about showing patience and cultivating a quiet stance when anyone with a disability is trying to talk. We are so impatient with those who are slower and more quiet, due to age or disability. You may have your own stories from Christmas dinners where an older person or a person with PD is practically invisible because the group cannot quiet themselves enough to listen. That breaks my heart.

Judi: Thank you, Theresa, for this interview. I would like to add when people have an opportunity to donate to Parkinson’s, don’t be shy. It’s donations that have funded research into this horrid disease and offer some hope for the afflicted. Thank you, Theresa, for the love of God you share with all whom you meet. I have had the experience of receiving that blessing first hand.





An Angel That I Know by Lisa Browning

In the front hall of my house hangs a cross-stitch that I made several years ago, one that holds a special place in my heart among my most cherished possessions. It is a small, simple cross-stitch, worked on dark blue cloth, depicting a winter scene of barren trees and a sky filled with stars. On the mat which frames the picture is inscribed in calligraphy the words "I believe in angels." On the back of the frame is a tribute I wrote to the woman for whom I did the cross-stitch, a woman who began to change my life from the day I met her almost sixty years ago.



My family moved to the outskirts of Toronto the winter before I was born. My parents, my 14-year-old brother and my 10-year-old sister packed up all their belongings, hired a mover, and drove in their 1959 light turquoise Pontiac from London to Etobicoke. They bought a red-brick split-level house on a quiet, tree-lined street, and went on with their individual and collective lives while waiting for my arrival.

The first three summers of my life were as eventful as any infant's life could be -- learning to walk, talk, and gain a perspective on the world. Then, in the summer of 1963, something different happened. A new family moved in to the yellow house on the corner, right next door to ours. Formerly inhabited by three young boys, the newest family on the block boasted two exceedingly well-groomed little girls, with shoulder-length curls pulled back tightly in elasticized baubles, and crisp pinafores that you dare not get too close to, for fear of soiling them.

Forever etched in my consciousness is the vision of these two sisters standing at their back gate, staring at me with stern faces. As their eyes rested briefly on my grass-stained pants and mud-encrusted T-shirt, I noticed a confusing mixture of jealousy and disdain.

Although the differences between us seemed insurmountable at first, gradually we all became friends. Elaine and Kathleen's mother found me entirely frustrating. From the day I

pulled all of her carefully placed border plants out by their roots, until the day I locked her oldest daughter in our tool shed for a joke, then forgot to let her out, Mrs. Sutherland would beg, scream and plead with my mother to “tame your child.”

But I was not to be tamed. One hot July morning shortly after the flower-pulling incident, my parents awoke to very loud, metallic banging in our backyard, and went out to find Mr. Sutherland putting up a fence between our previously open-access backyards. “If you think that’s going to keep Lisa out,” my father said, almost defiantly, “you’re wrong.” The fence went up anyway.

As the years passed, I still managed to get both Elaine and Kathleen into trouble on a regular basis, but a lasting bond began to develop between us as well. Perhaps they envied my carefree attitude, or perhaps they were simply afraid to cross me.

Mrs. Sutherland kept an impeccable house. Without fail, she apologized for messes whenever I entered her front door, and I looked around in confusion, finding not one item out of place.

I can’t imagine whatever possessed me to violate such sanctity, yet I managed to do so on a rather grand scale, I thought.

The entire Sutherland family were sitting on their front porch when I, together with my accomplice Stephen, the boy from two doors down, snuck in through the back door. Room by room, we placed all of Mrs. Sutherland’s expansive collection of Royal Doultons under the tables on which they formerly stood, and we removed all of the linens from the beds in each of the three bedrooms in the house, placing these on the floor as well.

Hearing noises in her house, Mrs. Sutherland came in and discovered both Stephen and me cowering on the floor of one of the bedroom closets. One look at her face, twisted with rage and disbelief, was all it took to make us bolt out of the house without a backward glance.

My mother made me go back to apologize, and it was the hardest thing I ever had to do. Perhaps it was having to explain why I did what I did that made me realize that there was no excuse for my behaviour, then or in the past. Or perhaps it was the fact that Mrs. Sutherland was actually gracious when accepting my apology. I looked at her incredulously, and finally asked, “Why don’t you hate me?”

“My dear child,” she said, “I know that you can be better.”

Mrs. Sutherland eventually became my most stalwart supporter. With a grace that I have yet to match, she saw through the mischief to the potential that lay within me, potential that I would like to believe I have lived up to.

She saw me through years of boyfriend problems, career and lifestyle choices, she wrote me letters and we accumulated endless hours of telephone time. Through it all, her underlying concern was always my happiness. The day after my daughter was born, she came to the hospital to see me. She took my face in both her hands, brought her own face close to mine, looked me straight in the eyes and asked, more forcefully and with more feeling than ever before, "Are you happy?!" In my drug-induced state, I answered yes.

Mrs. Sutherland passed away very suddenly, many years ago, in her early 60s. She had suffered a massive aneurysm, and Kathleen found her when she arrived for her weekly visit. I had just come in from church when I got a call from my father, telling me the news. The bite of the submarine sandwich that I had brought home for lunch became like cement in my mouth, and the remaining portion fell to the floor. It took me little more than half an hour to make the trip from Guelph to Toronto, and I walked into that same impeccable house that I had known for years. Words unnecessary and unavailable, Kathleen, Elaine and I held each other and cried, tears of anger, sadness and desolation.

The reception after the funeral was held in the Sutherlands' house. Still numb from shock, I walked aimlessly from room to room, not wanting to believe that I would never see Mrs. Sutherland again. Visions of the past kept appearing before me, and I was again that little girl I once had been, longing desperately for guidance and affirmation.

As I reached the family room, the sight that greeted me stopped my feet in mid-step. On the family piano stood three graduation pictures: one of Elaine, one of Kathleen, and one of me.

I heard it said once that when we lose someone we love, we gain an angel that we know. I still miss Mrs. Sutherland, desperately at times. But I believe that she is watching over me, and the thought warms my soul.

My cross-stitch still holds a special place in my home and in my heart, and will serve as a constant reminder of that fateful day, so many years ago, when my family moved from London to Toronto, leading me to the woman who changed my life forever.

History Corner

Scouting at Harcourt by Marilyn Whiteley

Once again, on Sunday, February 26th, some Scouts and Girl Guides will be participating in the Music and Message service at Harcourt. Have you ever wondered why it's that particular Sunday and why they're there?



From the archives: 3rd Guelph Troop 1982-83

The date question is easy to answer. Lord Robert Baden-Powell was a British army officer who served first in India and then in Africa. He wrote a military training manual, *Aids to Scouting*, and when he returned to England, he learned that it was being read by boys and used by teachers and youth organizations. In August of 1907, he held a demonstration camp that is now seen as the beginning of Scouting. Three years later, the Girl Guides were under the auspices of his sister, Agnes Baden-Powell. Lord Baden-Powell was born on February 22, 1857, so the date is always a Sunday close to his birthday.

Why at Harcourt? Harcourt's connection with Scouting goes way back to the 1930s, when the Brooklyn Mission became host to the 3rd Guelph Troop of Boy Scouts, the 3rd Guelph Cub Pack, and both Girl Guides and Brownies. When the Brooklyn Mission became Harcourt Memorial United Church, these relationships continued, and once the Dean Avenue building was opened, it became the busy meeting place for these groups of boys and girls. Over the years, groups such as Beavers for boys and Sparks for girls were added. In 1992, the Boy Scouts of Canada became simply Scouts Canada as the organization welcomed girls. Being part of the various Scout groups connected with the Brooklyn Mission and Harcourt Church has enriched the lives of countless girls and boys.

The Brooklyn Mission and then Harcourt Church had *hosted* various Scouting groups, and in 1988, Harcourt's Official Board made the relationship official by passing a motion that Harcourt formally *sponsor* the groups of Scouts and Guides that met in the church. Members of the 3rd Guelph group and others that you will see on Sunday, the 26th, are part of our Harcourt family. Let's give them a hearty welcome!

Love thy neighbour by Peter Gill

It was past noon on a Friday after the Christmas and New Year's celebrations. The Chalmers food programme had closed and Diana, Chalmers' administrator, was in the office working on some year-end items.

The 'phone rang and the gentleman on the line asked if Chalmers was open for business. Diana replied that we would be open again on Wednesday. The caller then said that his family of five (his wife and three children) had virtually no food left in the house, the Christmas hamper was used up and that he and his wife had been laid off from their jobs so they wouldn't be getting any government assistance for a few weeks. He had tried two other large food pantries in town but couldn't get an appointment until next week.

Diana made a quick decision and asked if he could get downtown in the next hour or two. The man said he could and so Diana put together a serving of food which would last the family a couple of days until they could access Chalmers and other food banks the following week.



When the guest arrived, he actually apologized that he had had to plead for food outside of normal hours. Chalmers' logo states "Respect and Dignity for All" – Diana demonstrated this philosophy that afternoon and ensured that this man's family did not go hungry over that weekend.

Most food banks experience great generosity from donors leading up to Christmas for which they are enormously grateful. Sadly, this experience shows that food insecurity is a year-round challenge which requires a year-round response. Sadly also, this interaction is far from unique.

Refugee Sponsorship – Update Peter Gill

Over the past number of months a small committee has been working on an application to sponsor the Shirzai family who escaped from Afghanistan and are currently living in Tajikistan.

For those who don't know their story, here's a short summary. Saliha, the mother, has a husband and five children. She has a sister, Sameen who lives in Guelph. Sameen asked Chalmers for assistance to bring this family to Canada and so began a number of conversations which resulted in Harcourt and Trinity United churches agreeing to fund almost \$55,000, divided equally, to help this family relocate.

The reason for this family's fleeing Afghanistan is that the two daughters, now ages 22 and 21 were homeschooling women and young girls and were warned by the Taliban to stop this activity. Warnings came from the imam and other members of the local mosque. The young women refused to obey the Taliban order and so one evening when they were home alone three masked men came to the door and severely beat one of the sisters with their rifle butts. Prior to this the father had been confronted by armed men outside the mosque when speaking with a friend. The men shot and killed the friend but the father managed to escape. The family

immediately went into hiding with relatives for a month and then made their way to neighbouring Tajikistan. The young woman in question is now suffering from depression even as the scars on her face are healing.

The co-sponsors of the family are Harcourt, Trinity and Sameen, the sister here in Guelph. The application has been processed through local company Danby which has had a great deal of experience processing refugee applications and have been enormously helpful navigating the mountains of paperwork. Our application was received by Immigration Canada on 30th December, just beating the 2022 deadline!

So the question is when will we see this family safely here in Guelph? We don't know the answer to that but Blaire Rennie, the refugee settlement person at Danby believes it will be sometime in 2023. We pray that it is sooner rather than later, especially considering that there are credible reports coming from Tajikistan of Afghans being deported back to Afghanistan. Clearly this family would be targeted if that happens.

And so we wait. When we have any indication of the timing of this family's arrival Harcourt and Trinity will be in full fundraising mode to honour the commitments made by the two councils. In addition we will be asking for in-kind donations of everything from furniture to household appliances to linen and clothing. The major challenge will be finding suitable accommodation.

Please remember this family in your prayers that they may be reunited with family here in Guelph and may settle in a safe community where they will prosper.

Items for refugees by Anne Day, via Janet Webster

*Hi Marion,
Attached is the letter describing what the group is accepting. One person suggested you base your decision on what to give, as though you were giving it to a loved family member or close friend. In other words, no broken, dirty etc items.
This might be a help to those doing some spring cleaning or de-cluttering.
Janet*



Yesterday the Refugee Committee toured the warehouse run by Jim Estill and Danby that houses furniture and household items donated for refugees coming to Canada.

Access to the warehouse is open to newcomers to Canada - from Afghanistan, Ukraine and other countries. They have to make an appointment to select what they need.

It was impressive to see what they have, but they need more as well as volunteers to help and if anyone has carpentry skills, they also need some shelves built. Here is the wish list.

Items needed for refugees arriving in Guelph

Kitchen/Household equipment

- Toasters
- Kettles
- Pots
- Frying pans
- Plates
- Glasses
- Cutlery
- Cutting boards
- Dishracks
- Small appliances (in working order)
- Linens (should be in plastic bag and labelled – eg. Queen size)

Furniture

5. Dining tables
6. Chairs
7. Sofas
8. Coffee tables
9. Small desks
10. Queen beds (no mattresses)
11. Bunk beds
12. Dressers
13. Lamps
14. Art work

The warehouse is located at 127 Woolwich. There's not always staff/volunteers there, so you have to make an appointment to deliver at DanbyRefugeeProgram@gmail.com

Also, if providing furniture – email photo – so staff know how much space to create for when it is delivered. They do have someone who will pick up and deliver to warehouse for a nominal fee.

Yours in Rotary

Week of Guided Prayer 2023

**Welcome to the Week of Guided Prayer and Spiritual Exploration,
“Hope and Resilience in Difficult Times,”
February 26 to March 4, 2023.**

The Week of Guided Prayer and Spiritual Exploration is an opportunity for people to learn more about prayer and explore their spirituality. It has occurred annually for 40 years as an experiential event: guided prayer and spiritual exploration are not reading about God, but developing, deepening and exploring a relationship with God, self, others, and the creative force within each one of us. The Week is presented by the Guelph Ecumenical Guild of Ignatian Spiritual Direction. Our online format was received well last year, and we will be online again this year.

The Opening and Closing will be for all participants and prayer guides, and will be on Zoom. During the week participants will be paired with an experienced guide with whom they will meet daily for about 30 minutes by phone or online via Zoom, Facetime, etc. The guide will suggest scripture passages, texts (poems, stories), art activities and/or meditations to explore and/or pray with. Participants can share their experience, and experiment with specific ways to meet God meaningfully.

Registration by Feb. 20 at guidedprayer.webs.com

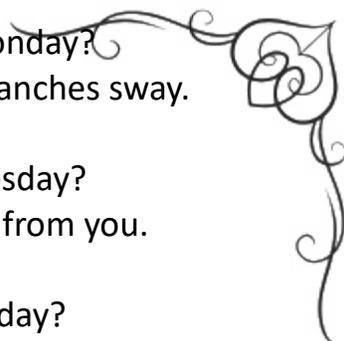
Advance registration is required

Quite the Week by Arlene Fuhr

Why not make this a memorable Monday?
Slow down, sniff the breeze, watch tree branches sway.

Why not make this a thoughtful Tuesday?
Shock someone who is stunned to hear from you.

Why not make this a wild Wednesday?



Paint, twirl, and sing like never before.

Why not make this a terrific Thursday?
Savour a restaurant meal paired with a recent movie.

Why not make this a fabulous Friday?
Lose yourself in a book as you binge on chocolates.

Why not make this a super Saturday?
Visit markets, select items, and share among friends.

Why not make this a silly Sunday?
Tell jokes to neighbours and post humorous stories.

Wowsers! This would be quite the week.

Want to dazzle your way though your days?

Will you join me on this seven-day adventure?

Blessing by Jen Auger

The blessing we share is a way for us to take a moment to wish good to someone else without even having to be with them! In opening our hearts to someone else, we open our hearts to God. Take a moment, think of someone you could wish a blessing upon.

Say this blessing to them aloud, or in your head:

