



The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter –
December 2020

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

IN THIS ISSUE

Cover photo courtesy of Jim Bowman

Notes from the Chair



“Hope is a star that shines in the night, Leading us on till the morning is bright. When God is a child there’s joy in our song. The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, And none shall be afraid.”

Welcome to Advent, the four-week season leading up to Christmas. The season where we prepare and wait. One of my favourite Advent traditions at Parkminster is the lighting of our Advent candles, the candles of HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE.

As I write this article, we are focusing on the message of our first candle, the candle of hope. But how do we find hope and where do we look for hope as COVID-19 case counts in Waterloo Region continue to rise, the bleak weather of winter falls upon us, the vaccines are months away and gathering with loved ones during the Christmas season may be next to impossible?

Hope came to me in a phone call to Ted’s 95-year-old Aunt Agnes, who lives alone in a retirement home in New Brunswick. We often enjoy conversations with Aunt Agnes on our way home from the cottage.

Aunt Agnes is always up to date on current affairs and last night was no exception. She asked us about the anti-mask demonstration that was held in Waterloo on Saturday. We told her that luckily it was smaller than anticipated, but we had difficulty understanding how people could so selfishly risk the lives of others. Aunt Agnes simply replied, “It appears that a lot of people are sitting on their brains these days!” and we all broke into a delightful, hearty laugh.

Agnes went on to say that it now appeared that she would be spending Christmas alone due to a lockdown in the retirement home. I expressed my horror. Without missing a beat, she responded that we just have to make the best of it because we can’t change it. Agnes then went on to express gratitude for a small Christmas tree that her son had dropped off. She thought she had thrown the tree out when she moved, but her son had kept it and this tree was now bringing her so much joy.

Aunt Agnes brings me the lessons of HOPE, the lessons of how to be hopeful during the pandemic. She brings her best self to every relationship, to every interaction. She finds the joy and fun in every moment, even when there is no finish line in sight.

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Notes from the Chair continued

In Parkminster's Listening for God group, we have enjoyed discussing books by Anne Lamott so I was delighted to find an article of Anne's, Celebrating in the Pandemic, in the December issue of National Geographic. Anne writes that our world may feel broken during the time of COVID-19, especially as holy days arrive. We long for our beloved communities, our families, the sacred stillness of the church. But if broken is what we've got, where do we begin the repairs? Anne says perhaps that means finding what is sacred and holy amid the loss. Holy doesn't come only from the divine, it's woven through life. It

is often felt in the small graces and blessings. It's around us, above us, below us, and inside us all time. It's here, but often we're not.

So, as we move through this Advent season, may we keep alert and awake, listening and looking for the voice of hope in our everyday moments. Perhaps we can even be the voice of hope as we bring our best selves forward to every relationship, to every interaction.

Kathy Shortt, Chair of Council

Message from our Ministers

Well, if the Prime Minister can use such language we feel emboldened to follow in his footsteps — this sucks. This sucks in so many ways. Most of it has to do with the lack of in-person social interaction, everything from church services, to work parties, to Santa Claus parades, to extended family gatherings. We shouldn't make light of this pain or attempt to side step it for it will cover the season with a veneer of insincerity. Joy only comes in facing reality head on and finding grace in the midst of it.

It seems to us that's an approach that is very much in sync with the scriptural witness. There is after all an entire book of the Bible called "Lamentations". The people of God don't shirk from reality. But, the people of God also know that part of reality is that God is at work in the world and thus we are to seek grace in the midst of travail.

Isn't that the Christmas story, a baby born to poor parents among the animals under the yoke of empire, visited by those considered riff raff (shepherds) and foreigners? Into this pain and oppression God makes an appearance, moving the story from the weight of loss to the hope of possibility.

And so too, God makes an appearance even in this time. Even though there is considerable grief about physically distanced celebrations of Advent and Christmas, such clarity allows us to move from the weight of that loss to the hope of possibility — from lament to creativity. As we imagine what Advent and Christmas online can look like, we can harness the imagination of this congregation. As we write this message, folks from Parkminster are creatively engaging in the familiar Christmas story as we bring a virtual pageant to life for the first time!

Our prayer for all of us who are in lament, in grief is that we may seek and find grace. Let's keep our eyes peeled and our hearts open to the ways God is seeking to be born in the midst of our COVID lives this Advent and Christmas.

Please join us every Sunday for our regular Sunday worship where we'll have the Advent candles lit from people's homes.

On the **Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 20th)** we'll present our virtual Christmas pageant featuring Parkminster families.

On **Monday the 21st (Winter Solstice)** we'll have a virtual Longest Night Service at 7pm. If you're grieving and lamenting this year for whatever reason, join us for some company, some reflections and hopefully some comfort.

For **Christmas worship** we'll be producing a pre-recorded service suitable for families and children. This will allow young families to watch and worship together on Christmas Eve (or at another time) when it works best for their schedules.

On **December 24th at 8pm** we'll host a live Christmas Eve worship service with Communion.

If we may borrow from another well-known Christmas story with apologies to Dr. Seuss:

**COVID HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming! IT CAME!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!
And the virus, with it's grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,
Stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so?"
"It came without gatherings! It came without hugs!"
"It came without sanctuaries, coffee time or mugs!"
And COVID puzzled three hours, till its puzzler was sore.
Then COVID thought of something that made its gut lurch!
"Maybe Christmas," it thought, "doesn't just happen inside
a church."
"Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"
And what happened then? Well...at Parkminster they say,
the peoples' hearts swelled three sizes that day!**

Advent and Christmas blessings to you and yours,

Rev. Heather and Rev. Joe

Inclusive's New Task

Inclusive Ministries heard the call to become mindful of our role in systemic racism and to figure out how we can improve that wrong within our lives. It is not easy because we do not have any rule books or guidelines. We are feeling our way. For some of us, it has been a surprise to learn that we contribute to this injustice just because we are white folks accepting the world that we were brought up in.

Inclusive Ministries is working to provide opportunities for Parkminster members to learn more about racial justice — and, in particular, to help white members to be mindful of the world that our racialized brothers and sisters live in.

In October, under the umbrella of Inclusive Ministries, Fred Monteith hosted workshops focussing on white privilege. In November, Inclusive held a pop-up discussion talking about the article,

What I Need from White People by Adele Halliday found in the September edition of Broadview. Adrienne Barrett Hofman hosted and seven people attended. The discussion was plentiful and thought provoking. We are hopeful that you will consider joining one of these future discussions as it might give you something to think about, or, you might have a perspective that helps someone else think.

Adrienne is a new member on our Inclusive team. She is full of ideas and helps us find a way to move forward in this work. We are grateful for her leadership and enthusiasm. Remember, we are figuring all of this out as we go, and we would be really pleased if you would be willing to stumble along with us, as we support our solidarity statement with the Black Lives Movement.

Submitted by Liz Forde

Fall at Parkminster



Here's a big shout out to Parkminster volunteers who spent a good part of Saturday, November 7th on leaf removal. We thought you'd be interested in seeing the massive amount of leaves and pine needles readied for removal by City crews.



Sincere thanks to Bert Blackburn and his team, including Bud Adams, Jim Bowman, Mark Dunbar, Marilyn Hill, Bob Hudgins, Rob MacQueen, Ginny McQuay, Jesse McQuay, Barb Monteith, Karen Quehl, Terry Ridgway, Kathy Shortt...along with Glenn Harper, Peter and Mary McLean, the Parkminster youth group and a Bluevale highschool student who spent time raking leaves in the weeks prior to November 7th.

Photos and article submitted by Jack Reynolds

Highlights from Parkminster's Early Years

The dream of starting a new church was discussed over coffee in the homes of many of our charter members before the plan finally came to fruition in 1958.

Services were held from 1958 to 1960 at Harold Wagner School. A retired Minister from Trinity United preached the first service on April 27 and he was amazed to find that there were no Bibles for him to use. He solved the problem by reciting the scriptures from memory.

The first full-time minister was Rev. Sam Soper, a retired missionary who had served in China. He received a salary of \$2,550 and a rented bungalow at 235 Erb Street East. He refused to call it 'his house', and insisted it be called the 'church house'. Committees met there. The choir rehearsed there. Rev. Soper put his energy to work organizing the prospective members and combing the neighbourhoods for new recruits.

Parkminster was the second United Church in Waterloo. Membership at the end of charter year 1958 was 258. 40% came from First United; 40% from Trinity United; and 20% from the nearby community.

The church was built in two stages. The Christian Education Centre, including the gym, kitchen, upper hall and family room (ladies parlour!)

was built in 1960. The sanctuary was built in 1964 and marked the completion of the goal. The Minister was Rev. J.B. Moore.

The building was financed through a \$150,000 mortgage, a bank loan and a Presbytery loan.

People were asked to submit names for the new church, many of which started with Saint (St). "Parkminster" was submitted by John Dinkel. 'Park' signified proximity to Breithaupt Park, and 'minster' for a church of a grand design.

When the move was made to the new building (now the C.E. area, offices, family room and upper hall), an electronic organ was installed.

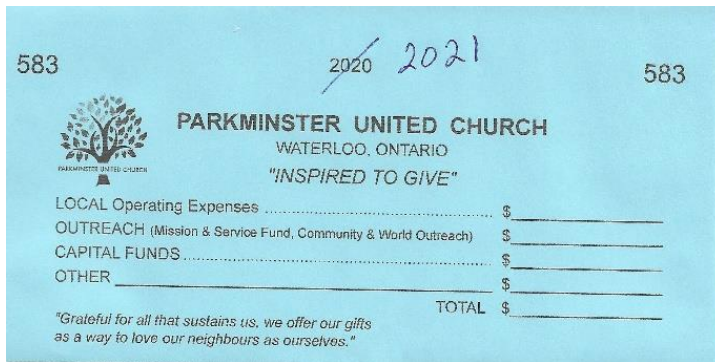
In the early years women always wore hats and gloves to church. Women were known by their husband's name!! Mrs. Howard Campbell and Mrs. Kenneth Eley were Committee Chairmen!!

By 1962, two services (9:30 and 11:00) were being held to attempt an alternative type of worship, and to accommodate the large number of children. By 1964 there were 466 members.

Submitted by Jack Reynolds

2021 Offering Envelopes

2020 was indeed a different year for so many things, even for our offering envelopes. As a result, many of you still have a supply of unused 2020 envelopes. **Please continue to use them in 2021.** Just stroke out 2020 and write in "2021." That avoids the waste and expense of ordering a full supply of new envelopes.



Many people are now using fewer envelopes for a variety of reasons:

- Some have moved to PAR — monthly automatic deductions from your bank account. We urge you to consider that method of giving, just email Asst Treasurer Jack Reynolds at jackr2002@aol.com for information and instructions.
- Many are using e-transfers (see the church website for instructions).
- Some are putting post-dated cheques for the months ahead into one offering envelope.
- Some are mailing their cheque(s) to the church. No offering envelope is needed in that case provided you indicate how you want your offering allocated, i.e. Local, Outreach, Capital, etc. The mail is picked up daily at the church.
- Some make their offerings monthly via Canada Helps (CH charges 3%).

As your Envelope Administrator it is my responsibility to ensure that everyone has the necessary supplies so their offerings can be recorded accurately. This includes assigning envelope numbers and distributing offering envelopes.

I'll provide more envelopes if you let me know you'll be running out. At any time during 2021 if you need more offering envelopes please contact me at budandmarilyn@hotmail.com or 519-746-6282.

Marilyn Hill, Envelope Administrator

The Big Treasure Hunt Fundraiser

Stop the Presses — So far we've raised over \$2,500!



There's still time. Join the Parkminsterites who have had so much fun looking through their jewelry box and drawers for old, unwanted, or damaged gold and sterling silver treasures.

Even the smallest of items are valuable, especially gold.

The treasures we want:

- Items made of 10 to 24 karat gold
- Items made of sterling silver (look for a stamp that says .925 or sterling)
- Foreign money and coins

We cannot accept silver-plate, gold-plate, gold-filled items or costume jewelry.

Parkminster will cash in these items and you will receive an income tax receipt for the dollar amount received. Items in good shape that can be sold as estate jewellery will command a higher price than items that will be melted down.

Once you have your items ready to donate, contact Marilyn Hill 519-746-6282, or at budandmarilyn@hotmail.com.

This is a pretty easy way to financially support the church during this crazy time. If you have any questions or need more clarification please contact Marilyn

Note: This fundraiser was approved by Church Council, May 26, 2020]

Submitted by Marilyn Hill

Book Pick-ups

Physical distancing and personal protective equipment rose to new heights as people rode-by, drove-by, or walked-by to pick up their copy of Parkminster member, Janet Holland's new book "Norway House Recollections, Adventures, Insights".



Nancy Dykstra and Wendy Watson (incognito)

If you would like a copy, contact Janet at hollandwood17@gmail.com and Wendy will happily deliver it.

Photo and article submitted by Wendy Watson

Your Gift of Stock



Did you know, when you donate stocks or mutual funds you do not have to pay capital gains tax; plus you get a charitable donation tax receipt for the full amount of your gift.

Donating stocks and mutual funds is easy!

1. Simply fill out the United Church of Canada Foundation's transfer form and send a copy to the Foundation and a copy to your broker.
2. Have your broker initiate the transfer.
3. The Foundation receives your gift and sends you a tax receipt for the full amount of your gift.
4. The Foundation sends the proceeds of the sale of your gift to the ministry, ministries or charities (one of which must be a United Church) you indicate on the transfer form.

That's it! The Foundation only charges 1.5% (to a maximum of \$250) for this incredible service!

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