



# The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church  
Newsletter –  
June 2018

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

## Notes from the Chair

In this wonderfully dynamic community that is Parkminster United Church I frequently hear, "I've been thinking ..." or "We could do ..."

Our members and adherents are constantly seeing possibilities for us to reach out, remain relevant and strengthen our faith by valuing and affirming the needs and lives of others. At Council we're working to ensure that our decision making is determined by who we say we are;

God is calling us 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.

To deepen our commitment to each other we must get to know each other so we can build relationships with each other that include trust and openness to different perspectives; relationships that withhold judgement and value open communication. We participate in committees, small group study and social groups. We use our Conflict Resolution process.

To nurture spiritual vitality and growth we must reflect on how we want to be in

relationship to ourselves and to others. We all have different beliefs and perspectives but our presence in the Parkminster family indicates that we "are evolving", shaping and re-shaping as we are presented with new ways of thinking. Through our music, labyrinth and worship we reflect, commit, give thanks and grow.

To live a life of loving influence in the world we reach out to those who may or may not be part of our community. We accept those who may be outside our social circle because we value love over approval. We connect socially through playgroup, food trucks, family parties, BBQs, strawberry socials, UGO-IGO, ACCKWA, house groups, men's club, bridge, euchre, movies and other pop-up groups. We demonstrate our commitment to the belief that we are all God's children by permanently flying our rainbow flag – a symbol of a safety and love.

As summer approaches and we begin to enjoy cottages, camping, festivals as well as visiting friends and family, we can also celebrate our faith community and all that we have achieved.

Maedith Radlein  
Chair of Council

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## Ministers' message

In urging her readers to embrace the spiritual practice of taking a Sabbath day American Episcopal Priest and writer Barbara Brown Taylor said this:

*"Test the premise that you are worth more than you can produce – that even if you spent one whole day of being good for nothing you would still be precious in God's sight. And when you get anxious because you are convinced that this is not so – remember that your own conviction is not required. This is a commandment. Your worth has already been established, even when you are not working. The purpose of the commandment is to woo you to the same truth."*

It was the idea of Sabbath that came to mind for this pre-Summer newsletter.

That's what Summer is for many of us, a time to slow down, a time to rest, a time to play, a time revel in the sacredness of creation. From a spiritual perspective these changes in the pace and content of our activities play a vital role.

As Barbara Brown Taylor says they remind us that life is not all up to us, that we are not primarily manufacturers of our existence but instead, recipients of gifts that sustain us. In religious language you could say that Sabbath time reminds us that we live by grace alone.

That right there is the essence of spirituality, to know that you're not alone, to know that you're a part of something (not the whole thing) and the same goes for everyone else.

So, as you swim, nap, fish, read, this summer know that you are doing important spiritual work.

If anyone doubts you, tell them your ministers said so. ☺

Rev. Joe and Rev. Heather

## Farewell to River and Midori



From the moment of their arrival at Parkminster United Church Midori Marsh and River Guard struck the right chord.

The vocal scholars from Wilfrid Laurier University were the perfect fit for the church choir. Their vocal talents were evident immediately to everyone in the choir loft, and to those in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

They will be missed for their musical talents now that their tenure at Parkminster is complete. But their talents are not the only reason they will be remembered so fondly. Their enthusiasm, sense of fun, and willingness to do anything asked of them is what has left an indelible mark on the hearts of the people they performed with and those they performed for.

**"They have given so much more than simply singing the right notes at the right time,"** said Music Director Neil Murray.

**"With Midori and River's presence, the choir sang with an energy and confidence that was simply amazing. They willingly took part in any aspect of Parkminster's musical life from men's chorus, to band, to singing solos and duets without hesitation. Over and above their obviously outstanding voices are personalities which are engaging and incredibly caring. It is this connection we feel toward Midori and River that compelled many of us to attend their various recitals, opera performances and final grad recital. What they contributed to Parkminster can't be weighed or measured or be given a price tag."**

The affection the congregation, and particularly the choir, has for Midori and River is heartily reciprocated. They laughed to themselves as they recalled the jovial atmosphere at choir practices and during performances.

"We're all BFFS, (best friends forever)" Midori said. "The tenor section is hilarious, it's like a little gang. They should get jackets, they're so funny."

"They're all weirdos," River added, "And I can joke around with them. They've become good friends. It's not like us being at a job, we are getting paid and it's a big help for us as students, but the dynamic is really clear. We never feel like we have to be here or we have to go to the church and we have to sing. As soon as we're there, we're like, 'these are our friends and we get to hang out and sing with these people.'"



River and Midori's presence at Parkminster was a gift both literally and figuratively. After the death of her son Dan,

parishioner Lyn McNiffe made a donation to the music ministry. The funds were donated to fulfill Dan's wishes that the money he left behind be used to make others happy. Dan's beautiful request reached all of us, and delighted us time and again.

Continued next page...

# River and Midori continued

Lyn sees the impact the scholars have made on the church as an extension of love, as a blessing, and as an incredible gift led by God. "River and Midori know how to bring joy," she said.

Her son preferred heavy metal over opera, but he would have been thrilled with the energy and happiness River and Midori have brought to the congregation, Lyn said.

It all started One December Night. River and Midori sang at the event and soon after Midori became Parkminster's first choral scholar. River was already working at another church when he was invited to participate.

He went back to the other church but never forgot how much he enjoyed the experience with Neil and the choir so when the opportunity arose to come over to Parkminster, he took it.

Born in Toronto and growing up in Hamilton, Niagara, and St. Catharines, River was raised in a home where the arts were the norm. His parents both work in theatre. River showed an inclination towards the arts early on as well but singing wasn't the direction he had planned for himself, he was leaning toward being an actor.



"When I was in high school I was in a rock band so I was just kind of screaming in clubs every night with 14-year-old friends until I was 17 or 18. That was a lot of my performance training and singing training. I did a lot of acting stuff as well. I did a lot of music theatre as a kid but again I had never had any singing training."

When he was cast in a school production of *Les Miserables* he wanted to sing at a higher calibre so he began taking lessons. It was his vocal coach who encouraged him to go

to Laurier to study opera. She was right to steer him that way, as he's excelled at his craft.

But he hasn't entirely forgotten his rock band roots. When he started at Parkminster he relished the opportunity to pick up a guitar again and play with the band. "Just being able to come back to something like that, because I haven't played in a group of musicians that way in a while, that's been really cool."

Midori, who was born in Cleveland to a Canadian mother and American father, wanted to sing from a very early age. She wasn't shy about making opportunities for herself either.



"I always had a very loud voice and I was a little ham. I would sing around the house, when my parents had parties. I would always waltz out into the living room in the middle of the adults and be like, 'everybody quiet, I'm going to sing somewhere over the rainbow.' And I would sing in front of 30-35 adults."

Her father signed her up for piano lessons when she was seven years old and she stuck with it until her early teens, but she hated it. When she was 12 he enrolled her in voice lessons and it was there she found an outlet for her talent and for her desire to perform.

Midori holds dual citizenship and chose to study in Canada after she finished high school in the U.S. By coincidence, she took some vocal training from the same teacher River saw and was also encouraged to consider Laurier.

Unlike River, she grew up singing in churches including a Presbyterian church in Cleveland where she was a choral scholar in her final year of high school. Her goal as a scholar is to nurture her voice and perfect her abilities. Performing at Parkminster

gave her a chance to sing at a high level but in a laid-back environment.

**"Neil's the best," she said. "The way he wrangles us and gets us to sing what he wants, he's a secret genius."**

Officially, River and Midori have completed their time as scholars with Parkminster but every now and then, one or both could be back in the choir loft until they take on their next challenges. River will be studying with a select group of vocalists in Banff this summer and Midori has options to consider.

In the fall they will head to Toronto to study in the master's programme at the University of Toronto.

"It's arguably the best opera program for master's in the country," River said. "A lot of the same professors who work there also work in the top independent opera companies in Toronto but also at the Canadian Opera Company. The teacher we might study with, Wendy Nielsen, is on the board for the COC's young artist program, which would be the next step after our master's, which is basically paid training."

As their voices and level of experience continue to grow, the world will get bigger, as will their place within it. They're excited to move on to the next chapter but Midori and River couldn't help taking a minute to look back on their time at Parkminster.

"I'm sad to leave," Midori said. "I don't like to think about it. It's definitely a bummer."

As part of their continued education in Toronto there will be more churches to sing in, some of them will be grand and some of them will be storied, but the scholars don't expect any will be quite like Parkminster.

**"I think we've been spoiled in terms of a church experience with you guys," River said. "I think anywhere we go afterwards will pale in comparison in all the ways we've talked about. We've been very privileged and very spoiled in terms of this experience so that's going to be very hard for us to move away from."**

By Laura Cudworth  
Communications Committee



# Greetings from Khaled and Mohamad

Khaled is in grade 7 and Mohamad is in grade 5 at Lester B. Pearson School in Waterloo.

The Al Mohammad children are receiving one-on-one tutoring from volunteer Parkminster teachers. This time helps to strengthen their English skills, reinforce academic skills, and develop positive relationships. Khaled also receives math tutoring once a week and this math tutoring is paid for by Parkminster. We asked Khaled and Mohamad to send a message to you.

**Khaled** says: "I like school and I like the teachers because they teach me a lot of new things. I really like learning how to draw in art class and I learn a lot in math. In history, I am learning about the past. I did a monologue and I had the best character, James Wolfe. He was in a battle against Montcalme and the French in Quebec City.

If he hadn't won that battle, we would be speaking French right now.

At school I belong to many clubs: basketball, volleyball, badminton, football, and track and field. If there is a sport, I am playing it. Every sport that happens at school (lunch, recess, club, after school, or gym class), I am joining it!

I have a math tutor and he is fun to work with because he teaches me new tricks for figuring out answers. With my English tutor, we are reading a book on Terry Fox. Terry Fox got cancer and they had to amputate his leg. In the hospital, he saw lots of children with cancer and he decided to run across Canada to raise money to help children with cancer. He wasn't able to finish the race, but he was able to reach his goal of raising 24 million dollars. Terry Fox was brave and very determined. Canada is the best."

**Mohamad** says: "I really like school. I like everything in school. We play a lot of sports outside - soccer, baseball, hockey, and basketball.

On May 25 we do track and field and we're going to be running. Last year I started doing 200m and 60m races. This year I'm going to be doing the same thing and I'm going to do high jump and standing long jump.

I like the subjects in school all the same amount. I'm in grade 5. I like division a lot because it uses adding, subtracting and multiplication.

Thank you Nancy for helping me."

Submitted by Kathy Shortt  
Resettlement Committee

# Congratulations to the newly baptized

On May 13, 2018 we had the honour of baptizing five children into the body of Christ.

Nolan Malseed, Audrey Malseed and Bennett Malseed, children of Eryn and Todd Malseed



Amelia Charette, child of Cedric Charette and Amanda Kalbfleisch



Kayleb Barber, child of Kirsten Fugard and Paul Barber



# Welcome to our new members

On May 13, 2018 we had the honour of welcoming 13 new members to Parkminster.

## Barbara Allan

Barb was raised in a small mining town in Northern Ontario and was used to the fact that the Minister of the United Church was a woman. That was in the early 50's and there were about 6 female ministers in Canada at that time. Barb was confirmed and later on was married by one—the Rev. Kathleen Christopher. Barb has always appreciated the strong stance the United Church has taken on societal issues. To her, it is the gospel in action. There is a sense of practicality in the United Church. Did it come from our pioneering forbearers? It is seen today in the willingness to move ahead and be relevant in our ever-changing world. All that being said, Barb still loves those old Methodist hymns.



Betty Crawford, Barbara Allan, Darlene Basse

## Darlene Basse

Darlene started coming to Parkminster a year and half ago and has now officially transferred from Trillium United in Cambridge. She participated in the Trillium choir under Neil Murray's leadership and was thrilled to join the Parkminster choir and reconnect with Neil...she loves music. She also loves being with people, regularly helps out at Parkminster events, and is a member of a performing group, singing with Rockway Entertainers. Darlene grew up in Saskatchewan, moved to Ontario at age 13, and had a career in accounting. Her brother Harold was known to us all...he was Waterloo's Chief of Police.

## Betty Crawford

I was born in Edmonton. Lived in Winnipeg for 20 years. Riverview, New Brunswick for 5 years and then Peterborough where I lived for over 47 years. I came to live in Waterloo with Maureen in July 2017. I'm widowed and have 4 children – 2 daughters in Winnipeg, son in Peterborough and a daughter Maureen here. I've been involved with the United Church all my life and hope to continue at Parkminster.

## Roberta Hickey

Membership transfer from Doon Presbyterian Church, Kitchener. I am married to Jim, a retired high school teacher and have 2 children Robert and Amanda, both living and working in Toronto. Both Jim and I are originally from Montreal but moved to Ontario to go to Teacher's College. I am a retired teacher, having taught in Newfoundland, Stratford and lastly at KidsAbility in Waterloo for 21 years. I was a volunteer and also the convenor of KW Out of the Cold for 15 years. I am very glad to be part of such a welcoming inclusive church. I am enjoying the meaningful services, the wonderful music, the activities of the UGO-IGO group and belonging to the Outreach Committee.



Jemma & Sheila Hooisma, Jermaine Browne

## Sheila Hooisma and Jermaine Browne

Sheila grew up in New Hamburg and moved to Waterloo just before entering Teachers College. She is a teacher with the Waterloo Region District School Board and loves every minute of it, or almost every minute of it. Her soulmate Jermaine is from Kingston originally and is an IT specialist working in Toronto. They live in Waterloo with their 3-year old daughter Jemma. They love to spend time with family and friends when not otherwise busy chasing after Jemma.

## Sarah Jewett

I came to Waterloo from England where I was christened in the Anglican Church. My family moved to Canada in 1965 and settled in Port Hope. From there we moved to Ancaster and then Dundas. In Dundas we attended St. James Anglican Church where I was a member of the children's choir. Since then I've lived in several places including Cobourg, Charlottetown and Halifax. I moved to Waterloo in 1986 and attended Emmanuel United Church where I was confirmed. Don Linkletter was the minister at the time! I graduated from Laurier and shortly thereafter started working at Kitchener Public Library, where I have been for 31 years! After getting married and starting a family, I drifted away

from the church. Shortly after coming to Parkminster, I joined the choir and rediscovered my love of singing. I also enjoy UGO-IGO and the occasional euchre night when my husband, Jeff, and I play as spares. Thank you for welcoming us into Parkminster's church family.

## Katie Lefler

I grew up in Princeton and Woodstock Ontario before heading off to university. I received my Visual Arts degree at McMaster and my Bachelor of Education at Western University. I was offered a job out west in Okotoks, Alberta teaching Art and Media at a junior high. My husband and I lived there for 5 years before moving back to start our family. My husband Tristan and I have two boys; Luke who is 3 and Eli who is 2. I originally came to Parkminster through the Monday playgroup; I fell in love with the wonderful community that welcomed me and my boys every week and look forward to the strong sense of connection that my boys will be able to grow up with.



Katie Lefler, Sarah Jewett

## Eryn Malseed

Hello, I am Eryn, a wife, a mother to seven amazing children, Sadie, Hayden, Claire, Dominik, Nolan, Bennett and Audrey and Mom of two dogs, 2 cats and a hamster! Some people may call it chaos, we like to call it family. We moved from Hamilton to Waterloo in June 2016. I have been with the Federal Government for 18 years. I also work part time at Ricki's, to support my retail therapy sessions!



Malseed family – Eryn (new member) and Todd; children Audrey, Nolan and Bennet (baptised)



John Bakelaar, Wilma Bakelaar, Roberta Hickey, Sandi McMullen, Bethany McMullen

### John and Wilma Bakelaar

John and I both immigrated to Canada as children with our families from the Netherlands. I (Wilma) grew up with 4 brothers and John grew up with 8 brothers. John was raised on a farm in Auburn near Goderich, while my family settled first in Glen Williams before moving to Guelph. John and I met in Guelph and have been married for 56 years. Our daughter Sandi was born in Guelph followed by our son David 3 years later in Uxbridge. We have been blessed with 5 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. We lived in Uxbridge for 30 years and worked in retail, owning our own store, before moving to Port Elgin where we became innkeepers of the Windspire Inn, a 14 room B&B. We sold the inn in 2008 and retired to our fifth wheel, with which we travelled extensively throughout Canada and the USA.

We both love travelling, boating, reading, golf, card and board games. John enjoys painting and wood carving, while I enjoy sewing and quilting and playing mah-jong. We have been members of the United Church since the late 70's and have served on a number of committees and boards. Our hope is to continue in sharing our faith journey with new friends at Parkminster United.

### Bethany McMullen

Hello! My name is Bethany and I'm in my third year of Social Development Studies at Renison in the University of Waterloo, which is an interdisciplinary social sciences degree, as I want to become a Social Worker and work with children like my mother. I sing in the Chapel Choir at Conrad Grebel University College, where I'm an associate, and involved in various aspects of community life there. I also work for the City of Kitchener as a Lifeguard / Aquafitness Instructor, where I really enjoy teaching children and seniors. I am a giant nerd, and I love Harry Potter, Star Trek, board games, and recently I got into Dungeons and Dragons, but I also enjoy knitting and sewing, playing the piano and trying to learn the ukulele. I'm incredibly lucky to be able to join Parkminster with my mother (Sandi), and my grandparents (John and Wilma Bakelaar).

### Sandi McMullen

I'm Sandi McMullen and I have recently joined Parkminster with my daughter and my parents, John and Wilma Bakelaar. I guess after 31 or so years I'm now considered a local of KW but I was raised in Uxbridge. I have been married for 28 years to John and we have two amazing, now adult children: Travis and Bethany. I work as an itinerant teacher attached to 14 schools within the Waterloo Region District School Board, supporting schools and behaviourally challenged students. I thoroughly enjoy my job—it's all problem solving and supporting others to get what they need. Outside of work, I keep busy spending time with friends and family, reading, playing board games and exploring encaustic art—painting with



tinted melted wax. This kind of painting is just the opposite of my busy life; I have to wait while the wax hardens—moving in its own way, creating its own magic.



**Come Out and Enjoy  
"Erb strEAT EATS"  
Food Trucks at Parkminster  
4:30 – 8:00 p.m.  
Every Wednesday  
through to September 5  
Good Food!  
Good Fellowship!**



# Conflict resolution at Parkminster

*"We must develop a way to understand genuine community as the product of conflict and testing. We must discover ways to be authentically present to and respectful of one another while we disagree strenuously. We must learn to discover and speak our own truths, without fear and without harm to others who also hold a piece of the truth in which we all live."*

Norvene Best

["Community as a spiritual discipline" in Benedictine Bridge](#)

Let me just state it right out, nobody likes conflict. I don't like conflict, Heather doesn't like conflict. But, unless we want to lead solitary lives or live disconnected from reality, conflict is inevitable. Especially for a church such as ours that embraces diversity. Diversity means difference and difference means conflict.

What if we could learn to view conflict not with a sense of dread but as an opportunity to increase understanding, to learn, to come closer together? That is the hope of Church Council and the former Interim Ministry Transition Team in introducing the recently approved conflict resolution process entitled, *Stepping Stones to Right Relationship* (see the next page).

Take some time to read it and familiarize yourself with it. In the coming weeks and months this document will become more widely available and will hopefully become a useful resource to us all as we seek to grow in faith and community.

Thanks for this important work go to the Transition Team, Annette Decker (Chair), Meg Grieve (Clergy), Jim Bowman, Joe Sheldon, Liz Forde, Sarah McLean, Stephanie Wagner and Wendy Ridgway.

Thanks as well to our Parkminster Mediators, Roxy Linkletter, Ted Oldfield, Kathy Shortt and Kevin Smith.

Rev. Joe Gaspar

## Stepping stones to right relationship - When there is conflict

### Exceptions

- When the conflict is with a staff member, meet with the staff member directly if agreeable to both parties or through the Ministry and Personnel committee.
- If the conflict is with a decision made by a committee or Council, meet with the appropriate Chairperson to express your concerns.



### Step 1. Explore and Reflect

- What am I feeling and why?
- Are there personal issues from the present or the past that may be adding to my feeling of conflict and discomfort?
- On a scale of 1-10, how important and urgent is it to me to solve this conflict?
- Do I want or need to resolve this conflict?
- Am I ready to talk about the facts and feelings with the other person?
- You may want to explore your own conflict style. There are several available sites on the internet to help you with this.



### Step 2. Personal Preparation for Discussion

- Write down the facts, your concerns and feelings about the incident.
- Try to set feelings of anger aside. Try to use "I" statements to clarify your own impressions of the incident or situation.
  - For example, "You never listen to anyone, and you're not really listening to me now", can be turned into "I feel that my concerns are not being heard."
- Identify what you think the issue or problem is.
- What do you need to make it possible to resolve the problem?
- Consider speaking with a mediator first (go to Step 6), if you do not feel safe, OR to help you prepare for Step 3.

# Stepping stones continued...



## Step 3. Invite a Conversation

- Let the other person know this is important to you.
- Invite them to discuss your concerns with you or with a Parkminster mediator\*, but be prepared that the other party may refuse your invitation.
- Agree to meet at a time convenient to you both, in a quiet but neutral place.
- Listen carefully to the other person's side of the story, their concerns and what they need from you
  - For example, repeat their words back to them ("What I hear you saying is..."). Ask questions to clarify information ("What did you mean when you said..."). Don't interrupt, let the person finish their thought.
- Present your side of the conflict and your needs in a calm and orderly manner.
- Be prepared to accept that there may be different points of view.
- Seek to understand how the other person views the conflict and their point of view instead of getting what you want or seeking to win.



## Step 4. Agree on the problem

- Discuss the current issue, not past issues.
- Focus on the problem only, not the person's character or personality.
- Avoid attacking or blaming others for this conflict.
- Together agree on naming the problem.



## Step 5. Brainstorm Creative Possibilities

- Try to shift from a "Winners or Losers" to a "Winners and Learners" mindset.
- What are you willing to do to meet each other's needs?
- What next steps can you generate together?
- What next steps seem most workable? Most satisfying?
- Which next steps would improve the relationship?
- If appropriate offer apologies, accept apologies and practise forgiveness.
- **Do you need to involve a mediator as a next step?** If yes, go to Step 6; if not, go to Step 7.



## Step 6. Involving our Parkminster Mediators\*

- Call a mediator to set a time to discuss your situation personally, OR
- If you are both agreeable to mediation then one of you can make the contact with one of the mediators. The mediator must be acceptable to both.
- The mediators are listed below and their contact information is available in the church directory or the church office.
- The mediator will discuss next steps with you.
- Parkminster mediators work in twos, to increase effectiveness of mediation.



## Step 7. Negotiating toward Resolution

- After exploring and discussing your options, agree on solutions that meet both your needs.
- Discuss how and when these solutions will be met.
- Talk about what can be done to prevent this conflict from recurring.
- Agree to check in with each other to ensure that there has been progress in solving the problem.
- If the agreement is not working out, **go back to step one, or consider involving a mediator** (See Step 6).



## Step 8. Acknowledge and Affirm

- Thank each other for meeting over a difficult issue and taking steps to right relationship.

\* **Parkminster Mediators:** Roxy Linkletter, Ted Oldfield, Kathy Shortt, Kevin Smith  
Mediators will work in pairs. The initial mediator will discuss with you which other mediator should be involved.

This document is a work in progress. Suggestions are welcome!

### Sources:

1. The Conflict Resolution Network [www.crnhq.org](http://www.crnhq.org) (Contains a wealth of resources!!!)
2. 5 Steps to Conflict Resolution by Erin Foord, OCDS. [www.ocds.info/conference/ConflictResolution.pdf](http://www.ocds.info/conference/ConflictResolution.pdf)