



The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter – Fall 2022

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

Notes from the Chair



Early November brings with it a time change that – in my opinion – is a mixed blessing. We move from Daylight Saving Time and enjoy an extra hour of sleep as clocks “fall back.” We also enjoy daylight earlier in the morning which provides a bit more “umf” to get our days started. Of course, the downside to Daylight Savings Time is that sunset is also an hour earlier. From now until the winter solstice, our evenings get shorter each day.

At this time of year as the light fades, we can sharpen our focus on our personal North Star – that which helps us navigate in the darkness. One could consider this a set of guideposts to remind us where we’re going, the paths to take, and who is on the journey with us. It includes our friends and family; our faith community; moments of peace with a book or a pet; a walk in nature; or many other things we do to centre and ground ourselves.

As I enter the last few months as Chair of Parkminster’s Council, I am guided by who God is calling us to be and do: an evolving community of faith inspired to embrace our future as we deepen our commitment to each other, nurture our spiritual vitality and growth, and live a life of loving influence in the world. This is the North Star helping me on the journey, and I know I’m not alone.

Jennifer Allan, Chair of Council

Message from our Ministers

Dear Friends,

We are now firmly into the fall season and for the first time in what feels like a very long time, we celebrate a return to many activities and events that we have missed. Our Welcome Back Sunday and BBQ on September 11th sowed seeds of a renewed hope and excitement for this faith community. We worshipped together. We celebrated a return to our weekly in-person children's ministry programming and resumed our tradition of outdoor games and horse rides that morning. We sang. We prayed and played. We ate delicious food. We made new friends and connected with familiar ones. It was a glorious day!

We felt like a cup running over. There have been moments over the last number of months when we wondered if our spiritual cups had a crack in them. Would people ever come back to church? Or was what we knew to be Parkminster, together in one strong body, at an end? Was that chapter of our life as a church over for good? Spoiler alert: NO!

As we have moved into the fall together and seen programs return and flourish, as our work towards becoming an anti-racist church continues, as we continue to focus on outreach, justice, and right relations, as in-person activities for children, youth and families resume, as we connect and care for each other, we celebrate a bigger, more boisterous Body of Christ for the beginning of our program year. Thank you – each of you - for all the ways you have shown up, stepped up, and helped keep this faith community strong over these past couple of years and moving forward.

As we move towards the Advent and Christmas season, we look forward to even more familiar events and activities returning. Please invite friends, neighbours, others to these events and to worship! It might surprise you who is suddenly open to doing a new thing—even a strange thing like church—after what we have collectively been through.

It's been a long pandemic and we know it's not over. As we continue to do all that we can to keep everyone safe, let us also embrace both familiar and new ideas that will shape us as a community this year and beyond.

May God bless us and others in all the work we do together.

Rev. Heather and Rev. Joe

Thanks Parkminster for Supporting the Tabs 4 Wheelchairs Project

Parkminster has been diligently collecting can tabs and I have just delivered this huge collection to the Elora Legion. The aluminum in these tabs is converted into cash and this cash is used to purchase wheelchairs for the disabled. As of September 14, 2022, 2,929 wheelchairs have been given away. Thanks to Parkminster for **seeing** the need, **starting** to collect the tabs and **sending** the tabs to Kathy Shortt for delivery.



Family Halloween Party

After many successful online parties, the Christian Education (CE) Committee was delighted to return to our in-person party events. Over 40 children and adults gathered in the church gym on the evening of Saturday, October 22 for some Halloween fun! We enjoyed dinner together as well as activities and crafts. A spooktacular time was had by all!



ACKKWA Cooking Circle

It is with a sad heart that Inclusive Ministries informs you that the Cooking Circle from ACKKWA has had to stop using our kitchen for their group. A recent inspection of the kitchen by the fire department has severely limited the kitchen's use. Since the Cooking Circle cannot use the stove top to even fry onions and other vegetables for sauces, the group felt that their food would be difficult to prepare. The rule of only using two of the burners also made it feel almost impossible. The group would start their time together eating scrambled eggs but since they are not to use any fat that became a challenge. Cooking Circle has been using the kitchen and gym at Parkminster once a month for many years. The group met to cook a meal, share that meal and then to send leftovers home with the participants so that they got to enjoy another meal at home.

This group enriched my life and I will desperately miss them. Many of the participants are immigrants from Africa and it was wonderful to experience their stories and their food. Others were men native to this area. The group was led by Priscilla Muzura and she sent a letter talking about the role that Parkminster played in the Cooking Circle. If in the future we get the kitchen properly vented so that we can use the stove in a normal way the group would like to return.

The following is part of a letter from Priscilla Muzira, African & Caribbean Strategy Coordinator at ACKKWA; "The AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA) Cooking Circle, provides a time to create friendships, healthy eating habits, as well as, allowing for self development.

ACCKWA is one of 31 AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) supporting people at risk, living with and affected by HIV in Ontario, and a member organization of the Ontario AIDS Network (OAN). ACCKWA works with communities and people who are disproportionately impacted by low socio-economic status, food insecurity and isolation due to HIV stigma

Medical advances mean HIV is no longer a death sentence but a manageable, chronic condition. HIV/AIDS unfortunately remains a taboo topic in many communities. Persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS are often isolated, both physically and emotionally, by a wall of stigma built, in part, by misinformation about the virus and its spread, and misjudgment about the moral integrity of people infected. Stigmatizing attitudes toward HIV-positive people exist within communities based on a range of interrelated assumptions about who gets HIV and why. People identified as HIV-positive are often marked as immoral and a shame to their family and community. As an organization supporting people living with HIV, it is an on-going struggle for us finding welcoming spaces that would accept us without any judgement.

Parkminster United Church is committed and devoted to the role of fighting the stigma and discrimination, and has the courage to speak out against exclusion, and recognize the dignity of all individuals. Connecting with Parkminster and being granted a place to do our monthly Cooking Circle was a blessing, and the Cooking Circle participants looked forward to meeting every month. The Church has been a welcome support for our participants as they work through their daily health challenges. Our Cooking Circle participants always say Parkminster feels like home and appreciate the non-judgemental support we have received from this community."

The Cooking Circle was an event that felt like Parkminster was making a difference in someone's life. Some of the people who attended did not feel well that week but they could still come and participate to the best of their abilities and often by the end of the morning there was a new sparkle in their eyes. For some it was nice to just be out with other people (some live on their own and seem isolated). Participants knew that they were getting a good wholesome, homecooked meal. My role was to make a dessert with them and introduce them to a few Canadian foods. Rhubarb is an example of a food that was new to many of them.

My concern is that we need the kitchen to be in working order with a good venting system so that we can continue to do good work with groups in our community. To this end the Property Committee is pricing upgrades and Bruce Mutton is exploring outside funding opportunities so that in the future we might be able to accommodate groups like the ACCKWA Cooking Circle.

Liz Forde, Inclusive Ministries

Everything You Wanted to Know About a Sabbatical - but were afraid to ask!

On October 25, Council approved Rev. Joe's sabbatical from April 24, 2023 to September 3, 2023. While most of us probably have a vague idea of what a sabbatical is, we might not be completely clear about the purpose behind it. Fortunately, your Ministry & Personnel Committee is here to fill in the gaps!

Sabbatical comes from the word "sabbath", and the biblical roots are foundational to the concept of sabbatical as a time away from the work of ministry. The sabbatical is for learning and renewal through rest, reflection, and recreation. While it developed in religious and educational institutions, it has also been adopted in the business world. For example, KPMG has a policy of a mandatory 4-month sabbatical for senior leaders in the organization. They understand these individuals need a break from the intense focus a leadership position requires, allowing them to return with renewed energy and new ideas.

The United Church of Canada recognizes the importance of the sabbatical and has a policy to ensure it is incorporated into a call to a pastoral charge. Not only is the sabbatical available to ministers, but they are encouraged to make use of this opportunity for revitalization. In a letter this summer about the state of the church in the Western Ontario Waterways region, President Mark Laird noted that *"congregations are weary, and ministry personnel are stressed. It has been over two years of learning: how to do work differently, adjusting on the fly, trying to find the spirit at work, saying goodbye to loved ones in a way that felt different and sometimes without closure."* In conversation with other local churches, M&P has become aware of sabbaticals taking place at the insistence of the congregation, even during the worst of the pandemic. These churches believe in the value of the sabbatical in supporting the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of their ministers.

The M&P Committee will publish more details about the sabbatical as plans are firmed up over the coming months. If you have any questions, contact a member of M&P and we will try to address them in future newsletters.

Rob MacQueen, Jeanne Foster & John Watson, M&P Committee

Highlights of Our Year with Fadi

The Resettlement Committee is pleased to bring you an Update about our friend Fadi whom some of you met when he and his extended family, Khairiya and Yehti, as well as Siham and her children joined us for ice cream after the service in June.

It is hard to believe that it is almost a year since Fadi arrived from Lebanon on December 7, 2021. Fadi lived for parts of the year, with each of his two aunts Khairiya and Siham and is now living independently. Fadi is to be congratulated on all he has accomplished in Canada. He has been employed almost continuously since February. Just imagine going to a new country with a totally different language, alphabet and culture and successfully becoming employed in less than two months!

Part of Fadi's success has been his adept use of technology, to help him communicate and meet his settlement needs. Fadi is currently employed as a chef. He found his current job at Arabesque restaurant without our help! Fadi is also improving his success potential by taking on-line ESL classes.

Jim Bowman has been his primary Parkminster contact and support person. Their relationship is like family. We congratulate Fadi on his efforts and ability to successfully settle in Canada. Like so many newcomers, continuing to build his own social networks will be part of developing a sense of belonging here.

Resettlement Committee

