



# The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church  
Newsletter –  
December 2019

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

## Notes from the Chair

### Traditions: A Steady Hand in a



### Confusing World or Time for a New Twist?

The sun is shining, the sky is blue and the birds are flitting about the

feeder in the backyard. I am grateful for the gift of having a beautiful day at the end of November. As we bid good-bye to November and as our Advent Season approaches, I have been thinking about traditions and the value of traditions in our lives.

I remember the excitement of traveling to our family Christmas: the delicious smell of turkey wafting from the oven, the familiar taste of the dressing (don't mess with the dressing recipe!), the beauty of my grandmother's depression glass bowl holding the creamy mashed potatoes, the noisy buzz of conversation from the adults and peals of laughter from the cousins. I was embraced with a feeling that all was well in the world. What a comfort to know that you are loved and to know you belong. Tradition can bring families and friends together and allow us to create lasting memories.

Advent also comes with many traditions which we celebrate at Parkminster. During this time of preparation and anticipation, we light candles and share the messages of hope, peace, joy, and love for our world.

Every year there is a feeling of excitement when I walk into our Sanctuary all decorated for the Christmas season! Another Parkminster tradition is to buy items for the Parkminster Giving Tree. We live a life of loving influence in the world when we give these donations to "oneROOF" assisting the homeless and at-risk youth. Our annual Longest Night Service provides support for those in our community who are grieving loss. Every year, Parkminster music groups work hard to prepare seasonal music culminating in our One December Night service shared with our neighbouring Bluevale High School Choirs. Traditions give us the flow of rhythm and as we come together in community, the knowledge that we are part of something larger than ourselves, a part of the Divine Mystery.

As society changes and new generations bring new thoughts and ideas, we must constantly evaluate our traditions, deciding which ones help us and which ones don't make sense anymore. What a gift to be open to the creation of new traditions.

Author and lecturer Ardis Whitman wrote, ***"We must cherish our yesterdays, but never carry them as a burden into the future. Each generation must take nourishment from the other and give knowledge to the one that comes after."***

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Image above from the November 3, 2019 service highlighting a wonderful piano duet—Gillian Hobson and Bob Hudgins. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Allan

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## Notes from the Chair continued

I wish you all the best during this Advent and Christmas season as you prepare for and celebrate the birth of Christ and his message of love and compassion. Take some time to reflect with your loved ones on your traditions. Which ones have you carried on from your parents or

grandparents, and which ones have you created yourself or for your own children?

Which traditions contribute to the frenzy of the season and which traditions encourage kindness, community, generosity and empathy?

May you notice the signs of hope, peace, joy and love all around you this season and may you reflect the messages of hope, peace, joy and love through your traditions.

**Kathy Shortt, Chair of Council**

## Message from our Ministers

One of our favourite contemporary preachers and Christian commentators is Nadia Bolz-Weber. Bolz-Weber is a Lutheran from Denver, Colorado. She is known for her bold appearance, tattoos and piercings and down to earth approach to Christianity. She notes that when you look at the scriptures the church has lined up for Advent they aren't exactly in line with the joyous, happy mood of the season portrayed by mass media and encouraged by merchants.

In church, Advent confronts us with portents of the end of the world, John the Baptist raving against religious hypocrites ("you brood of vipers") and God compared to a thief in the night for whom we must be ready. Bolz-Weber is taken by this image of God as a thief in the night and she says, "Maybe the idea of God breaking in and jacking our stuff doesn't have to be heard as bad news...maybe instead of a list of things we want Santa to bring to our house maybe we make Advent lists of what we would really like Jesus to abscond with in the middle of the night."

We're really taken by this as well. Maybe we might ask ourselves this Advent season, "What do I need to let God take from me" instead of "what do I hope to get". What does God need to take from me so that I

can be ready to receive the holy in our world, in my life? What would open me up to God's coming in barely noticeable vulnerability? We think that's a holy question for this Advent season. It's a question that will lead us back to our true selves in the midst of so many competing expectations leading up to Christmas. It's a question that holds the possibility for a deeper connection with the truth of God's presence in our midst. We would encourage you to take up this question and make an Advent list of what you would want God to take from you in the night.

As part of your preparations we invite you as well to experience the season in community, with family, friends, and work colleagues but also as part of the Parkminster faith community. Come and worship on Sundays throughout Advent. If you have children come to the family party on December 7th. Attend the One December Night Concert on December 15th. Finally, be a part of worship on December 24th, either at the family service at 7pm or the Communion service at 10pm. Whatever you do or don't do we want to wish you and your family a blessed Advent and a very Merry Christmas.

**Rev. Heather and Rev. Joe**

## Parkminster's Pride Flag

At Parkminster we fly our Pride Flag with purpose. We fly it because it is a symbol—a symbol of hope, a symbol of safety, a symbol of love, a symbol of inclusive Christianity.

In the past, the United Church has excluded LGBTQ (+) people and now, by flying our Pride Flag, Parkminster makes a public, intentional and explicit statement that we care deeply about justice and full inclusion for all people.

Parkminster is proud to be an affirming community, celebrating and honouring LGBTQ (+) people and we call on society to honour LGBTQ (+) people. Our flag is a public declaration that we welcome everyone to a safe space with love and open minds.

Let's celebrate the fact that all of Waterloo's United Churches share this mission.

**Kathy Shortt**



# Parkminster December Services



## Join us!

Celebrate the season through the month of December. Share music, messages and celebrations as we reflect on the gifts that surround us.

### December 1 – 15 – Giving Tree Gifts

All are invited to bring in unwrapped donations of new socks, mitts/gloves, hats, towels, personal hygiene products and more and place these items under the tree. Items will be donated to our friends at "oneRoof" in support of homeless and at-risk youth. **Check out their wish list for inspiration, [oneroof.org/wishlist/](http://oneroof.org/wishlist/).** Items will be blessed and dedicated on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Sunday, December 1 at 10:00am - Advent 1: Hope

Worship with Communion  
We light the Advent Candle of Hope

### Sunday, December 8 at 10:00am - Advent 2: Peace

We light the Advent Candle of Peace

### Sunday, December 15 at 10:00am - Advent 3: Joy

We light the Advent Candle of Joy

**Christmas Pageant** presented by our Parkminster children/youth  
**Giving Tree Gifts** will be collected, blessed and dedicated during the service.

### Sunday, December 15 at 7:00pm - One December Night

A delightful evening of music showcasing the musical talents of Parkminster and Bluevale Collegiate. Tickets: \$10/person or \$20/family. Tickets are available on Sundays and on the night of the concert.

### Saturday, December 21 at 7:00pm - The Longest Night

For some the Christmas season can bring with it reminders of pain, loss and emptiness. It is helpful to know we are not alone in these times. Please join us at Parkminster to gather in worship, share fellowship, and light a candle acknowledging our grief and loss.

### Sunday, December 22 at 10:00am - Advent 4: Love

We light the Advent Candle of Love

### Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

**7:00pm** – Family service with lots of music

**10:00pm** – Quiet, reflective service with communion, candlelight and carols

## Gifting shares to your congregation

There are lots of pluses when you donate securities (shares, stocks, mutual funds) to your congregation:

- + You don't have to pay capital gains tax on donated shares and units
- + You get a charitable donation tax receipt for the full amount of your gift
- + The ministries you care about receive your generous gift
- + The United Church of Canada Foundation (the Foundation) provides this service at no cost to you or your congregation

### Giving gifts of securities is easy!

1. Complete the Foundation's transfer form
2. Send a copy to the Foundation and a copy to your broker
3. Have your broker initiate the transfer
4. The Foundation receives your gift and sends you a tax receipt
5. The Foundation sends the proceeds of the sale of your gift to the ministry/ministries you indicate on the transfer form
6. That's it!

### For more information:

Web <http://bit.ly/giftofstock>  
Call 1-866-340-8223  
Email [fdn@united-church.ca](mailto:fdn@united-church.ca)

