



The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter –
October 2017

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

IN THIS ISSUE

Notes from the Chair

Sitting at the Pow Wow in Waterloo Park in September, I thought that this must be what is meant by the dog days of summer – too hot to move. Just to be sure, I Googled it and read this written by Becky Little:

- *The "dog days," I always thought, were those summer days so devastatingly hot that even dogs would lie around on the asphalt, panting.*
- *Many people today use the phrase to mean something like that—but originally, the phrase actually had nothing to do with dogs, or even with the lazy days of summer. Instead, it turns out; the dog days refer to the Dog Star, Sirius, and its position in the heavens.*
- *To the Greeks and Romans, the "dog days" occurred around the day when Sirius appeared to rise just before the sun, in late July. They referred to these days as the hottest time of the year, a period that could bring fever, or even catastrophe.* (National Geographic, July 10 2015)

For Parkminster, these "dog days" bring not fever or catastrophe but joy. Joy in the richness and wisdom of Meg's interim ministry as well as joy in the start of Joe and Heather's team ministry. So, as we enjoyed summer in September we could also reflect on what was a very meaningful and emotional month. Meg's gift of connecting and honouring was evident throughout the month as she said

goodbye in thoughtful ways to all of us. She had a very busy summer covering pastoral care and working closely with our summer students but took the time to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to connect and reflect on this very important transition in our church lives. We are grateful to her and have learned from the insightful reflection she brought to everything she was involved in.

We also said thank you (but not goodbye) to Fred. He and Meg were true models of team ministry in the months they worked together. We were blessed by the richness of their ministry: we were not allowed to forget that "seeing" means looking beyond our immediate circumstances and "working together" means talking to people who have the answers you want rather than acting on assumptions.

We saw the results of the thoughtful and thorough jobs of the Joint Needs Assessment, Search and Transition committees on October 1 when we welcomed our new ministers – the Rev. Joe Gaspar and the Rev. Heather Power.

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Photos contributed by Kathy Shortt, Nancy Dykstra, Jennifer Allan and Jim Bowman.

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Notes from the Chair, continued

Joe joins us from ministry in Parry Sound and Heather from ministry in Alliston. Both are committed to team ministry and will share duties equally. They are promising a dynamic partnership; responsive to the needs of the congregation as well as to how their individual strengths will shape the changing needs of our church and community.

The Covenanting Service will be on October 22. It will likely be an afternoon service as this is Presbytery's welcome and Joe and Heather's colleagues in ministry cannot attend a morning service. Please come out and support our ministers in this, the beginning of our covenant together. It would be wonderful to have the pews full.

Joe and Heather are very keen to learn about the life of the church.

Committee Liaisons will be contacting committee chairs to set a date to mix and mingle to learn about priorities and goals, but in the meantime committees are welcome to invite them to their meetings as are Neighbourhood Groups. I look forward to a busy fall of working and growing together in love and partnership.

Maedith Radlein

Meet Heather and Joe

It is my pleasure to introduce Parkminster's new Team Ministry of Rev. Joe Gaspar and Rev. Heather Power.

We are delighted they have begun a faith and spiritual journey with Parkminster. Together they will lead us in our next chapter with their first Sunday October 1.

Joe and Heather bring with them unique gifts and styles but it is their passion to work as a team that will foster Parkminster's Inclusive atmosphere.

Joe and family



Joe and his wife Andrea have 3 children, Calvin, Joshua and Jacinta. Calvin is currently in third year studying Computer Science at Ryerson University. Joshua has begun his first year at York University in Graphic Design and Jacinta who is in Grade 11 is attending Eastwood Collegiate.

Joe graduated from Emmanuel College in 2004 alongside Heather. They have remained friends and mentors to each other ever since Parry Sound Library said goodbye to their CEO, Andrea as she and Joe returned to the KW area. They lived in the KW area from 1991-2004, before moving to Hornepayne.

Joe's past charges are Hornepayne and Parry Sound, Ontario. He was born in Portugal and raised as a Roman Catholic. He came to the United Church in the 1990s. He enjoys spiritual reading and is a fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs and The Toronto Blue Jays.

Heather and family



Heather and her husband Kieran have 2 daughters Skye and Shadow. Skye is in Grade 9 at Kitchener Collegiate Institute and Shadow is in Grade 8 at Centennial Public School. Kieran has a background in IT and has stayed at home to raise their daughters.

The United Church is in Heather's blood. Her mother was a United Church minister as well. Her previous charges are Cookstown United, Trinity United in Newmarket, Eglinton St. George's United and St John's United in Alliston.

Heather's passion is travel. Kieran was born in Northern Ireland and it is their special place to travel. Heather also enjoys reading and live theatre.

They both are very excited to work together and look forward to meeting each of you!

Blessings,
Karen Schertzberg
Ministry & Personnel

Welcome to Parkminster, Joe, Heather and your families. We're so grateful you've joined our family of faith.



Backpack program

In August, the Parkminster congregation was invited to contribute school supplies for the local Indigenous community. The response was wonderful!

In total there were 17 backpacks, and 6 additional boxes of school supplies contributed!

It was my privilege to deliver the backpacks, paper, binders, pens, pencils etc. etc. and \$\$\$'s to Donna Dubie, Executive Director of the Healing of the Seven Generations in Kitchener. Donna was overwhelmed by the generous donations from our congregation.

More than 25,000 indigenous people live in Waterloo region, with a growing student population attending elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools.

The Healing of the Seven Generations works with all Indigenous people in the area. They assist those individuals who are suffering from any effects of the Legacy of the Residential Schools, including intergenerational impacts such as growing up in dysfunctional families, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, addictions, poor self-esteem, loss of culture, lack of awareness of cultural identity, teachings, values and traditions, and poor self-image as an Indigenous person.

All survivors are taught to use traditional healing approaches and practices such as prayer, ceremony, songs, dance, drumming, dreams, fasting, and medicines as tools in their healing.

Non-traditional healing is also taught, including art, movement, relaxation, and writing.

Thanks to you, the backpack program has been a success! It is my hope Parkminster will make this program an annual opportunity, as we look for more ways to walk beside our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Janet Holland

Parkminster on Facebook

Facebook is a very valuable platform that we can use to keep our members updated, as well as reach new and former members of our community.

We frequently post events, activities and reminders on our page. It is very useful for you to keep track of the events you are interested in.

In addition, by liking our page and posts, you help extend our reach and allow your friends to view the posts as well. This will allow us to keep growing and establish our presence online which is growing more and more important as social media continues to expand!

If you have a Facebook account please follow this link:
<https://www.facebook.com/ParkminsterUC/> and like our page.

Laura Mutton manages our Parkminster Facebook page. If you have any events to advertise, photos from events you'd like to share, please email her at mutton.laura@gmail.com

What a beauty!



We have a new railing for the steps at the front of the church sanctuary. It was a combined effort from the Property Committee and Paul Schertzberg. Paul and Mark Dunbar installed it, and Paul also donated all of the materials.

It's a removable railing, an important addition to the safety, versatility and inclusivity of our worship space. You have likely already noticed it being used by appreciative members.

Thank you, thank you, and thank you again to all those who made it happen!

Thanks to everyone who helped out with worship services, the children's program, and pastoral care over the summer months. Your contributions make our church a truly special place.



Food truck report

The Food Truck Pop Up Committee met regularly 19 times this summer on Wednesdays from 4:00 until 8:45 pm. We had an average attendance of 15 out of a total membership of 50, ten of whom were in leadership roles (which does not mean that they were not “worker bees” too). The 9th Waterloo Scout Troop assisted with most cleanups.

At our meetings we transformed the front yard of our church into a venue for walk-in neighbours and drive-in folks to come and visit.

Each week from May 3 to September 6 there were about 5 local area Food Trucks

attending to sell their wares and create a community event. There was a Bouncy Castle on the first Wednesday of each month. On June 7, eight outreach organizations set up promotional tables and for the youth, on various other Wednesdays there were features like face painting, games, painting, art work and colouring all provided by our Summer Students, Laura and Ceiline.

To do this we used up to 17 tables, lots and lots of chairs, hand wash stands and Blue, Green and Black bins for recycling and garbage. During the event we cleaned tables of condiment drippings and also sorted the bin contents to ensure a proper use of the bins.

For our efforts we generated a lot of local interest with an estimated average of 300 people per night, including 40 – 50 people walking in. A good number of guests would stay for more than an hour to enjoy themselves. On three occasions, a group of about 20 – 25 members of a “Dog Club” came with their very friendly dogs to add a bit of variety.

All in all, the 2017 event connected us with our near-by neighbours and our not so near-by neighbours, and with our own church members in different contexts to socialize, eat and enjoy ourselves. We look forward to the 2018 season to continue what is fast becoming a Parkminster summer tradition.

Meet Susan Usaty

Do you know someone who does a lot of things but never takes recognition for what they do? Susan Usaty is one of those people. She contributes a great deal around the church that many of us are unaware of.

Susan grew up in the Kingston area and then as a young adult she headed to Toronto to go to university. She was enrolled in the School of Pharmacy there and she lived in New College. Ron Usaty enrolled in Engineering at University of Toronto and he also lived in New College. Ron grew up in Bracebridge. After graduation, the two settled in Waterloo when Ron got hired by Schneiders here in the city.

Luckily for Parkminster, they eventually moved next door to Debbie and Mike Miethig. Debbie suggested that Parkminster might be a fit for their little family. They had Dana at that time and she was baptized here at the church and the Usaty's have been here ever since. Colleen came along soon after and both girls have been active here at Parkminster. Dana continues to play in the Bell Choir even though she has started attending university and Colleen is a frequent soloist at the front of the church.

The most recent involvement that Sue has had, is that she worked many evenings at the Food Trucks. She was responsible for waste management. She helped set out the containers and she constantly checked that things were in the correct bins. She also does this within the church building frequently. If things are out of place she quietly corrects them. Meanwhile in a lull of activity Sue would be in the kitchen cleaning out the fridge. She keeps the fridge tidy for us all and it never gets overrun with disgusting treasures.

Sue has quietly worked with the youth. She volunteered at the Professional Development (PD) day activities that were shared by Trillium, First and Parkminster United churches. Sue and her family have hosted the youth for four or five outings at the family cottage. A video shows that the days were action packed, full of learning and good fun. That is a generous gift.

When Susan retired she wanted to volunteer in a way that involved food. She was the person in charge of muffin management for the Out of the Cold program at First United until they stopped having people sleep over. She looked around and discovered Habitat for Humanity and she has worked there ever

since. At Habitat, she prepares a breakfast buffet and lunch for fifteen to forty people. She does that Monday and Thursdays and whenever there is an extra need. She helps keep their fridge organized also.

Sue is one of those people who shows up with food when you most need it. I have seen her quietly deliver soup to someone who has experienced a loss. Her reaction to that is, “Isn't that what you do?” She goes at least twice a month to visit a congregation member, who lives in a nursing care facility and needs help eating his meals. Sometimes she is just with him but at other times she is visiting with his wife also.

Sue lives close to the Al Mohammad family and early in their time here she took Yehya on the bus to teach him the way to get to the grocery store. She continues her involvement with the family by having one of the younger girls come to her house to bake cookies or just to have quiet time. It gives attention to the little girl and probably a bit of a break for the family. Sue is a giving person. Her kindness and thoughtfulness are a great strength and we are so lucky to have her in our Parkminster family.

The Al Mohamad family



Those new to Parkminster may not know the congregation sponsors a former refugee family from Syria.

The Al Mohamad's came to Canada in February 2016 from a refugee camp in Lebanon and moved into a house rented by Parkminster six weeks later. Over the past 18 months, church members have provided support as the family has adapted to a very different language and culture.

The Re-Settlement Committee (RSC) coordinates the efforts of the church. The family is financially self-supporting through Ontario Works and Child Benefits. Parkminster provides funds for uninsured medical costs, recreational opportunities for the children (e.g., YMCA Summer Camps) and English tutoring.

Yehya (father) is 44 years old. He did not have any formal schooling in Syria and worked as a taxi driver, small grocer and construction worker. He has several siblings in Syria and recently lost a brother in a car accident.

Yehya wants to get a job, but needs to continue developing his English skills to make this a realistic possibility. Karen Medsger has been hired to tutor Yehya and was also able to support him during a Volunteer Work Placement this summer.

Khairiya (mother) is 34 years old. She has a grade 6 education from Syria and can read and write in Arabic. This has been very helpful as it allows us to use "Google Translate"! She is from a family of 12 children. A brother-in-law was killed last winter during bombing in Aleppo, leaving Khairiya's sister a widow with six children. Both parents are grateful for the safety they enjoy in Canada, yet worry about their relatives at home.

The school-age children all attend Lester B. Pearson Public School and are tutored once a week by members of Parkminster.

The four oldest children are boys. They all love to ride their bikes and play soccer. They have participated in 12 weeks of camp over the past two summers where they also received swimming lessons.

- **Khaled** is 12 and in grade 7. His Parkminster tutor is Kathy Shortt.
- **Mohamad** is 10 and in grade 5. Nancy Dykstra is his tutor.
- **Nour and Zakariya** are 8-year-old twins in grade 2 and their tutors are Lee Osborne and Kathy Hehl.
- The next three children are girls.
- **Rama** is 6 and in grade 1. Lori McKim Lang is her tutor.
- **Hala** is 4 and started Junior Kindergarten this September. Sheila Rule plans to begin tutoring her soon.
- **Ghosoun** is 3 and was born in a refugee camp in Lebanon. Sue Usaty has started the tutoring process with her.
- **Amir** was born in May of this year and is the first Canadian-born member of the family. Parents have said he will be the last child – only time will tell!

The Al Mohamad's have been through many difficult times, yet we are humbled by their resilience and good humour. Their gratitude is genuine, but they no longer feel the need to express it all the time. They manage their affairs independently for the most part, occasionally requesting help with forms and paperwork. They are most comfortable with small groups of people and are always gracious hosts when someone visits.

The Al Mohamad's have faced many challenges, but they are a strong family. Parkminster is blessed to have the opportunity to share their journey.

