

From Elizabeth's Desk

"EAT HEARTY AND GIVE THE HOUSE A GOOD NAME!"

Where did this bidding come from? I don't really know, but it was my parents' proclamation over the table at the many dinners we shared with guests and extended family in our home. If my siblings and I had to name one salient family value we inherited, it would be the gift of 'hospitality'. Home for us was a place where people were welcomed and included, and when guests came, all other concerns were laid aside.

Almost everyone has a story about hospitality. Was it a time when the joy of finding a gracious welcome came in a foreign place or when the vulnerability of needing hospitality was not found? How many have known the unsettling experience of welcoming a stranger only to find that things are not as they first appeared? We cherish memories of times when we felt too weary to invite someone in but opened the door anyway and discovered that our guest brought us life and renewal. We all have stories of abundance and sacrifice, joy and disappointment, grace and gift.

This morning in a session of "Mind Stretch", I remembered a stunning moment when I was the recipient of 'hospitality'. It happened the morning after a late arrival in a small northern township of South Africa back in 1991. I was part of a group of North

Americans, invited by the Black South African Council of Churches, to be in solidarity with them in their political struggles against apartheid. A spontaneous party had erupted the night before, when our bus arrived. To think that hundreds would assemble to greet us, was the first of many stunning moments we would experience of Africans laying aside their lives and sacrificing their meager resources to feed and to celebrate our presence.

But the moment to which I refer came the next morning, after walking a distance to a Lutheran service down dusty roads. As we approached the church, a stream of youth literally poured out of the building and ran toward us in greeting. There, in the middle of the road, they 'called us to worship', beckoning us forward in chant and song and dancing the beat into the dust with bare feet. Such reception and joy! Such amazing grace! And a 'call', not issued to the already assembled, but to strangers in the street! The Spirit fairly reeled us into worship on that unforgettable Sunday.

At Emmanuel United Church in Waterloo, there is a series of symbols etched in goldleaf above the chancel. One day while waiting as a guest for the service to begin, I carefully studied each symbol. At the centre of them was a picture of an ancient door standing open to the mystery within. Immediately I found something very deep within myself being stirred by this quiet, ever present witness to the openness of God's 'kingdom.'

From Jim's Desk

When we unlock and throw open the doors of worship; when we go out to greet others and welcome the stranger among us; when hospitality is what characterizes us as a family of faith; then, we are truly offering the very heart of God's 'kingdom' to a world for which Jesus gave all.

As Peter and I come closer to the time of farewell at Harcourt, we feel an incredible gratitude to you for the countless acts of hospitality and welcome we have authentically experienced here. And as we pray for you as a congregation in the future, we commend you to actively wrestle with ways to extend this hospitality to a new generation out there, which may not recognize our presence, nor know the way in. The Tony Robinson event on congregational renewal (held on Tuesday, April 21st with a workshop to follow on Saturday, April 25th) is a good beginning. The symposium on Hospitality scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, April 29th, is another. Your assembling leadership team will soon be ready to join you in this innovative adventure.

May you all eat hearty at the banquet of God's love and give God's 'house' a good name.

Elizabeth Eberhart-Moffat

I've decided to take another look at my new year's resolutions. It's about time I did. My goals included getting healthier, being in better shape, and living a more balanced life. When I stopped laughing about these, given the winter I had, I remembered that these wishes were feedback on my life - they represented my best guesses about what I needed to work on to be a better, healthier, happier me. But they sounded like a voice of correction beyond me - like the voice of a fitness coach, or that of a parent. That's how some resolutions are: they invite me to be more of what I am not. I can't say that I always respond well to such a voice, but it is usually one to which I pay good attention, and where warranted, make effort to respond, and to mixed results work close the gap between who I am and who I wish to be.

There is, thankfully, another kind of feedback that can help us with change and health. A kind of resolution for which I have greater enthusiasm. It is the word that bubbles up from within. What often whispers to us through this kind of feedback is the notion that to be healthier involves being more of what we already are. This is the soul talking. This is memory of core Christian identity speaking. What is whispered invites us to remember truths about ourselves as individuals, as Christians, as members of Christian community, that might come as "news" for some but which are neither new nor other.

More importantly, the embrace of them does not involve pretending to be something we are not.

Christian hospitality is a case in point. Hospitality is a core Christian practice and a part of core Christian identity. As such it is not just something Christians do, it is also something Christians are. Congregations have been embracing the term in recent years to help reorganize the way and spirit in which they welcome and relate to one another. Hospitality involves something much bigger and deeper than the tasks of greeting and ushering and saying hello can ever begin to describe. Being hospitable is the same as handing out water and bananas to runners in a race. It is similar to offering shade and a place to sit to those who are weary. It is about being helpful and open to the need of the world. While we would love our numbers to be higher, we must be exceptionally clear that Christian hospitality is not a strategy for recruitment. We practice hospitality for the sake of being hospitable, because being hospitable is our character, our identity, and our way of being in God's world. It may happen that in being hospitable we come to feel better for being more "ourselves" - that is to say Christian. Equally, others may come to feel good about being the recipients of our care. But we are this way not for these or other outcomes, like increased membership, but because we cannot imagine any other way of being.

More than a century ago, a senior rabbi in the Jewish community forbade theological dialogue with Christians. Why? Because, in

their experience, Christians engaged in the whole exercise of dialogue as a strategy for conversion. Get to know the other better in order to convert them more effectively. It has taken a century of learning, the bitter experience of the Holocaust, and decades of reworking traditional Christian theology, as well as the offering of categorical statements such as "Christians have no mission to the Jews because God's covenant with them remains valid and strong. Their spiritual life does not need to be replaced by ours. God loves them as they are," to open the way for real and meaningful dialogue between Christians and Jews. Strangers walking through our doors will be just as quick to smell out behaviour that is pretense, actions that are artificially worn and externally motivated, cloaking a hidden agenda. By comparison, guests who encounter honest welcome without agenda will be blessed by a transformative Christianity, the kind that very well may encourage them to return, and perhaps even join, and if not, at least to have them leave speaking well of us, and willing in the future to partner with us in our joint care for God's world.

If our way of being ever proves appealing to others, let it be our honest self that appeals, and not something less. Not something contrived. Let not the introvert try to convert the extrovert, nor the extrovert the introvert, but let the introvert figure out for themselves how they can best be welcoming and Christian, and the extrovert likewise, doing what it takes to create safe, restful and welcoming space for the world's weary travelers.

One last thing: the Christian identity, as expressed through core practices like hospitality, has never failed to regenerate itself in subsequent generations. Trusting what has long been true, and what has long worked, is the best resolution we can make as we pilgrim together through the rest of this year and beyond.

I'm going to try to remember this, and trust this, as I move forward. I'm also going to read my list of resolutions again. For laughter too is good for the soul.

Blessings!
Jim

Worth Taking a Look At ...

QUESTION: HOW CAN WE REDUCE LONELINESS AND ISOLATION?
ANSWER: SENIORS SKYPING SENIORS

If you are a Senior and would be interested in participating in a group with me to put together a proposal for a New Horizons Grant (Federal Funding), I would love to hear from you.

We would be applying for grant funding to enable seniors at Harcourt to talk face to face with other seniors at Harcourt who are unable to get out and about, using computers loaded with the free software Skype. This would also be a desirable tool for Ministers

and others providing pastoral care at Harcourt. It is also a great way to Grand Parent over long distances. We have grandchildren in Brazil and Colorado and we are literally able to see and hear them as they are growing up.

The project would likely include: equipping people, where needed, with a computer attached to the internet and with Skype on it; training in how to communicate face to face using Skype; support for your Skype Visiting when needed and for technological blips, and the project would be evaluated by students from the University of Guelph.

The actual development of the proposal would be decided by the group.

If you are not interested in the planning aspect of this project, then you may be interested in being an actual participant. We will need to know of Seniors who are keen to offer to Skype Visit as well as know of those who would like to receive a Skype Visit.

One can never be sure that we would get the grant, but if we don't apply, then we surely will not get a grant. The Call for Proposals is expected to be at the beginning of April.

For more information, and for expressing your passion to be involved please call:

Joan Barham:
519 -836-0433; jbarham@sympatico.ca

JOINT SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Joint Search Committee has been diligent in its work. Our committee is prepared to bring forward our recommendation of an individual to fill the full-time ordained minister. This will take place at a congregational meeting May 3, following the 10:30 worship service. I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of the Joint Search Committee for their contributions and dedication.

Lindsay Lennox

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY from the Spiritual Life Committee Mindfulness – A Spiritual Practice

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally.” (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

To live mindfully, is to live fully in the present moment. When we are fully aware of the experience of the present moment, it is impossible to focus on regrets from the past or worries for the future. We are free to replace regrets and fears with gratitude and joy or whatever feeling arises in us as we experience the moment.

Sue Thoele has identified four elements of mindfulness. The first is simply giving loving attention to whoever or whatever is with us. This act often results in an increase of understanding and enjoyment of the focus of

our attention. Paying attention to self in a gentle, loving way is part of this process, which enables us to understand, accept and love ourselves more fully.

The second element is living fully, with all of our senses, in the present moment. This means being conscious in a loving, nonjudgmental way to what is happening now. For example, if we are eating, it means noticing the aroma of the chicken, the color and texture of the vegetables and the taste and feel of the food in our mouth and esophagus. It is not a time to watch TV, or worry about finances or regret a comment made to a friend, but rather a time to simply savor the gift of food.

The third element is simplifying our inner and outer lives. In the midst of busy lives and a chaotic world many of us find ourselves fragmented and frayed by the multitude of obligations and possibilities which surround us. Decluttering our lives is one way to begin to create space, which in turn, brings a sense of peace and groundedness.

The fourth element is breathing. A focus on our breathing brings us into the present moment and also helps us attend to our physical bodies. Paying attention to our breath as it enters our body, gradually breathing more deeply and relaxing into a rhythm of deep breathing, enhances our vitality and brings us into the practice of mindfulness.

Ellice Oliver

A WEB SITE RE-DESIGN FOR HARCOURT

We are fortunate that Jeremy Hodge has volunteered to re-design Harcourt's web site. Jeremy wants groups to prepare what they want to go on the web. Your group will recommend how interactive your information is, the number of links you want to have etc. We provide the information, Jeremy does the design.

For this period of re-design, the Electronic Communication Team wishes to establish a small Web Team to anchor this exciting process. You don't have to be technical!! Just really keen on developing Harcourt's Web Ministry. Our electronic interface with the world!

Please contact Joan Barham, 519-836- 0433; jbarham@sympatico.ca

Youth News

HARCOURT KIDS FOR KIDS! A Sunday Morning Event for Young Families

We all know that "church" isn't just about gathering in a building, but how often do we spend time with God and each other beyond our church walls on a Sunday morning?

On Sunday, June 7th, we will be participating in our first Harcourt Kids for Kids family event! While part of our church family gath-

ers at the church for worship, kids and families are invited to "go and celebrate God's presence" by taking part in the 3rd Annual 1km Run/Walk for KidsAbility Centre for Child Development. All proceeds of the 1km Run/ Walk will help provide therapy for children with physical and developmental disabilities in Guelph and Wellington County.

The event starts with check-in at the West End Community Centre at 10am. (Participants must register in advance with Cindy) The run/walk (wheelchair friendly) begins at 10:30 and is followed by Child Activities & Free BBQ at 11:00am. A Ceremony and Prizes are awarded at 11:30am.

How to Participate!

1. Get a Participant Information and Pledge form from Cindy: cindy@harcourtuc.ca or (519)824-4177.

2. Encourage your kids to gather pledges.

On Race day, bring:

- registration fee (\$10 per person, free for kids under 5)*
- pledge form & pledge money
- signed waiver
- helmet for your child (if you wish to try out an adapted bike)
- bring your own bike and have an engineer from Tetra help with special needs bike modifications for free!

**It's Harcourt's practice to never let fees prevent anyone from participating in an event; we have funds to help those who need assistance with registration. Contact Cindy for confidential assistance.*

Groups & Events

GUELPH LITTLE THEATRE PRESENTS LITTLE WOMEN

At the end of April and the beginning of May, Guelph Little Theatre is presenting Little Women, a dramatization by Peter Clapham of Louisa May Alcott's classic novel, and directed by Leslie Marshall. Set during the American Civil War, the play describes, with humour, romance and pathos, the struggles of the women of the March family to live by Christian values in a time of adversity. Best known as a children's book, Little Women speaks, in fact, to the whole family and has a good deal of relevance to our present situation. Bringing together some of Guelph's veteran actors with its brightest young talent, this is a production not to be missed. Contact guelphlittletheatre.com, 519 821 0270, or Julia Loncke for ticket information. Tickets are \$15.00 and \$17.00 each.

YARN SWAP! SHARE THE STASH Sunday, May 3, after the 10:30 service sponsored by the Prayer Shawl Ministry

How often do you use up all your yarn when you finish a knitting or crocheting project? Do you sometimes wish you had just the right wool to mix with what you have? The Prayer Shawl Ministry group offers a solution!

Bring yarn from your stash that others might use. Take away whatever you'd like. It's as simple as that! In fact, there's no need to swap: bring all you want, take all you want, and use it however you want—prayer shawls, Mitten Tree items, or projects of your own! Yarn may be dropped off in a box in the greeting area during the week of April 27 to May 1, or brought to the gym before either service on Sunday, May 3.

FREE instructions will be available for traditional prayer shawls and scrap yarn prayer shawls. Check out the Yarn Swap table on May 3rd.

HOLLY'S HEART

Dear Friends & Family of Holly, Jessie, Jack, Rob & Paula Cameron,

We invite you to our fundraising event – Holly's Heart,...in memory of Holly Grace Cameron.. Many of you at Harcourt may remember Holly sitting near the front of church enjoying Sunday services with her mom, dad and big sister, Jessie. . Holly was born May 10, 2004, with a severe heart defect. She miraculously survived 3 open heart surgeries, as well as many other medical procedures. Holly endured many lengthy stays at Sick Kids Hospital . Holly brought so much joy to everyone she met, and her family, friends and the team at Sick Kids had so much hope for this little girl with the big brown eyes. Despite her strong spirit and will to live, Holly passed away suddenly on February 15th, 2008, at the age of 3 years and 9 months.

Holly's Heart will take place Saturday, May 9th, 3 to 6 pm. Our event is one that Holly would have enjoyed, with her love of family & friends as well as her fun sense of humour. It promises to be a fun filled day for everyone able to attend. Activities will include: a Silent Auction, games for all ages, entertainment, activity areas for children with prizes for participation, old-fashioned family games, door prizes, a special auction table just for children, face painting, and of course, food - a BBQ of hot-dogs, hamburgers, drinks & dessert. Funds raised are going to be split between the Guelph Wish Fund for Children and Sick Kids Hospital (cardiac). Money will also go towards planting a tree and placing a plaque in Holly's memory. We hope to raise an amount between \$3000.00 and \$4000.00 dollars for these good causes. If you would like more information on how you can get involved email Paula at roband-paula@sympatico.ca or Janette at jandj.tenhag@sympatico.ca to request a detailed invitation via email. Janette can also be reached by telephone at 519-823-8058. We are in need of volunteers and if you are able to give your time it would be very much appreciated. Tickets are limited.

Thank you in advance for your support. May Holly's light shine on in all of our hearts.

CAROLINE HARCOURT WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The April meeting of the Caroline Harcourt Women's Fellowship centred around a detailed look at the role of a Parish Nurse. Guest Leslie Hyde, herself a widely experienced R.N. with decades of community nursing as well as much involvement in the life and work of Harcourt Church, led a wide-ranging discussion period, and left another sizeable group of the congregation more informed re the possible future of a Harcourt Parish Nurse.

Supplemental Ontario government funding in the LHIN budgeting for the "Aging at Home" program needs to be applied for before May 15; congregational meetings in the meantime will decide what action Harcourt will take.

Reverend Ann Estill, an expert teacher of Storytelling, will treat the May 11 meeting of the CHWF to some of her own storytelling. All women are always welcome; gather between 11:30 and 12 in the Friendship Room. This is an especially good time to bring along a friend.

The annual Potluck Lunch and Silent Auction will be held in June. This is your opportunity to set aside those "white elephants" you got at Christmas or birthday, and know their sale will help charitable causes!

**STROKE RECOVERY CANADA
FUNDRAISING CONCERT**

This year's Fundraising Concert will take place on May 16th at War Memorial Hall. We still have good seats left and we really need to sell them. Last year we were sold out a month in advance for the Benny Goodman Tribute Concert and the evening was very successful in all aspects.

This year's concert, a Tribute to Glenn Miller, promises to be just as entertaining with an equally professional band playing the actual scores written by Miller. They also feature boy and girl singers...just like the old days.

We REALLY need your help. For tickets please contact Joanne in the Church Office (519-824-4177), Jim McKinnon (519-821-3541) or Don Milley (519-822-0744).

They are only \$ 30. and all profits will stay in Guelph Wellington to assist Stroke Survivors to reintegrate into our community.

Thank you on behalf of Stroke Survivors in Guelph Wellington from the Harcourt members of the Executive – Marj Brooks, Lorraine Holding, Pat Kandel, Carol Martin, Bruce McCallum, Ruth Tatham and Tony Wagner.

RETIRED MINISTERS' LUNCH

Harcourt's retired ministers and their spouses are invited to lunch on Thurs. May 21 at 12 noon in the Friendship Room. Bill Lord is presenting "A New Score Card for the Church". Please bring a brown-bag lunch. Soup, tea & coffee will be provided.

**THE RAINBOW CHORUS
GETS GROOVY WITH
"PEACE, LOVE, ROCK N' ROLL"**

The Rainbow Chorus would like you to dance down memory lane in this tribute concert to an era when "the times they were a-changing"! Concert includes favourites from rock, Motown and folk artists.

Saturday May 30, 2009 at 8:00 pm
Harcourt United Church
87 Dean Ave., Guelph

Advance tickets are \$15 for adults, \$15 for seniors and students and \$5 for children under 12 and can be purchased through PayPal on the Rainbow Chorus website www.rainbowchorus.ca. Tickets are also available at the Guelph Artisans' Store, Old Quebec Street Mall, at Opus II, 100 Aherns St W, Kitchener, or from Rainbow Chorus members. Tickets will also be available at the door for \$20.

There will also be an amazing Silent Auction before and after the concert; cash or cheques only please.

With Heartfelt Thanks

April 7, 2009 (Lorna's Birthday)

To Every person connected to Harcourt Memorial Church in any way, also Monica and John:

"For gifts beyond price" – sincere thanks.

Lorna had a few garden angels, but you all were her guardian angels. She told me often how grateful she was. I am too, as you eased my care from Peterborough area.

Much love,

Many prayers for your continued ministry of word and music and laughter and service and food and love and bulb-planting, etc. – sure looks like her garden.

Pat and Don Wood,
for the Ballaghs

MIIGWETCH

The ANISHNABEG OUTREACH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING INC. would like to thank the congregation of Harcourt for their generous donations to the Anishnabeg Therapy Fund. During our Advent season, we raised a total of \$3,285.00. The funds have been quickly put to action. Four men are now in therapy and two more people will soon begin.

Furthermore, with the assistance of the Justice and Outreach Committee, Anishnabeg has applied for funding for a Men's Healing Circle through the United Church of Canada's Healing Fund. Let us pray that the Men's Healing Circle will be realized.

We will keep you updated on the wonderful work the Anishnabeg Outreach is doing for the First Nations People of Guelph.

Again, Miigwech "Thank you"
Justice and Outreach

Opportunities to Serve

SPRING CLEANUP

The annual Spring Cleanup will be held at the church on Saturday morning, May 2. In case of rain, the alternative date will be May 9. Volunteers are requested to help clean up flower gardens, lawns and shrubs and to clean windows. Bring tools but some will also be available. All welcome!

Dave Hume,
Chair of the Property Committee

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the number of links you want to have etc. We provide the information, Jeremy does the design.

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Library Lines

FIC The Shack, by Wm. Paul Young
YOU

"This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress did for his. It's that good!"

Eugene Peterson.

Your friends are talking about it, five million copies are in print -- it's time you read it. This is an amazing, thought-provoking story of a man beset by tragedy, who has a stunning experience of God in the midst of great sadness and guilt. Please let the Library Committee know what you think after you read it.

FIC The Guernsey Literary and Potato
SHA Peel Pie Society,
by Mary Ann Shaffer
and Annie Barrows

This wonderful story is written in the form of letters back and forth among a number of interesting characters who are involved with life on the Channel island of Guernsey, which lies close to France, but belongs to Britain. As the story of life on Guernsey unfolds, we learn about German occupation and severe hardship during World War 2, (which accounts for the potato peel pie in the title), and about the aftermath of that time in the lives of the inhabitants. This is a great read-both funny and sad, a tale told with wit and charm.

Brenda Kelly

Library Lines

Deaths:

March 23, 2009: Craig Alexander, loving wife of Margaret

April 7, 2009: Margaret MacPhail, mother of Joanne (Dale) Lockie

April 13, 2009: Greta Mitchell, mother of John (Joanne) Mitchell

April 16, 2009: Wally Knapp, loving husband of Peggy