



The Sunday Plus

Parkminster United Church
Newsletter – February 2023

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. COME SHARE THE JOURNEY

Notes from the Chair



January is often the time of year I set goals and resolutions for the upcoming year. Some years I keep the resolutions and reach my goals, other years I forget about them after a few weeks. This year, instead of setting specific goals, I'm going into 2023 with a focus on a word – my Word of the Year.

This word sums up what I'd like to focus on, what I'd like to improve, and what I need more of in my life. Having a word of the year allows me to set my intentions and provides me with an anchor for the year ahead when making decisions in all aspects of my life.

My word for 2023 is connect. To connect means to bring together into some manner of union. After a couple of years of feeling somewhat disconnected, I want to put energy into building connections with the important people and places in my life. That includes making more profound connections with my family members, friends, colleagues, community, work place, as well as Parkminster, my church.

I look forward to forging deeper connections with individuals at Sunday worship and in Council and Committee meetings. I look forward to connecting with who we are and what God is calling us to be and do.

What's your Word of the Year?

Jennifer Allan, Chair of Council

Message from our Ministers

Dear Friends,

As we welcome in the new year, it's a time for reflection and renewal. As we emerge in fits and starts from the reality of the pandemic, we can be proud of the ways we have adapted as a congregation and the way we've taken care of and supported one another. We are heartened by the fact that more and more people are feeling comfortable resuming in-person worship and activities.

For many of us, a new year is an opportunity to set goals, make resolutions, and commit to making positive changes in our lives. As a community of faith, this can also be a time to consider how we can be more faithful to our values and beliefs. For us, that means striving to live out the teachings of Jesus, which include loving our neighbours, caring for the poor and marginalized, and working for justice and equality.

One way we can do this is by engaging in acts of service and social justice. This is one of the tenets of our vision at Parkminster. The many ways we engage with our local community including working with organizations such as, The Healing of the Seven Generations, House of Friendship, A Better Tent City, Waterloo Wayside, SHOW, as well as our support of the United Church's Mission and Service Fund not only deepens our commitment to one another but also sets the example of living a life of loving influence in the world. As we move into 2023, we remain committed to supporting organizations that work for social change and advocating for policies that align with our values.

Another way we can live out our faith is by being more intentional about how we live our daily lives. This could mean reducing our carbon footprint by using sustainable products and practices, supporting fair trade and ethical consumer choices, and being more mindful of the impact our actions have on others and creation.

At the start of this new year, let's take this opportunity to recommit ourselves to following Jesus and making the world a better place. Let's strive to be the change we wish to see in the world, and work together to create a more just, loving, and compassionate world.

Blessings to you all in the year ahead,

Rev. Heather and Rev. Joe

Mix'n Mingle Social Event

The gym was alive on December 14! Thirty-five gathered together for an afternoon of socializing and music memories. We sang Christmas carols, enjoyed Christmas baking and just generally had a good time together. Special thanks to Bob Hudgins for his superb performance on the piano, and to our very talented singers Delores Benedik and Darlene Basse who lead the carol singing. Thanks also to those who did the baking and donated fruit.





Information about the flag we fly

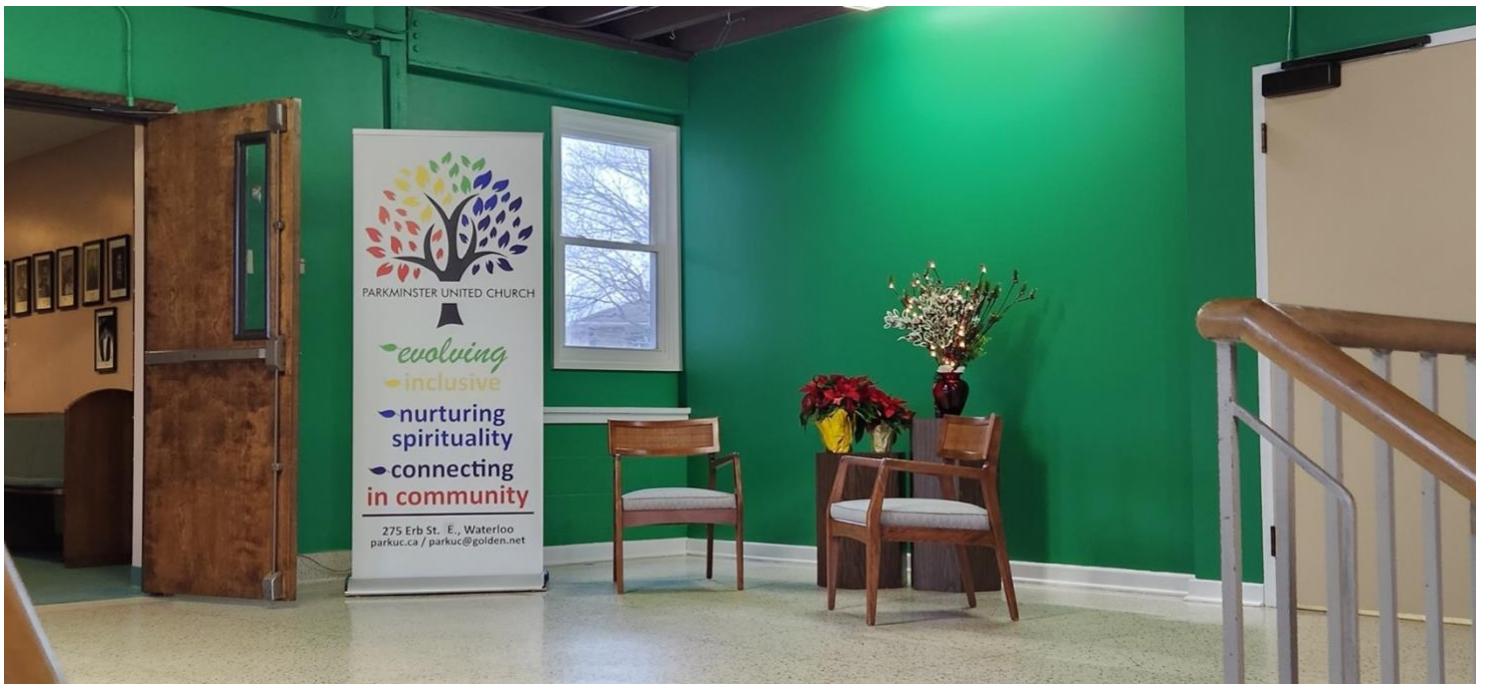
Flags have always been an integral part of the LGBTQ+ movement. They are a visible representation meant to celebrate progress, advocate for representation and amplify the demand and drive for collective action. Many years ago Inclusive Ministries raised funds to get money to pay for the rainbow flag, the flag pole and the installation of the pole.

About a year ago Parkminster switched the traditional rainbow flag to the Progress Pride flag that was created in 2018 by nonbinary artist Daniel Quasar. This flag has the iconic 1978 rainbow flag along with stripes of black and brown to represent marginalized LGBTQ+ people of color. The triad of blue, pink and white is from the Trans flag which is a five striped pink, blue and white flag. This design which we are flying is meant to represent diversity and inclusion. All are welcome.



A Vote of Thanks

Many will not be aware of the hundreds of hours of volunteer time put in by members of the Property Committee (Bud Adams, Bert Blackburn, Mark Dunbar, Peter McLean, Ginny McQuay, Terry Ridgway, Rob Yorke) and honorary members Andrea Gaspar, Melanie Chisholm and Rob MacQueen. Their work included a major redo of the Family Room (new floor, new furniture and decor, and repainted); painting the Upper Hall and adjacent hallway; stripping and rewaxing the floors in the double classroom and corner classroom (with gym floor to be done after Christmas; and cleaning graffiti off two outside walls (still in progress). Along with that, Ginny spends countless hours keeping the church gardens beautiful; Bud keeps the grass cut and weeds under control; Rob Yorke provides IT support for church computers; Marilyn Hill and helpers mulched the labyrinth; and Terry, Mark and Bert have worked extensively with Soundco to upgrade our a/v system. What an amazing team, to whom we're very grateful.



News from the Ministry & Personnel Committee

As many of you know, Allen Switzer retired at the end of 2022. Ministry & Personnel interviewed several candidates and were pleased to offer Linda Rempel the Custodian position beginning January 3, 2023. Linda will be working from 12-4 pm, Monday to Friday.

Linda was born in Waterloo and has lived here all her life, attending the former Alexandra Public School and KCI for high school. Her family has deep roots in the Mennonite community and Linda still feels a strong connection to that tradition.

Linda currently lives in Waterloo with her son Noah, 19, and daughter Hannah, 17. Noah is in the Culinary Management program at the Waterloo campus of Conestoga College. Hannah is in grade 12 at KCI and has applied to the Bachelor of Illustration program at Sheridan College. She has an interest in Art Therapy as a possible career.

Working at Menno Homes in the mornings and Parkminster in the afternoons keeps Linda quite busy. She does enjoy crafts and crocheting when she is able to find time. She also likes to read life-affirming books and posts, as she feels there is enough negativity in the world already.

Linda describes herself as a “friendly introvert”. While she looks forward to meeting more Parkminster members, she warns it will be some time before she will remember all those names. 😊

Welcome to Parkminster, Linda!



Prayer Shawls

2018 marked 20 years for the Prayer Shawl Ministry, founded in 1998 by Janet Severi Bristow and Victoria Galo. The two met while attending Women's Leadership Institute at the Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. They joined together with the idea of combining a love of knitting and crocheting with the desire to reach out to those in need of comfort as well as joy.

I first learned about Prayer Shawls from my friend Eva Martin, and was immediately intrigued. As a member of my congregation's Pastoral Care Committee, I felt the Prayer Shawl Ministry could enhance my contribution to the work of that committee.

Eva described the pattern her congregation was using to create the Prayer Shawls, and I began knitting. While attending a Five Oaks Memoir Writing Workshop, a member of the group was diagnosed with cancer, and I wanted to present her with a Prayer Shawl at our next meeting. I had a huge amount of yarn given to me by well-meaning people who thought I could use it for rug hooking. I almost exclusively use wool fabric for rug hooking, so the bags of yarn waited for me to find another use for them. I worked feverishly to finish it in time. When I finally wrapped the Shawl around her shoulders and read the prayer of giving, she was overwhelmed. She wore the Prayer Shawl to all our workshop sessions, and other writers were interested and asked for the pattern and a copy of the prayer. And I witnessed the rippling effect of the Prayer Shawl Ministry happening before my eyes.

Following my first experience with creating a Prayer Shawl, Eva and I went together to shop for yarn. I recall us both being somewhat unsure about how bold we should be with our choice of colour and, somewhat unimaginatively, we both chose grey. When Eva completed hers, she gave it to me as a Christmas gift. It was the first Prayer Shawl she had made and, as she gave it to me, she apologized for all the mistakes she had made. But apologies are never needed with a Prayer Shawl. The love and care knitted into every stitch is what counts. It's the love and care that creates the rippling effect that causes this ministry to multiply.

In 2006, when I introduced the idea of Prayer Shawls to Parkminster as part of the Time and Talents program within the congregation, I used my Prayer Shawl for its visual effect. Because I was late bringing the idea to the Pastoral Care Committee, it was not included in the sign-up brochure. At the end of the service that day, I was delighted when twelve people approached me with the offer to knit or crochet a Shawl, and requested the pattern. Janny Swijters, one of the original twelve, returned two crocheted Prayer Shawls within a week!

Parkminster's Church Secretary, Gaye Bott, contacted me shortly after reading about Prayer Shawls in the bulletin she was typing. She said she would like to be involved. I provided her with needles and yarn, and Gaye began her Prayer Shawl production. She quickly became the most prolific knitter in the congregation, and I kept the yarn coming! When Gaye left Parkminster for a position at another church, Gaye introduced the Prayer Shawl Ministry there—that ripple effect! Although now retired, Gaye reports that the Prayer Shawl Ministry is ongoing in that congregation. Gaye is herself continuing to knit Prayer Shawls, having now completed more than 200, still using the needles I gave her those many years ago.

As a member of the Pastoral Care committee at Parkminster, I visited a Parkminster member while she was hospitalized with cancer. When she returned home I visited again, and took with me a newly completed Prayer Shawl to wrap around her shoulders. We both shed many tears into that Prayer Shawl.

I recall taking a Prayer Shawl to a Parkminster member who was unable to speak and almost completely immobile. The Prayer Shawl I chose for her was a lap robe, and as I placed it over her knees, praying the Prayer Shawl prayer, she smiled! It was the only response I ever witnessed during the many times I visited with her.

Many more members of Parkminster received Shawls during Pastoral Care visits. One church member asked to purchase one for her mother. However part of the Prayer Shawl creed states that they cannot be bought or sold—only gifted to the recipient. I suggested to the member that if she would provide the yarn, I would arrange for a Shawl to be completed for her mother.

When Five Oaks was experiencing some challenging times, I created a Prayer Shawl for the Director. She told me later that at some difficult meetings, she introduced the practice of wearing the Prayer Shawl in order to speak. It presented a new dimension to the meeting, tempers quieted, and decisions could be made with grace.

I made a Prayer Shawl for the Frances Sandy Indigenous Theology Centre that was housed at Five Oaks. I chose a soft shade of turquoise yarn that reminded me of the Sunday dresses worn by the girls at Norway House. I worked some turquoise and ivory sparkling beads into the Shawl fringe...which was extremely hard to do. The Centre has since moved to Winnipeg, and the Prayer Shawl was in the Upper Room at Five Oaks when I last visited.

Lifelong friends in England were experiencing some serious health problems. Not being there to offer support, I talked to them often by phone, and I sent a Prayer Shawl. They have both expressed how much the Shawl has strengthened our connections—the ripple effect.

I made a Shawl for my husband Lloyd. Our daughter Jill was with us when I wrapped the Shawl around his shoulders as he shook with pain. Our daughter Maurie was living in Ottawa and during Lloyd's advancing illness, the miles seemed endless. Then came a move for her to Austria, where her husband was being stationed to serve as Canada's Ambassador. As I knew it would be difficult for Maurie to be so far from Lloyd and me, I made a Prayer Shawl for her in her favourite shades of mauve. Using the leftovers from all the other Prayer Shawls I had previously knitted, I created another one for our granddaughter. We all shed many tears as I presented those Shawls, and during the next few years, Maurie told me she was wrapped in the Prayer Shawl as I shared the increasingly distressing news of Lloyd's health. Following Lloyd's death, I asked our grandson if there was anything of Grandpa's he would like to have, and he asked, "Can I have Grandpa's Prayer Shawl?" My heart overflowed as I gave it to him.

When I was at writing workshops at Five Oaks, the Chaplain there sometimes participated and lead devotions. When he retired, I wanted to give him a Prayer Shawl. I chose a yarn of varying shades of warm turquoise and he loved it. He wrote to tell me he enfolds himself within its caring warmth each morning for his personal devotion time.

A group was started at Parkminster in perhaps 2010 to knit Prayer Shawls, and to teach any young people who wanted to learn to knit. Lots of yarn was donated and experts offered help on Sunday mornings before the church service to any who were experiencing difficulties. I don't know how long the group lasted, Lloyd's illness kept me from attending beyond that original meeting.

In 2019, the collection of Prayer Shawls at Parkminster continued to grow, to the point that people who wanted to have a Prayer Shawl were invited to come to the front of the sanctuary to choose one. I looked for one for my daughter Jill, who was experiencing some health issues. I chose a deep blue large size Shawl that could offer some warmth. She loves it. When babies are baptized at Parkminster, they receive a Prayer Shawl. And I also learned that when John Watson went to Nicaragua each year on his building missions, he took Prayer Shawls to the people of Nicaragua—the ripple effect.

There is a new Prayer Shawl knitting group now at Parkminster, lead by Roxy Linkletter, a member of the Pastoral Care Committee. It is a popular group of skilful, creative people who want to keep the Prayer Shawl ministry alive at Parkminster. New and experienced knitters are creating Shawls of incredible beauty that will bring joy, peace and the assurance that Parkminster members care. Don't hesitate to talk to Roxy if you're interested.

I am so very glad that the Prayer Shawl Ministry is continuing to be a part of Parkminster.

Janet Holland

Calling all Crocheters & Knitters!

Parkminster continues to have an active Prayer Shawl Ministry. We have people who crochet or knit shawls at home and/or at a monthly gathering on the second Wednesday of each month. There is yarn available if you wish to join our knitting team. For more information contact Roxy Linkletter at 519-725-4535 or roxylinkletter@gmail.com.

