



YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY.

The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter – June 2016

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Photos courtesy of Lee Osborne unless otherwise indicated.

Notes from the Chair

The 2015-2016 church year has been very busy and productive in the life of Parkminster United Church. The mood around the church is infectiously optimistic.

In September, we awoke to the terrible tragedy of refugees in Europe. In the blink of an eye, a congregational meeting was called, a motion passed to support fund raising for a refugee family and a pop-up refugee committee struck to work on all the logistics. More than \$35,000 was raised and the refugee committee swung into action. They found an appropriate semi-detached house, and furnished it with a lot of donations from the congregation. When it looked like we would not be able to get a refugee family privately, Rob MacQueen approached the local refugee settlement organization looking after government sponsored refugees, and in quick order we had the Al Mohammed family of nine. That committee and volunteers are now very busy working to integrate this family into Canadian society.

In November, council met and discussed the concerns relating to our current governance structure and a committee was struck. The process the committee has used to make changes has shown the congregation that it is possible to make change in an open and transparent manner. Opinions were solicited and alterations made to the proposal. Further work will be required before the annual meeting in February of 2017.

A new format for the Annual Report was tried and successful. The reviews were very positive and we have Jennifer Allan and Maureen Crawford to thank for this initiative.

We were approached last summer as a possible location for a weekly Food Truck event in our parking lot. Joe Sheldon became quite excited over the possibilities and has led a pop-up committee to see this come to fruition. As of now there have been three events that have been very well attended both by Parkminster folks and the local community. The funds raised from this endeavour will go to reducing the debt resulting from our efforts to make our church entrance and washrooms both wheelchair and gender accessible. If you have not yet come for dinner, I encourage you to do so. It is great fun with no cooking for your family and an opportunity to meet others.

In June, a joint venture by the membership and pastoral care committees will see our shut-ins brought to the church for a strawberry social. It will be an opportunity for these folks to re-connect with their friends and peers.

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Meet the Bertrand family

Most Sundays you have probably seen the Bertrand family at church. They have been regular attenders for quite some time. There is Dave (dad) and Carol (Mom) and their three little ones. Sylvia is the oldest and she is five. Next comes Vivian who is three and then six months ago little Russell arrived on the scene.

Dave and Carol started looking for a church in Waterloo around 2007 when they were newly engaged. They knew that they wanted a church home that was welcoming, with a sense of community and had an active children's program. Parkminster became their church home.

Dave is originally from Alliston where he grew up in the Roman Catholic faith. Carol grew up in Bracebridge where her dad was the United Church minister, so finding a United Church was a natural fit for her.

Dave is a hydro geologist, which means he is into rocks and water. He came to Waterloo to go to University. Carol is a physiotherapist and she got a job in this area early in her career. Both settled into this area before a mutual friend introduced them.

In their spare time, Dave plays hockey and Carol is training for a "Try-a-Triathlon." One questions the amount of spare time found in this busy household. One thing for sure is that Parkminster is glad that they have been able to fit us into their schedule.



Notes from the Chair

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Also this year, a grant to have a labyrinth in our backyard was approved by the federal government. Bruce Mutton, Bud Adams and Marilyn Hill have made plans, received bids and approved one. Construction will begin shortly. The entire cost of the project will be covered by the grant.

We have also been approved for two summer students to carry on the work that Emma Cohen began last summer and to lend a hand to organizing material for communication-related activities.

Unfortunately, our pastoral care minister Louise Rutledge has been off work and is now on long term disability. We wish her well. We are very fortunate that Rev Elaine Beattie has been filling in the interim and we are grateful for her leadership.

My wish for you all is to have a good summer, rejuvenate yourselves and return with renewed enthusiasm and vigour to continue all this good work for our congregation and community.

-Barb Leask Wynne, Chair of Council

Change in the church community

God is calling us at Parkminster to be an evolving community of faith inspired to embrace our future as we:

- Deepen our commitment to each other
- Nurture our spiritual vitality and growth
- Live a life of loving influence in the world.

How do we live out this call and how are others facing similar challenges in the Christian community? What are people looking for from churches?

Click or cut and paste this address into your browser to read an interesting and thought provoking interview with Krista Tippett on the subject:

https://www.faithandleadership.com/krista-tippett-will-religious-institutions-rise-occasion?utm_source=albanweekly&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=faithleadership

Did you know?

- Council and Committee minutes are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office for your information.
- There is a library in the room at the back of the church. Feel free to borrow books or donate your faith-related books.

Welcome to the Al Mohamad family

It is likely few of us could imagine what 2016 has been like for the Al Mohamad's. The year started with the family living in Refugee Camp #53 in Lebanon, where they had spent the past two years after fleeing the city of Aleppo. Somehow, they were approved as Canadian Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR), and were cleared for transport, arriving in Canada February 2, 2016 on a plane filled to capacity with other Syrian refugees.

Upon arrival, the Al Mohamad's and others were taken to Waterloo Region, one of the top destinations for refugees. Due to the overwhelming numbers, Reception House staff rented additional accommodation space at the former Dominion Hotel in St. Jacob's, as well as the Howard Johnson Hotel in Kitchener, which was the Al Mohamad's home for their first six weeks in Canada.

Meanwhile, Parkminster United Church had committed to sponsoring a Syrian family, and raised close to \$40,000 in support of this initiative.

When informed that no further sponsorships would be available for some time, the Sponsorship Committee approached Reception House about the possibility of a match with a GAR family waiting for housing. Whether by divine intervention or simple good fortune, we were matched with a family of nine, and on March 14, the Al Mohamad family moved in to the house the church had rented on Barwick Crescent.

While there have certainly been challenges over the past three months, the family has settled remarkably well. The five oldest children started school at Lester B. Pearson Public School following March Break, and school staff have been wonderfully caring and supportive.

Parents Yehya and Khairiya were enrolled in LINC (English) classes in early May, and the two youngest girls started attending Pluto Day Care on May 16 while parents are at school. Yehya will continue to take English classes for six weeks in the summer, with Khairiya looking after the children.

The four boys have been registered for six weeks of day camps subsidized by the YMCA, City of Waterloo and Parkminster.

At the same time, Parkminster members have been helping the family learn to use the transit system, determine the best places to shop and how to plant a garden. Appointments have been made with an Arabic-speaking doctor and dentist, and the entire family has had eye examinations. It's amazing how much has been accomplished in such a short time, thanks to the dedication of committee members and other volunteers.

While the Al Mohamad's arrived as a "refugee family", this really isn't the case any longer. They are Permanent Residents of Canada, neighbours, classmates and friends. They are eager to learn English and become independent citizens in their adopted country. Parkminster is playing a huge role in helping this family adjust to a very different culture and has the privilege of sharing this journey with them.

Skylight Festival July 29-31, 2016

Looking for something to do this summer? Why not check out The Skylight Festival in Paris, Ontario.

Taken from their website www.skylightfestival.ca, Skylight began as:

"...a small, ecumenical group of people passionate about arts, faith and justice. We each found ourselves longing to create an open space for people of diverse backgrounds to come together, exploring faith while engaging in art and being inspired by speakers and seekers of justice. So, we began to gather and dream. And the vision of Skylight emerged..."

The summer of 2015 marked the first Skylight Festival-a pilot for this summer's 2016 official launch. The pilot was incredible! Now we're getting ready for an even more engaging and exciting festival this summer."

From internationally renowned **John Bell**, **Martyn Joseph**, and **Diana Butler Bass**, singers, leaders, speakers, a **travelling theatre company**, youth and children's programming, **couch garden**, and (believe it or not) much more, to our own EDGE tent's



line-up of United Church leaders **John Pentland** and his Fishing Tips and **Jamie Holtom** aiming for the Bullseye, the **Illumin8Faith Podcast**, a mini-**Social Innovation Challenge**, and the official launch of the soon-to-be-renamed **Chasing the Spirit - whew** - this second Skylight Festival is an experience not to be missed!

To register yourself, your family, or a group, follow the gathering excitement on Facebook, check out the latest line up, and stay tuned for live-streaming options if you're not able to make it in person.

Photo from www.skylightfestival.ca

Coming soon—the Labyrinth at Parkminster



What is a labyrinth? It is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but useful path. The labyrinth can help us find answers and comfort. The labyrinth has long been used as a meditation prayer tool, the experience of walking it is very sacred and powerful, helping us feel a greater sense of oneness and belonging.

We have, in the past, borrowed a portable labyrinth for our congregation to use in the gym. Now, thanks to grant funding, a permanent outdoor wheelchair accessible labyrinth is coming to Parkminster for use by our family of faith as well as the whole community.

Keldee Landscaping has been hired to install the interlocking brick layout. It will be approximately 40 feet in diameter, and will be located in the former Day Care playground area at the back of the church. The construction is scheduled to begin in June and be completed by mid-July.

Parkminster continues to evolve as we look for ways to become a more integral part of the greater community.

The labyrinth will be a meaningful part of the visioning that we have been doing over the past few years and will contribute to the already welcoming atmosphere for which Parkminster is well known.

The labyrinth is just one more way that Parkminster can welcome our neighbourhood and the community outside our doors. We look forward to sharing its spiritual benefits with all of you.

Once the labyrinth is built we will hold information sessions. Watch "What's Up at Parkminster" for dates. For more information contact Marilyn Hill or Bruce Mutton.

Summer staffing news

Summer students

This summer we will be welcoming two students to our church. We have received a grant from Canada Summer Jobs (courtesy of Bruce Mutton's hard work) that will support the students in their continuing work to: 1) connect with our community, and 2) enhance the communications in our church. We will let you know more when the hiring process has been completed.

Louise Rutledge

It is with sadness that we let you know that Louise Rutledge has been placed on Long Term Disability. We wish her well in her recovery.

M&P Committee

You've been caught...

... doing something inclusive!

Whenever Meg hosts a daytime tea or lunch for different groups in the church, Inclusive Ministries has offered to set up and serve and tidy up so that Meg is free to visit with the people who have been invited to the event.

Inclusive Ministries saw a need and they were able to help out.

Inclusive Ministries you've been caught being inclusive.

Important dates

- September 10 - Night with Neil and the Neil Murray Band
- September 11 – Welcome back Sunday BBQ/Corn lunch
- September 24 – Saturday Women's Retreat

