

The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter –
June 2021

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

IN THIS ISSUE

Photo courtesy of Jesse McQuay in
Parkminster's Peace Garden.

Notes from the Chair



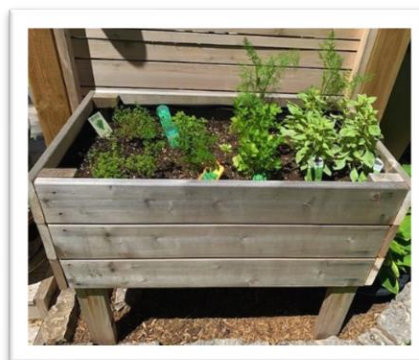
Last year, my partner Lee built me raised garden boxes so I could grow vegetables. While I've tended tomatoes and herbs for years, last

year I filled those boxes with peppers, onions and lettuce. Although I had varying degrees of success, I found much pleasure in the idea of greater self-sufficiency.

Lately, I've been spending every spare moment getting lost in "*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*" by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The book is about the world of botany as described and explored through Indigenous traditions. Kimmerer shares stories of her personal experiences working with plants and learning to become reunited with her own people's cultural traditions. It is a book filled with beautiful reflections, including those about her own vegetable gardens. As I read, I learn more about Kimmerer's Indigenous culture, her immense gratitude for Mother Earth and reverence for all living things.

The book's revelations have increased my awe in nature and have given me a view into a rich Indigenous way of being where there are layers of meaning and beauty. It has caused me to ask myself how I can incorporate a similar respect into my own relationship with nature, including my gardens.

This year, I give thanks for the soil, water and sun that help my little tomatoes, peppers, onions and herbs grow. I tend the plants with more attention and care, grateful for their sturdiness and near visible growth. I acknowledge the miracle of blossoms that will turn into produce in a short time. And when I harvest, I will be sure to again, thank the Creator for blessing me with the bounty of Mother Earth.



Jennifer Allan, Chair of Council

Message from our Ministers

Look ahead to a summer of abundance.

Page 2

Sisters: Ruth and Pat

Learn a bit about two Parkminster members.

Page 2

Peace at Parkminster

View photos of this ministry of remembrance and love.

Page 3

Message from our Ministers

"Where I live, summer's keynote is abundance. The forests fill with undergrowth, the trees with fruit, the meadows with wildflowers and grasses, the fields with wheat and corn, the gardens with zucchini, and the yards with weeds.... summer is a steady state of plenty, a green and amber muchness that feeds us on more levels than we know..."

Summer is the season when all the promissory notes of autumn and winter and spring come due, and each year the debts are repaid with compound interest. In summer it is hard to remember that we had ever doubted the natural process, had ever ceded death the last word, had ever lost faith in the powers of new life. "

Parker Palmer, *Seasons*, The Fetzer Institute, pp. 23 & 26

Following a time of great social scarcity there is hope for a summer of abundance. Vaccines are filling me with anticipation for a summer abundant in backyard BBQs and hugs. Thank goodness for it. I've been feeling run down emotionally and spiritually by these fifteen months. We all have, to greater or lesser extents. As Palmer says, in the depth of our

exhaustion it can be hard to embrace the promise of renewal and re-birth even though we know it will come. It has come, even if slowly and cautiously.

I don't have anything very profound to say, as I mentioned, I'm tired. As much as you can, live into the abundance of this summer, this vaccine summer. Sit in the sun or the shade, go for bike rides and canoe trips, dig in the garden, go for a swim. Revel in the gaudy abundance of summer. Have people over for dinner outside, meet a friend for a coffee on a patio, go for walks together, hug your parents or grandparents if you have them or anyone else who feels comfortable with your touch. Let that companionship feed and fill the emptiness we have felt for so long. Amid your satisfied longing and summer enjoyment remember to stop and take it all in as gift and grace, be grateful. Gratitude will keep God at the centre and pull you deeper into communion with the Source of life and indeed life itself.

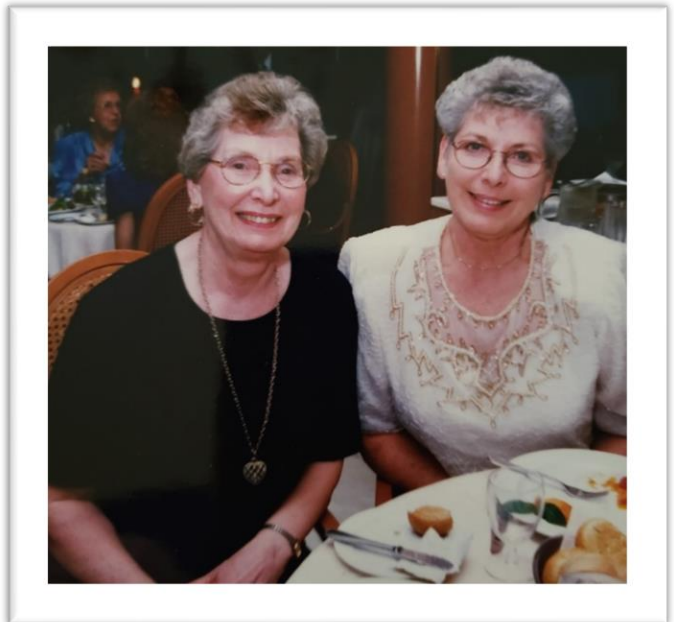
Reverend Joe

Sisters: Pat and Ruth

Each person at Parkminster has their own story. Every person's story is unique and interesting. Trouble is we usually don't know those stories...we often don't know much about those sitting beside us in church or serving together on the same committee.

So, here's another in our periodic storytelling about those among us at Parkminster. This is the story of two sisters, Ruth Farley and Pat Harris. Born in Kincardine in 1932 and 1935 respectively. Ruth was the second youngest of five children, and Pat the youngest. Their Dad worked in a number of different businesses, including ownership of a hardware store in Tiverton (eight kms from the present nuclear site now at Douglas Point). Teachers were in short supply in those days. So much so that their Mother went to Sauble Beach at age 14 or 15, with no teacher training, to teach in a one-room school. She later finished high school in Owen Sound and went on to Toronto to finish her education so that she could teach high school. Quite an accomplishment in those days! Ruth and Pat obviously inherited her tenacity.

In 1939 the family moved to Port Elgin to live with Grandma — their Mom's mother, recently widowed at the time and not able to maintain a very large home on her own. Then in 1942, when Grandma needed more care, the family moved to Owen Sound. Those were the war years. That meant rationing for the family...with ration coupon books provided according to family size to purchase things like gas, sugar, butter, meat, etc. Families sometimes traded coupons with other families, depending on what they needed and didn't need. By today's standards, times were tough, but it didn't seem so at the time. The girls recall that the nearby town of Meaford took over a large number of farms for use as a range for testing armaments. It was known as the Meaford Tank Range. When VE day (Victory in Europe) was announced in May, 1945...factory sirens, whistles and bells blew all over town to let everyone know and to celebrate the end of the war. Ruth remembers that one boy ran out of the classroom and took the rest of the day off. Then everybody got the rest of the day off.



Ruth and Pat enjoying time together on a cruise

Growing up, the girls were very actively involved at Knox United Church in Owen Sound...Sunday school in the afternoon (no shopping on Sundays in those days), singing in the choir; both in Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT). They were also very active in school sports... good basketball and softball players; Pat pitched (underhand in those days, not today's windmill style). With school ball diamonds a half a block away in either direction, kids headed there in the evenings to play ball. Living near Lake Huron meant lots of time at the beach, and Ruth often sat on the hill watching the horse races at the track on the fair grounds. Winters meant sledding down the hills that they lived on. With Methodist

parents, Sundays meant absolutely no activities other than reading or going for a walk.

One of Ruth's favourite teachers was Mrs. Cole, in grade five. Every Friday she spent the last quarter of the day reading to the class. That sparked a lifetime of reading enjoyment for Ruth. Also on Fridays, local ministers came to the school to teach religious education. The school principal was of course a male. Most of the teachers in the elementary system were women in those days.

Their high school in Owen Sound offered industrial, commercial and regular streams. Ruth and Pat were in the regular stream. Math was Ruth's favourite subject, along with Phys Ed. Career choices for girls in those days were secretarial/office work, nursing, retail work, or teaching. It was in grade 12 that Ruth decided to go into teaching. Not surprising with her mother and an older sister teaching, but as well there was a real shortage of teachers.

After grade 13, Ruth headed for a year at Normal School in Stratford, so named because it was a place where teachers were educated to teach 'norms' as far as education was concerned. School boards came to Stratford to recruit. Ruth took a position in Hamilton. Her sister had taught there and so did a girlfriend. She taught grades 4-5; thereafter she always taught the younger kids. When she married a fellow teacher, they moved to Kitchener and then taught here for three years. However, KW school board policy in those days limited married female teachers to teach only three years, which meant an end to Ruth's teaching at that point. Teachers had obviously become more plentiful. Ruth returned to teaching some years later.

Unlike Ruth, Pat knew early on she wanted to be a nurse. After graduating from grade 13 in 1954, she and a classmate headed off for three years of training at Toronto East General. She specialized in obstetrics, and stayed on there in her first nursing position. Along the way, as a student nurse, she also spent time at other Toronto hospitals...Weston (in those days caring for patients with tuberculosis), 99 Queen Street (a "mental" hospital), and Sick Kids Hospital. By 1965, Pat had married Ted, her high school sweetheart; they moved to KW, and began then to attend Parkminster United Church.

Ted, an engineering grad from Queens University, got a position at Sutherland & Schultz; then moved to the firm that built the Toyota plant in Cambridge, and finished his career at Stantec. Pat continued in nursing at KW Hospital. Although normally assisting with the delivery of babies, she did play a more major role on one occasion when the patient didn't get to the delivery room fast enough. Pat loved nursing and along the way made lots of friends. Her nursing class of 72 students remains connected, as nurses seem to do, with regular reunions.

After retiring from teaching, Ruth and her husband moved to Orillia, and then to a farm outside Harriston. Ruth later came back to KW. Their children are now living in KW, Port Severn and St. Clements.

Pat and Ted joined Parkminster soon after arriving in KW in 1965. When they first arrived, there were two services on Sunday. Ted brought the kids to the early service for Sunday School, and then Pat came for the second service so she could sing in the choir. Lots of young families attended in those days. Pat and Ted have three children, two living in KW and one in Aurora.

After moving to Kitchener, Ruth didn't originally come to Parkminster. That happened in 1995, after first attending two other local churches. Over the years, she and Pat have served on almost every committee in the church, were very active in UCW (United Church Women), Pat was a CGIT leader, and both continue to be involved in the life and work of Parkminster. They cherish their many friendships here.

Both say that retired life is good. Time with family, dinners and bridge with friends, and travel (including cruises and many trips to Portugal with other Parkminsterites). However, life during the pandemic has, in Ruth's words, been 'different'. It means seeing little of family; missing time with friends; yet not such a dramatic effect as it has had on younger people. Being avid Toronto Blue Jay fans certainly helps...maybe all the way through to October this year.

Hats off to Ruth and Pat for their many years of contribution and caring at Parkminster. And as radio broadcaster Paul Harvey used to say, 'now you know the rest of the story'.

Submitted by Jack Reynolds

Peace at Parkminster

The Pastoral Care Committee plants bulbs in Parkminster's Peace Garden in memory of loved ones each year. These photos (courtesy of Ginny and Jesse McQuay) keep their memories alive and dear to our hearts.

