



The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter –
September 2018

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

Notes from the Chair

What a wonderful summer we've had: good weather; spiritual enrichment in our services, the Grand River Water Walk and the Pow Wow; improved access (new lifts); and communication (new TV monitor and sign). We have much to be thankful for. We celebrate one year of Heather and Joe's ministry (lucky us!): a year which has seen renewal, growth and changing perspectives. We are blessed to have Fred as our supply minister. We are blessed in having every one of you present in our congregation. We are blessed as we continue to embrace our community and, in the process, discover that reaching out has its own dynamic – an organic increase in love, commitment and connection.

A sure sign of growth at Parkminster is the increasing intersectionality of committee, church and community. It is becoming the norm for committees to plan and work together, opening themselves up to new ideas, energy and ways of being. In August we partnered with other United Churches to worship and share. Our participation in Truth and Reconciliation community events is growing and embracing a widening circle of members.

This fall, as we continue to fulfill our mission to ourselves and wider community, I ask you to pause and reflect on the fact that we can do and be all these things only because Parkminster is able to fund its programs and outreach. We are called to go out into the

world and increasingly to steward our human and natural resources. We must therefore plan for the future.

Our Stewardship Committee will lead us in this process during the coming year as we embark on a new initiative: Planned Legacy Giving. Here's a story about that, but before you read it, **put the date Sunday, October 28, in your calendar and plan to stay after service that day, have lunch and learn about legacy giving.**

Mabel Miller, a faithful member of Parkminster, wondered how she, a single woman, could support her church home for years to come. As a result, she stipulated in her will that a percentage of her estate be left to Parkminster. A retired teacher, she understood the value of education and requested that the income earned on this gift be used for Christian Education (CE) activities, the support of student ministers, and special building projects.

Since her death in 1987, her gift has been used to support many student ministers, allowed our youth to participate in TCOW (Two Countries, One World) trips, and provided funds for other CE events. This legacy gift continues to benefit the life and ministry of Parkminster more than thirty years after Mabel's death.

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Happy Thanksgiving Everyone

"At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

– Albert Schweitzer

Notes from the Chair continued...

There could be a similar story written about you because legacy giving isn't just something that happens when someone dies. It also does not need a large income. There are opportunities for all of us—young and old, rich and poor—to support the future ministry of Parkminster in several ways—by planning now.

On Sunday, October 28, following the morning worship service, Dave Jagger, United Church Stewardship and Gifts Officer of Region 8, (our new regional body), will be here at Parkminster to lead a workshop on planned legacy giving. Join us for lunch and learn more about Legacy Giving – Now and Later.

"Every one shall give as able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which has been given you."

See you there!

Maedith Radlein
Chair of Council

Conflict resolution at Parkminster

Conflict. It's part of our lives no matter how we try to avoid it.

Fortunately, most of the disagreements we face are small, like what movie to see or what to have for dinner. Sometimes conflict comes in the form of arguments over those pesky socks that never seem to make it into the laundry hamper. Typically, a small compromise or apology will resolve any issues and the offence is quickly forgotten.

Less often, there are issues that divide us so deeply a compromise seems impossible. There are times too when we can't agree on who deserves the apology and who committed the offence. It's in these situations when the conflict grows, and with it comes that uneasy feeling in our stomachs or those sleepless nights.

No one wants to live in conflict but overcoming it takes some hard work. Now there's help.

Parkminster sent a group of four volunteers—Kathy Shortt, Ted Oldfield, Roxy Linkletter, and Kevin Smith—to Conrad Grebel College at the University of Waterloo to learn how to mediate conflict effectively.

"It was really very good," Shortt said. One of the main concepts she took away with her was "how important it is to be a good listener. Listening is key and also to ask prompting questions to get more information because the more information you're able to have the better decisions you're able to make."

Shortt was interested in becoming part of the team of mediators because as a former teacher, she had plenty of experience under her belt.

"Mediating conflicts was one of my strengths—being able to help kids figure out their problems, and helping them figure out what went wrong and what they needed to do next time to avoid (conflict)," she said.

Those skills in addition to the training at Conrad Grebel have helped turn her, and the rest of the team, into experts in adult conflict resolution. However, mediation should not be the first step when experiencing difficulties in a relationship.

The team developed a conflict resolution work sheet and encourage anyone experiencing a conflict to go through that first.

"We worked very hard on that. I think we have a pretty good document," Shortt said.

If a resolution still seems impossible after following the advice on the document, two mediators can step in to help.

Parkminster trained volunteers in mediation on the recommendation of the Transition Team. It was the transition team that looked back at past conflicts and thought perhaps mediators would have been an effective way to resolve those issues. The idea is to be proactive and prevent any conflicts from growing, Shortt suggested.

"Hopefully we'll be able to resolve conflict before it becomes hugely stressful," she added.

Whether we're in a church or out in the world, wherever there are relationships the possibility for conflict exists. Although it can be hard work to solve tension and strife in relationships, it's well worth it to find peace, Shortt suggested.



Kathy Shortt, volunteer mediator at Parkminster.
Photo by Laura Cudworth

"Conflict doesn't have to be negative. We can grow from conflict. If we have conflict and we talk, both parties can grow, so it can be a positive experience."

The conflict resolution document can be located on the Parkminster website under the "About Us" tab.

By Laura Cudworth

Summer fun with the Al Mohammads

Spending time at the water during the summer is a wonderful thing to do. This summer the Al Mohammad family had a variety of opportunities to experience some typical Canadian activities as the guests of their extended Parkminster family.

In July, the six oldest kids all spent time with their special adult Parkminster friends. The two oldest boys, Khaled and Mohamad, spent a glorious day with Kathy Shortt and Nancy Dykstra at Lake Eugenia. Canoeing, kayaking, swimming, and water fights made for terrific fun.



Nancy, Khaled and Mohamad at Lake Eugenie



Mohamad, Khaled, Nancy and Kathy

Kathy Hagedorn-Hehl had the twins, Zakariya and Nour to her house for an afternoon of swimming in the backyard pool.

Lori McKim-Lang had Rama and Hala to her cottage on Lake Huron for two days. Swimming, catching minnows and building sand castles were highlights for these little girls. They had never had a "sleep over" before so that was also very exciting. We believe that having regular, positive connections with their "teachers", as the kids call us, makes a huge difference in the lives of these children.

With the help of Glen Harper, Lori and Gerard Lang had the whole family for a full day of summer fun in August. Yehya enjoyed the drive through beautiful

farmland from Waterloo to the cottage near Goderich. He tried swimming but found the waves a bit intimidating. Khariya enjoyed walking the beach and sitting under the umbrella as the kids played.



Nour, Yehya, Amir, Khariya, Mohamad, Hala, Zakariya, Ghouson, Lori and Khaled at Lake Huron. Missing is Rama who had fallen asleep after the day of swimming.



Amir and Khariya

The kids just love anything active. Kayaks, boats, jumping off the raft, playing in the waves—they tackle it all with gusto and competitiveness. Each child wants to be first and best. Even with life jackets on everyone, we were kept on our toes the whole time. Thankfully no one or thing floated away.



Ghouson and Khaled



Hala and Rama



They stayed for both lunch and dinner, and enjoyed lots of typical summer foods including watermelon, barbeque, corn on the cob and ice cream cones.



Ghouson, Anna, Gerard, Glen, Zakariya, Nour, and Khaled

We finished off the evening with a campfire, complete with songs and the roasting of halal marshmallows.

The Al Mohammad's are very appreciative of the exciting and enriching opportunities made available to them through their connections here at Parkminster.

All photos on this page contributed by Lori McKim Lang.

Minister's message

The days are getting cooler and the sun sets earlier. It must be the unofficial New Year. It feels great to look out from the front of the sanctuary on a Sunday morning and see so many of you again after a scorching hot summer. I really do hope that your summer was a time of Sabbath, a time of refreshing and renewing your Spirit. While summer blesses us with an awareness of the holy in the natural world our connection with God also needs community. We need each other, we can't be whole on our own. So, welcome back! As the year starts I want to say thank you to all of you who have felt a call and responded to the many ministry opportunities at Parkminster. Our community is blessed by the sharing of your gifts.

This fall worship will focus on the theme of spiritual practices, those habits and behaviours that help us to live lives rooted in our identities as children of God. To quote my opening sermon,

"We need spiritual practices because if we don't allow God to shape us then other gods will shape us. There is no such thing as a neutral life, there is no such thing as not choosing whom or what will shape you. If we don't intentionally choose the shaper of our lives we will, by default, be shaped by the values and the culture of our time. We are created in the divine image, but many of us allow ourselves to become misshapen because we have lost touch with the shaper of our lives and so we allow other forces to form us. Marketers turn us into consumers, governments make us into taxpayers, jobs turn us into employees, children turn us into parents, schools turn us into students, ill health turns us into patients and on and on. Why bother? Because the truth is that we are not just roles, objects or parts in this life, we are created in the divine image, children of God. We are meant to be whole and the only way to live in that truth, to grow in that image, to be shaped by God is to intentionally choose to do so through the practices of our faith."

Fred and I hope you find the series helpful and enlightening.

This fall also starts with Rev. Heather on medical leave recovering from concussion symptoms. I know that Heather wishes that she were back with us even as she takes the time she needs to recuperate. In the meantime I am thankful for Fred's presence on staff and the many gifts he has to offer.

Sunday October 1, 2018 marked one-year since Heather and I joined you in ministry together. It has been a year of getting to know one another and this work will be ongoing. As we continue on this path together my hope is that we will be more and more united in our purpose to live out God's mission in our time and place. Blessings of the new year to everyone.

Rev. Joe Gaspar

Parkminster's memorial garden

Parkminster's Memorial Garden is a pleasant and welcoming place for people to remember loved ones, or merely to relax during their busy lives.

Parkminster United Church has played a significant role in the lives of many, and if you are looking for a way to remain close to the Parkminster community of faith when you or your loved one has moved on to the Community of Saints, a subscription to the Memorial Garden is something you may wish to consider.

Buying a subscription to the Garden has a solid theological basis. It is a very environmentally friendly way to leave a memorial as no additional land will be used in creating your memorial. The garden provides a space to remember those who have gone before us, whether we stop on the path on our way to service, on our way home after service, or at any time day or night when we need that comfort.

Membership in the Garden continues to grow and over 100 subscriptions have now been sold. It may be necessary to add additional monuments in the future, but the design allows for an additional three monuments. There are sufficient funds in reserve in the Parkminster Endowment Fund to provide perpetual care of the Gardens.

If perhaps you have considered a marker for yourself, or for a loved one, it may be Parkminster's Garden of Memories that could provide that comfort for you. If you would like more information about the Gardens, the current committee members are Pat Harris, Jim Bowman, Swain Van Camp, and Wendy Ridgway. They would be pleased to talk with you.

