



Photo of Jamie Hofman, Theo, Sadie and Adrienne Barrett-Hofman (L to R).

# The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church  
Newsletter –  
November 2021

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

## Notes from the Chair



For this Special Edition Newsletter, I thank Jack Reynolds for pulling together wonderfully rich content. It gets me excited to enter this

next step of hybrid worship services starting November 14th.

Hybrid services are *integrated*, balancing the personal choices of both those at home and in-sanctuary. Our worship service leaders intend to provide a cohesive service that meets the needs of both... a truly *united* approach. You'll see laptops, cameras and mics. And worship leaders' attention will be shared between in-person and virtual attendees to bring a sense of intimacy to both. We believe this style of service will widen the reach of Parkminster's Sunday worship and ensure we remain relevant in the new hybrid world.

You can expect these things to be consistent with the past:

- Your worship leaders, Reverends Heather and Joe and our Music Director Neil,
- The sanctuary with its beautiful stained-glass window,
- The opportunity to worship in community.

For those attending worship in the sanctuary, here are some things that will be new (for now):

- Arrive at least 15-20 minutes early and be prepared to wait in line. In colder weather you will enter the gym doors to line up.
- You will go through a sign-in, screening and proof of vaccine procedures before entering the main church building.
- Wear your mask and keep it on at all times while in the building (children over 3 years of age must also wear masks).
- Children will be provided with activity packs to use in their pew as there will be not yet be a children's program.
- No congregational singing, paper bulletins, hymnals, pew Bibles, or passed offering plate will occur at this time.
- Soloists will be behind screens.
- Coffee time will be replaced with a social time with interaction with people on Zoom. You are welcome to stay in the sanctuary for this or, make your way out of the building.
- You may be filmed as our service will be broadcast on Zoom, Facebook and videotaped for our website.

For those attending worship via Zoom or Facebook, you will see people in the pews. Otherwise, the experience should be relatively similar to your virtual experience since Thanksgiving. We continue to refine the audio and visual components.

### Pandemic Impact

Read how a number of our members were affected by COVID-19.

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It's important to keep open hearts and minds as we enter this new experience of worship.

We look forward to seeing you in the sanctuary or remotely, whatever is best for you!

Jennifer Allan, Chair of Council

**Please review the "Return to In-Person Worship Safety Plan" for all details. Sent with my November 8<sup>th</sup> email or on the Parkminster web site.**

# Pandemic Impact—how did it affect you?

We asked a random sample of Parkminster members how the pandemic had affected them; what interesting or different activities they had pursued during that time; how it feels to be returning to worship in the sanctuary; what lasting effect it will have on people; what learnings come from it; etc. And here's what people said:

"This has been a difficult time, yet also a time of great blessing. I have had the love of family and the support of many friends during a time of great loss. Other than meeting for a few minutes in the parking lot every two weeks to provide for A Better Tent City, Parkminster, usually a vibrant, caring community, has been a building to drive past! I can hardly wait to enter that building and gaze at the cross hanging in front of the tall stained glass window!"

"With respect to my work, it means many more Zoom meetings, but I was probably more productive because of them. With respect to being aware of the pandemic, I have become a compulsive hand washer and most careful to protect those around me by masking and distancing. With respect to fitness, I did miss the gym and have put on weight."

"My main goal has been to be kind, and to keep relationships as a priority throughout the pandemic. I have found as time goes on that I reach out to fewer people through emails, zoom and phone calls, as those relationships sadly feel more distanced. Walk! As things have opened up we continue to walk rather than drive to many places, so that is good! I am knitting a temperature blanket which has been very therapeutic; check the previous day temperature each morning and knit one row each day in a colour coded yarn. I can hardly wait to return to in-person worship! It is great that worship can continue online for those are unable to attend in person, but for me, church is the people and I am anxious to return and see everyone through our masks. My personal opinion is that COVID in some way or another is here to stay and we as church, and as society, can and must learn to live safely with it. November 14th can't come soon enough for me! I worry about the lasting affects for people who are finding it difficult to return to a normalcy and that isolation will take its toll. I worry about the many who have fallen through the cracks throughout this pandemic, such as school age children without support systems in place at home. What have I learned? I think I value what I have in life more now. I have often said that if I must live through a worldwide pandemic how lucky I was to be healthy, in my current phase of life and with a loving partner. My heart has ached throughout for those who live in long term care, for health care workers, for children and their young parents, for single people, for essential workers, and for small business owners. My greatest heartache though lies with all those who have lost a loved one during this pandemic. I too lost someone and have felt the immense sorrow of grieving without the in- person support of extended family and friends to surround you. May God Bless You All. Thanks for asking. Very therapeutic for me actually!"

"Although it reminds me of the return to class in elementary school (Okay, Sydney, what did you do over your summer vacation?) it's not a bad thing to think back on how I spent the Great Pandemic Retreat. One way was to reflect for several minutes (and no more) on the fleetingness of life. This cheerless topic then led my partner and me to look at our finances and present several useful chunks to our heirs. They seemed grateful and so did we for the privilege of being able to donate it at all and especially while still alive."

"Since March 2020, I have appreciated the ability to connect with my Parkminster family virtually. Church services have been creative and meaningful. Our virtual coffee times have given me the opportunity to

'meet' more people in the congregation and share some laughs and tears. It has been a gift to connect with those folks that I might not have chatted with in person! I am glad that Parkminster will be holding 'hybrid' services moving forward since my work involves treating immunocompromised patients and I cannot risk their health and well-being right now. Thanks to our leadership team who have identified that there are some people who will benefit from ongoing virtual services. We are drawing the circle wide!"

"I really missed the comfort of coming and going, visiting family and friends, the camaraderie of our book clubs and sharing stories. The garden provided a space to recharge and fill the loneliness after months of lockdowns. And I found a real zest for "spring cleaning" throughout all the seasons - both inside the house and out. No job was too large, and many trips to the ReStore and Thrift on Kent followed. There was no substitute for the human touch, a hug or a gentle touch. That was by far the most significant loss in the pandemic."

"I think that with the passage of time, we will all find that the pandemic was very painful in ways that were not immediately obvious. Weddings that had to be delayed, only to find that elderly relatives could no longer make it due to failing health. Serious medical procedures that had to be endured alone because support people were not permitted in hospital. Grandparents unable to be partake in first birthdays of grandchildren. That kind of thing. I do not see the work world returning to business as usual. The pandemic made clear that many work meetings can be conducted just as effectively virtually. There is still a place for face-to-face meetings, but the benefits of conducting routine meetings online are many, including people being able to give their car a rest. My guess is that the majority of my workplace meetings will now take place virtually."

"Missed having friends and family into our home for 19 months – that's too long without hugs from children and grandchildren. Missed the ease with which we used to grocery shop and attend worship services. We missed getting together with our church community. Have been disappointed with all the misinformation and outright deception that has been perpetrated by persons posting on the internet. Played a lot of scrabble, put together several 1000 piece puzzles, and did a lot of knitting – plus enjoyed several outdoor "porch visits" with friends. Missed attending concerts, theatre productions, sports events. Got sick and tired of watching the TV news repeating the same information over and over. Appreciated several cards and friendly greetings from Virginia McQuay – the card ministry is a great feature of Parkminster."

"Enjoyed and appreciated nature so much. Appreciated meeting and having conversations with folks on my walks that were unfamiliar to me. Cut down on my use of fossil fuel. Became acutely aware of the reality of the needs of vulnerable people in our community, country, and world. Enjoyed my garden and the ability to grow some of our own food. I am hoping we all can respond as quickly to climate change as we responded to the Covid pandemic."

[See more comments on page 4.](#)

# Getting to know...

## Adrienne Barrett-Hofman and Jamie Hofman

This is the story of two quite exceptional people who joined Parkminster in 2015. Adrienne grew up in Mono Mills and the Hockley Valley area. Her Mom and Dad had a hobby farm there, raising goats and chickens. She spent several hours a day on the school bus, along with her three younger sisters, travelling to schools in Caledon, Mayfield, Bramalea and Orangeville. She then went on to Trent University in Peterborough, majoring in cultural studies. Since her Dad had a PhD in Nuclear Physics she felt badly about not having any interest in math or science courses. However, her Dad wisely urged his girls, "Take what you're interested in."

Following Trent, she headed out West, to get her Master's degree in creative writing at the University of British Columbia. Since then, she has published a book of poetry in 2014 entitled *The House Is Still Standing*; wrote a text book on masonry, now used by Conestoga College and other masonry schools across Canada; and has held a number of other writing positions.

Jamie grew up in Oshawa. His high school had a strong choral program, and he says he owes that program for getting him through high school and influencing the course of his life. He wasn't keen to go on to university. He wanted to get a job and be independent. He worked as a baker and also for his father who owned a printing business. Jamie's Dad wanted him to stay with him in the business, but music kept pulling him away. His Mother valued music, and he grew up taking music lessons and loved singing. He eventually decided to move to Toronto, going whole hog into the music business. But making a living as a musician isn't easy. While performing in theatre musicals, with several rock bands, and doing section lead jobs with choirs, he also worked as a waiter, theatre usher, bartender and in a grocery store. Ah, the life of a musician!

He eventually decided to go back to school, and entered the music program at York University in Toronto. As opposed to the music program at U of T, which Jamie laughingly says was aimed at preparing students to be first chair in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, York appealed him because it was much more open to different types of music. While there, Jamie served as a choral scholar in churches.

Meanwhile, Adrienne came back from B.C. and worked as a proof-reader for the *Auto Trader* magazine, did some freelance and ghost writing, wrote magazine columns, proofed ads, and wrote advertorials for home magazines. Although comfortable and well paid in that role, at age 30 she one day realized, "uh-oh - is this what I want the rest of my life to look like?" Although she still wanted to write, she decided it would be nice to work outside, doing something physical. In the midst of laying out a newswire story on the shortage of bricklayers, she decided to call the number in the article advertising the Ontario Masonry Training Centre in Mississauga, and enrolled in their program.

Not surprisingly, in a male dominated trade, she was the only girl in her class, and she was feeling rather terrified. It was a two-month course, followed by an apprenticeship in Toronto...surely one of a small number of female bricklayers in Canada! But there are others. Adrienne says, "I have met other women masons in Canada, and was lucky enough to help teach two of them in the K-W area."

It was there, in Toronto, that the girl from Mono Mills met the boy from Oshawa. They were attending the same church, and both sang in the

choir. Sitting at opposite ends, and secretly gazing longingly at each other. They began dating in 2006, and marriage followed in 2007.

After starting a family, they decided that it would be more affordable to move to Woodstock, where Jamie's sister lived, and buy a home there. It was a great change, but a bit unnerving, moving from a condo in Toronto to a century home in a small rural town. When they walked in the door on moving day, they looked at one another and said, "What have we done!"

Jamie got a job as a substitute teacher with the Thames Valley School Board, leading eventually to a permanent role as a music teacher in Innerkip. He plays guitar, piano, bass guitar and, with some lesser ability he says, wind instruments.

An interesting aside re Jamie...in his last year of university, Jamie was hired by Canadian composer Peter Hatch to perform at a festival called *New Adventures in Sound Art* in Toronto. The plan was for one weekend of singing on the Toronto Island in a flash mob style. Up to four singers would converge on an area using various props and gimmicks, and spontaneously perform short compositions designed to surprise, entertain, and stimulate discussion about our urban soundscapes. Most unsuspecting passersby were delighted, but the performances also allowed for people to chuckle, ignore or, in some rare cases, be offended for being subjected to a performance without notice! Amazingly, this job continued for the next 10 years, until 2018. The group (with various cast members) performed at the Junction Arts Festival in Toronto, The Stratford Summer Music Festival, Open Ears Festival in Kitchener, and *Escale Improbale* in Montreal.

While living in Woodstock, Adrienne decided to return to work, learned of a summer position teaching masonry at Conestoga College, and began teaching there in 2013. A couple of years later they decided they wanted a new home and opted to move to Waterloo. Jamie continues to commute to Innerkip.

It was while she was at home with the kids that Adrienne wrote the textbook on masonry. She has now been teaching for a number of years, all of the various levels of masonry courses that the College offers...some students are just out of high school, some have come back to learn a trade, and there is a growing number of international students.

Jamie and Adrienne have two children, Theo age 11 and Sadie age 13. As with all families, the pandemic has been hard, missing time with other people. Yet they feel they are among the luckiest of people...a happy family, a big back yard, trails to hike, and a Toronto Blue Jay baseball team performing well that Jamie loves to watch.

After moving to Waterloo, they briefly attended other United churches, but a friend in Woodstock had told them they should try Parkminster. They were struck by Parkminster's welcoming statement and Neil's music program. They are now very much a part of the caring and welcoming community we have at Parkminster. Adrienne serves on the Inclusive Committee, Jamie performs with the band, they are assisting with resettlement efforts for Siham and her family, and their children are in the youth program.

Jamie, Adrienne, Sadie and Theo, we're glad to have you at Parkminster.

# Pandemic Impact continued

"I worked from home, then did a half-time arrangement where I was at work and at home. I've been fully back in the office since last February. I used my computer to record and send videos for choir and used Zoom and still use MS Teams a lot. So living my life over the computer has been essential. My workload is crazy and seems at times to eclipse my home life. Harder to disconnect from it. I am actually finding it difficult to return to in person activities in situations other than work and sometimes feel overwhelmed. As well, I've had no time to pursue other activities, except perhaps more camping instead of travel for vacations and dabbling in water colour painting. Realize now that I need to work on recentering myself and think about my direction moving forward."

"So, how did the Pandemic affect us? It was lonely, it was frightening, it was depressing. Returning to the Sanctuary--although so looking forward to it, I have questions. Is it truly safe. How do we greet, do we wave at each other. Will we be able to sing. Will the pandemic have a lasting effect-- yes, yes, yes especially for those 40 and up. Younger ones will remember but carry on with their goals in life, even if they have been changed."

"Regarding our return to Worship--we are a caring faith community that thrives on in-person interaction. Connecting on Zoom is not the same. I look forward to returning to worship in the sanctuary so we will thrive again. What have we learned: I think we have learned that we can do with less; the things that are important cannot be bought; and that the most important people in a pandemic (health care workers, PSW's, grocery clerks) earn the least money."

"I'm afraid that Covid, or the threat of Covid, will be with us for a long time. What a terrible thought. I'm a people person, so I've been depressed at times because we've been so isolated. I really appreciate the many extra hours that Council and the Covid Working Group have put in, and also the massive number of hours that members of the Property Committee devoted to putting the video system in place, doing a major refurbishing of the Family Room, doing repairs to the gym, and tending to all of the normal maintenance and gardening chores. Thank you, thank you."

"I found that with so many activities being curtailed I began to plan more about what each day's routine would be so that I could feel I was accomplishing something. I used the telephone more to keep in touch with family and friends and used zoom to keep in touch visually. As things re-open I feel a little reluctant to participate in person because I'm still aware of precautions and restrictions."

"During COVID I did more phoning and emailing to keep in touch, but I really look forward to interacting with church members in person. Disparities (income, housing, health care needs, etc.) in our own community became even more evident and I hope new, creative changes will be examined as we move forward as an active, caring and evolving congregation."

"I was one of those privileged folks who was able to continue working, almost seamlessly, from home. Just this has brought me to my knees in gratitude, over and over again. I was also moved by the online community that Parkminster was and is becoming. I was in awe of Heather and Joe and Neil's ability to negotiate this new way of 'being church'. 'Where two or three are gathered...the spirit moves -- and, isn't the Spirit sort of 'virtual' in and of itself? When possible, I joined the Parkminster walking group, following distancing and masking rules, but still able to connect with our church family, catch up on family events, share in our combined journeys. I contributed to a few choir pieces, though listening to myself singing alone was a humbling thing indeed. I explored various parts of Ontario, near Waterloo, taking out a membership allowing me to walk various Hamilton Conservation Areas -- what a glorious part of Canada we are so privileged to live within! So, all in all, despite the many challenges, we are coming through this part of the pandemic, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes feeling as though on solid ground. Praise be!"

"We learned how to communicate with ZOOM for bridge games, book groups, meetings, birthdays etc. It was very helpful and in fact we saw more of our distanced relatives because of ZOOM. The more local relatives we actually saw less of. I am hoping we can continue with some level of ZOOM so that folks can work remotely and congregate for meetings, especially in the evening. We learned how to buy groceries and other items on-line..no more standing in line at the cashier. On the other hand, we were not able to have as much help (cleaning staff, PSW's etc) in the house due to the restrictions of COVID 19. People learn that the ability to meet in person is a privilege and should not be taken for granted. I also hope people learn that if you are unwell from a cold or flu, you should stay home so you do not infect others. Also, if you have to go out for essential reasons that it is OK to wear a mask. They have been doing it for a long time in Asia. Our level of anxiety has definitely increased, as it has for many others. The heightened awareness of our surroundings and other persons has been a factor. For others, job and food insecurity have been issues. We have slowly started to meet with others in person. There is a greater sense of spontaneity in the conversation and a better sense of feelings in others when you meet in person."

"By meeting out on the street every night at 7:30 since the pandemic started we've gotten to know our neighbours really well...and laughed (or groaned) at well over 650 jokes!"

"I think I weathered the COVID storm well enough. Last summer, my daughter wanted me to spend as much time as possible in Toronto with them. I managed three trips. We walked every day in a large park, so we all got lots of exercise. Things at Luther Village slowed down---no groups met, so many months we seemed to be unable to congregate, but many of us found the paths at Waterloo Park quite inviting, and in late summer 2020, I bought a very well-used 3-wheeler to use when shopping at Bridgeport Plaza and Waterloo Square; I even took Rosie, the cat (from Pet Patrol) for a couple of bike rides in the back basket. My family has been great. My son and I formed a bubble and ate lunch most Sundays here, or at his house--sure made Sundays special. And when family returned in July from N.Z. after 4 months and were vaccinated, we could all meet----lovely! I think I survived COVID, for sure!"



## In our midst

The Rotary Club of Kitchener-Westmount recently published a book entitled 40 Years of Service Above Self. John Thompson led the rather massive effort to gather the information and finalize the content and design. If you hadn't met John and his wife Brenda at Parkminster before the pandemic, be sure to say hello when things get back to normal. John, retired CEO of KW United Way, a Past President of Kitchener Westmount Rotary, and with a vast number of other major volunteer involvements, has four other publications to his credit—Hockey Night in Mildmay; 100 Years Strong – Intercounty Baseball League; Western Ontario Athletic Association 75th Anniversary; and Z-Man Darren Zack (Darren, a First Nations individual from the Sault Ste. Marie area, was one of the best fastball pitchers in the world).



Brenda and John Thompson

Interestingly, long time Parkminsterites Glen and Claire Machan are featured in the book. Glen served as Club President in 1983-84, and he and Claire are both recipients of the Paul Harris Fellow award which is designed to encourage and recognize outstanding contributions to the work of the Club. Kitchener-Westmount Rotary helped establish and

provides continuing financial support for the Rotary Centre (Kidsability), and Glen served as President of the Centre's Board of Directors.

Glen was President of the Waterloo Rotary Club when efforts began in 1980 to start a new Rotary Club. That happened because people looking to join Rotary weren't able to because applicants had to live within the Club territory and there had to be a free classification open to their vocation. Glen worked with two others to lay out a plan to solve the territory issue with the three existing clubs, and himself moved over to the new club, and later became its President. Over four decades, the Rotary Club of Kitchener-Westmount has provided about \$3 million in grants and donations, with more than one-third of that donated to Kidsability.

Glen and Claire didn't stop there...they advanced the establishment of Probus Clubs in this area, including the first Probus Women's Club...the 7th Probus Club in Canada.

Hat's off to these marvellous community builders in midst!!



Glen and Claire Machan

## Parkminster messages to passersby

If you have driven past the church in recent times, you'll notice some wonderful new comments on the church's sign board at the road. Thousands pass by every week. Parkminster is now giving them a much wider range of thought-provoking messages. Here are just some of them:

- No mask can hide the compassionate heart.
- Truth & Peace is the only way. Love to our Indigenous friends.
- Be the voice of truth and justice. Silence is not an option.
- Together we make a beautiful rainbow.
- Take Time for Yourself. Walk our Outdoor Community Labyrinth. Any time ... Any day.
- Let's Care for Creation Together.



The Parkminster Walking Group on a chilly November 3<sup>rd</sup>.