



The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter –
March 2018

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

IN THIS ISSUE

Ministers' message

As we move through the Lenten season and into Holy Week, may we be inspired by the Holy One to enliven our faith and our very lives. We invite you to experience the special services that will lead us to Easter as we have opportunities to worship together and with sister churches in Waterloo:

- Sunday, March 25 – Palm/Passion Sunday at Parkminster – 10:00 a.m.
- Thursday, March 29 – Maundy Thursday at Parkminster – 6:30 p.m.
- Friday, March 30 – Good Friday at Emmanuel – 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday, April 1 – Easter at Parkminster – 10:00 a.m.

May we be open to surprises of the Spirit and hold fast to the gifts of community in all times – knowing in all of our journeys we are not alone.

One of the things that we try and do each week is take moments for reflection and spiritual refreshment. We came across this beautiful poem written by Andrew King, a member of Maple Grove United Church. With his permission, we share it with you.

Blessings to you all,
Rev. Heather and Rev. Joe

Escaping from the Boxes ([Luke 4:21-30](#))

There you go again, God, moving to the margins,
taking love to the outcast and the alien,
breaking through the barriers we've constructed from our prejudice,
a light that shines into the world's dark corners;
unfettered by our selfishness, unhindered by our blindness,
there you go, defying our expectations,
surprising us with the wideness of your grace.
There you go again, God, slipping through our fingers,
escaping from the boxes put around you,
crossing fences of theology we build to hold you prisoner,
a wind that blows beyond our closed horizons;
uncaptured by our doctrines, unbounded by our dogmas,
there you go, defying our expectations,
surprising us with the freedom of your grace.
There you go again, God, calling us to a journey,
prodding us to leave our shells of comfort,
bidding us to examine the rigid shelters of our thinking,
a voice that reaches deep within our souls;
undiscouraged by our stubbornness, patient in our fearfulness,
there you go, defying our expectations,
surprising us with the closeness of your grace.

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Soup Lunch photos contributed by Jim Bowman. Curling shots taken by Sheril Stinson.

Notes from the Chair

Read Maedith's message Page 2

Soup Lunch for Plett Meal Centre

Learn about this Parkminster tradition Page 2

Parkminster to sponsor second Syrian family

Hear about this new initiative Page 3

Someone is sick

Reflect on these ten ways to help Page 3

Success with grants for capital projects

Learn about Parkminster's latest grants Page 4

Parkminsterites get swept up

Check out the photos of this fun outing Page 4

Notes from the Chair

Looking through the window I see sunshine and clear sidewalks. It's unlikely that winter is totally gone, but certainly there are signs that spring is not far off. Hopefully it also means that we can say goodbye to the flu and its accompanying ills for another year.

Many Parkminster members have been putting in double time to get our various 2018 initiatives going. The Food Truck Committee is working on reshaping the event based on the feedback received from the congregation. The Photo Directory Committee has spent many hours signing people up for appointments and making phone calls to those no longer able to be at church. Rides are being arranged and families contacted to ensure that no one is left out. The Communications Committee has identified new directions to increase our media presence in the community and make our web site more user-friendly. Bruce Mutton, our grant application wizard, has secured funding to retrofit the lift, install a commercial chair lift to the choir loft and improve our sound system. It is amazing what our members do to

contribute to the life of the church and the fulfillment of our mission to live a life of loving influence.

There's a small, committed group involved in the Truth and Reconciliation sub-committee. It is taking the opportunity to increase understanding of our historical relationship with our First Nation communities and more importantly, to gain the knowledge to help our faith community understand how to seek improved relationships in the future. If you haven't yet been able to attend any of the many interesting events in the community, do look out for them. They are well advertised by Laurier, the University of Waterloo, Conestoga College, Divest Waterloo and other community organizations.

We continue to increase our community presence. You may have noticed a truck parked in our parking lot on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons in the last week or so. This is the Urban Sugaring Project which gives city residents with maple trees the opportunity to tap their maple trees and bring the sap to be made into maple

syrup. Parkminster is now a drop-off spot thanks to Outreach. Also to be celebrated is the Inclusive Ministries' potluck which has become a beacon of hope in this area of Ontario. At the last event we had visitors from Guelph and one couple from Woodstock is there every time. It's wonderful to see our frequent visitors taking ownership of the event and pitching in to setup and take-down. A family is taking shape!

In the next few weeks we'll hopefully be enjoying the coming of spring. With the sunshine we see the dust bunnies and the smeared windows, so those of us not travelling will likely be spring cleaning. Whatever you'll be doing, think of these words from Paul Miller, our Presbytery Support Minister, "What is the 'product' of a not-for-profit? A church?" Drucker's answer: '*Transformed individuals.*' The 'product' of not-for-profit organizations is the change that they bring about in people's lives.

Thank you for all you do.

Maedith Radlein, Chair of Council

Plett Meal Centre

Parkminster made a connection with Ray and Edna Light when several women from Parkminster attended a conference titled "Ecumenical Decade for Women Conference" in Durban, South Africa in 1992. Initially, the organization that we supported was called Concordia. Ray and Edna retired to the Plettenberg Bay area where they helped set up the Plett Meal Centre. The goal of this centre is to feed, teach and help the area's disadvantaged—especially the children. The soup kitchens serve well over a thousand meals of soup and bread daily.

In the past few years, our major fund raiser for this project has been an after-church lunch organized by the Christian Education committee with many of Parkminster's youth helping with the preparation and serving of the soup.

Donations are also encouraged from members of the congregation. So far, we have received almost \$1,700 in donations and over \$800 from the soup lunch



Parkminster to sponsor second Syrian family

When Siham Ali Al Mohamed lost her husband in a bomb strike in Aleppo in 2016, she had little time to grieve her loss. With seven children ranging in age from two to 14 years old depending on her, their apartment building on fire, and a war raging around them, their lives went from extremely difficult to frightening and miserable.

Syrian government forces had surrounded the neighbourhood and the family lived in constant fear they would be killed. Eventually the government forces announced anyone wanting to leave would be able to do so. Al Mohamed took the opportunity and fled with her children, on foot, to her brother's home outside Aleppo.

Al Mohamed and her children made a harrowing crossing over the border to Lebanon where they now rent a small plot of land and live in a tent with no heat or electricity. When it's cold they burn wood

inside the tent for warmth and most days they go hungry. Al Mohamed and her eldest daughter Ahlam pick vegetables in the summer for \$8 a day. A loaf of bread costs \$2, so the money they make doesn't go far. Though they have left the war behind, their suffering has not subsided.

Al Mohamed's nephew has joined the family but can't work legally inside Lebanon and fears deportation back to Syria where he will be forced to join the army.

Al Mohamed's sister Khairiya Al Mohamed and her family received sponsorship and now live in Kitchener-Waterloo, receiving support from Parkminster United Church.

Now the church would like to help bring Siham Ali Al Mohamed, her children, and nephew to the safety and the opportunities Canada can provide them.

Parkminster has access to \$12,000 through its refugee resettlement fund, and intends to raise another \$30,000 to bolster the family's application to settle here.

The family's circumstances are dire, so the church hopes to work quickly and have the money raised in the coming weeks.

Recent air strikes in Eastern Ghouta diminish the hopes of a peaceful Syria in the near future and the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the war requires compassion.

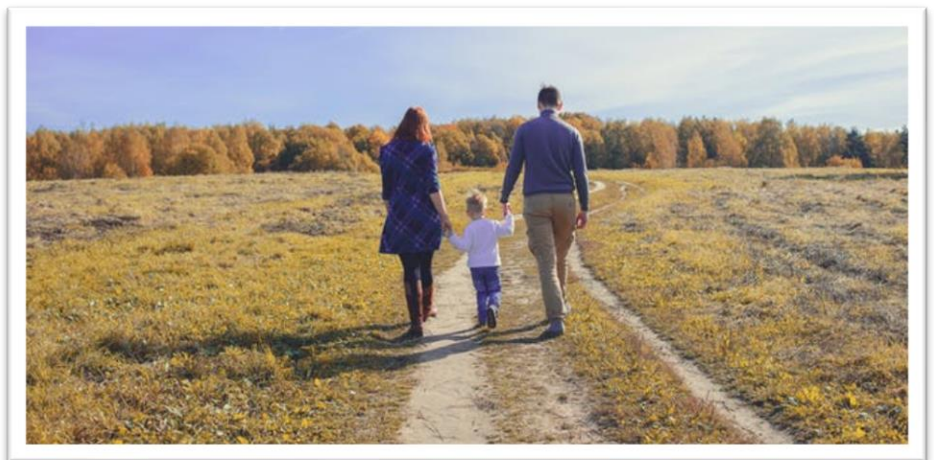
Al Mohamed longs for the comfort of family and the emotional support of family and dreams of living in a country where her children are safe and secure.

For more information contact Rob MacQueen, chair Refugee Resettlement Committee, at rdmacqueen@gmail.com.

Helping someone who is sick or who has a terminal illness

Someone you know has become sick or has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. What do you? How do you act? Read these ten suggestions for how you can help.

1. Treat them exactly the same as you have.
2. The illness is not their identity. Let them talk as much or little about it, as they need to.
3. Talk about other parts of their life and yours as you normally would.
4. Offer support but don't take over and make them feel debilitated. Let them ask for what they need.
5. Have fun with them and laugh. We all need it—a break from our problems.
6. Ask them what helps. What they need. That will be different for all of us.
7. Talk about the future. Hope.
8. While prayers and thoughts are great, love in action is better. Do something concrete to help.
9. Don't look at them like they are dying, without hope. This is most discouraging.
10. Let them know you are available, a phone call away if they want to talk, need something, or want to get out for some fun.
11. If the person looks well, tell them so. It feels encouraging and helps.



Success with grants for capital projects

Parkminster is no different from many churches that scramble to come up with funds for capital projects like roofs, parking lots, heating systems etc. In the past, we have had fund-raising events to ensure we had the money we needed for projects that would keep our building in good repair and our facility accessible to all. Today, funds are more and more difficult to realize for property projects that are necessary but not outreach related.

The Government of Canada as well as the United Church of Canada recognize the need to have safe and accessible buildings. As a result, they have grant programs that assist churches and not-for-profit agencies in their desire to remain accessible and current.

To date, we have been fortunate to receive over \$150,000 in federal, Presbytery, provincial and municipal funding to help our church remain accessible and community focused. These grants have helped us to afford the main floor washrooms, upgrade the front entrance, and create our community Labyrinth. These improvements have made our facility much more inviting to our congregation and to groups wishing to use and rent our facility.

We have been fortunate over the past several years, not to have to fund-raise for these necessary capital projects. Recently we received a federal government grant, which will allow us to replace our aging elevator, install a chair lift to our choir loft and improve the sound system in the church sanctuary.

The grant will cover most of the cost, leaving a small portion to come from our capital fund. It is important to understand that although we have not been actively requesting financial contributions from the congregation for capital projects, that the capital fund does need replenishing.

Parkminster's incredible ability to raise money has always been one of the hallmarks of its faith community so it is important to acknowledge our passion for outreach while at the same time recognizing the need for property improvements.

Congratulations Parkminster for your awesome commitment.

Parkminsterites curl on St. Patrick's Day

The MOPs and UGO-IGO took to the ice at the Westmount Curling Club on March 17 and got swept up into the curling spirit. Here is a photo collage of the fun on and off the ice.

