

From Jim's Desk

ON PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care has long been imagined to centre on the care offered to others by a pastor. As such it has been seen through the lens of a professional model, where the work done for the many has been carried out by the efforts of a designated, trained few. The few are called, equipped and set apart to listen and respond to the hurts and hopes of the people. In larger congregational settings, this model has often been expanded to include the efforts of willing, often trained, and certainly capable laity who primarily serve in the role of hospital, nursing home or shut-in visitors. Ordered ministers who find the demands of pastoral care and the hours dedicated to it increasing in this generation of aging congregations always welcome this expansion of support.

In the background there has always been another model of pastoral care at work within Harcourt and in the wider church - one that expects everyone to extend care to everyone else, doing so in ways simple or sophisticated, according to each person's gifts. People extend care to and for one another, enough to make the weekly challenges bearable, if not surmountable. Occasionally the so-called "professionals" get called to add their energies to this model, often in situations acute or complex. But the burden and major work of pastoral care is seen as a ministry of the whole community.

As Wendy and I and a reconstituted pastoral care team begin to get our bearings in relation to this important work, the strategic question arises: into which of these two ways - let's call them "professional" and "congregational" - ought we as a community to lean more? Which of the two offers a greater chance of facilitating successful support to folk within and beyond the congregation? And which of the two offers a greater opportunity for members to share their gifts, doing so in ways that deepen their joy and sense of Christian identity?

At Harcourt, we affirm that everyone has a spiritual life and a vocation. These are expressed not just in the work folk do to earn a living but also in the service they offer through their work and beyond their work. Spirituality touches the whole of our lives. In this sense, everyone has opportunity and calling to serve as a pastoral visitor to one another here and to the people we meet beyond this place. The extroverts among us will no doubt find this interaction with others a bit easier than the introverts, but everyone can be a pastoral visitor of sorts because anyone can be a good friend - someone prepared to listen attentively and compassionately to the hurts and hopes of others, and to hold what they hear in trust. Anyone can provide safe and compassionate space for others. Which leads us naturally to a new definition of pastoral care.

Rather than think of "pastor" when we say pastoral care, let us think "pasture" - as in green and gentle space, filled with resource and safety. When we shift our thinking of

pastoral care from the work of a very few professionals to the work of everyone who sets themselves to the task of creating pastoral "space" for others, we open ourselves to a future that is not resource stressed but rather to one that is resource abundant. Members of the church will ask new questions of themselves, beginning with "how in my daily life and routines am I creating safe, compassionate space for others to tell their stories and advance their ability to cope and heal? What words are helpful? What kind of presence is required? What discipline of silence is called for? What resources, liturgical and otherwise, are available for each member to offer such support? In what ways can the existing professional staff help equip members to feel more comfortable and capable in the role? Who else's expertise might be factored into the training/equipping process?" When we shift our understanding of pastoral care this way, these, and other, questions naturally arise. As do new opportunities and fresh hope. The thing of it is, this "new" understanding is not so new, because our members have been living their faith values and supporting people within and beyond this church for years. But perhaps we haven't thought of this way of living as "ministry". Well, perhaps it's time we all did.

Oh, ministers or "pastors" will still visit and listen, reach out and respond, bringing what expertise they have to bear on people's personal stresses and challenges. But we have a whole congregation of "ministers" who are capable bearers of compassion to a hurting world. We need to celebrate this wider min-

istry - our ministry - and help everyone here feel more effective and faithful in this work and way of being in God's world.

Blessings!
Jim (and Wendy
and the Pastoral Care team too!)

Worth Taking a Look At ...

FAREWELL FROM CINDY

I write this article with a heart filled with hope, mingled with sorrow. Sorrow that my ministry with you has come to an unanticipated halt, hope that it is not the end of our relationship but that I will be chosen among the candidates before you to serve in the new position I collaborated with the Youth Ministry Review Team and the Personnel Committee to create during this past year. As this could be the last article I write for the Herald, I'd like to take this opportunity to share some of my hopes and dreams for Harcourt.

Imagine a church with dedicated space for children. Believe it or not, Harcourt has no dedicated space for children's ministry. Three years ago, we opened the doors on our new sanctuary, a beautiful space carefully designed to serve many functions, serve the needs of different community groups and utilize multiple technologies. There is no question, however, that it is first and foremost the "living room" of the Harcourt home, the special place where we gather to celebrate God's

presence. Two years ago we opened the doors on the Wonder Café, a space designed for and that appeals to youth and young adults. I believe that if we hope to offer effective, relevant, life-changing ministry for children and families that we need to continue with the renovations and include a "family room": a room designed to serve many functions and host a variety of community groups, but whose primary purpose is that of Children's Worship Centre. A room decorated and equipped for Godly Play and other programs that are sure to be birthed in the not so distant future. We have the space; we just need to refashion how we're using it.

Imagine a church that understands that the home is the most influential environment for the spiritual growth of children and youth and that parents are their children's most significant spiritual mentors. How do we support parents and families on the journey? Perhaps we include a link on our website to our e-zine that's full of activities, discussion starters, and worship resources and ideas for families. Or provide an on-line community calendar of family friendly events in our city and our church. We could partner with community workers and agencies to offer workshops for hot-button parenting issues and concerns. The possibilities are endless.

Imagine a church that acknowledges, rather than tries to compete with, the reality that Sabbath time is no longer a cultural norm reserved for Sundays and that the default "group" format for Christian formation is seldom feasible for anyone between the ages of 14-55. A church that explores other ways of

being in group and living our faith together: on-line Confirmation classes and bible studies, chatting on-line with a faith partner, discussing books via blogs, connecting with friends from church and group members on Facebook or Skype. Missed the sermon or that great speaker who was visiting? Check out the podcast.

Imagine a church that truly and genuinely connects with post-millennials. A church that isn't afraid to try new ways of practicing God's presence in the church, the community, and the world. A church that isn't afraid to fail at experimental endeavors for practicing its passions and core values on its quest to rejoice, renew, and reach out in a post-Christian culture. A church with whom the old story never fails to resonate as it is retold from generation to generation, as every generation refreshes the world and God's Word.

I believe that Harcourt is on the way to becoming this kind of church. It has been a privilege to walk with you during these years of transition; I hope we will continue the journey together in the months and years ahead. My prayer for you is encapsulated in Pepsi's Refresh Anthem that aired during the 2009 Superbowl. You can view it on YouTube by googling "Pepsi Refresh Anthem". Featured artists and pop culture icons in the clip include Bob Dylan, Will I. Am of the Black Eyed Peas, Bruce Lee, Gina Garano, Tony Hawk, Gumbi, Shrek, Jake Blues of the Blues Brothers and Jack Black.

Many Blessings,
Cindy

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY
From the Spiritual Life Committee

Making Spiritual Sense of Your Life

This is the second installment in a series on "Awakening," the heart of spiritual life. Last month, we reflected, with Bill Lord, on the unexpectedness of sudden awakening. We were looking at a single experience - how it occurred, how one can be open to the unexpected, and what impact it might have on a life.

This month, Peter Jackson will share a different story of awakening. This one looks not at a single experience, but at a life of "small nudges and big shocks" and how one makes sense of all this. The theme is trusting one's experience and being ready for the cyclic nature of our spiritual journey.

We are constantly bombarded by sensory experience, but we don't trust it all. We put filters on our interpretation of our experience and often discard as "imaginary" or "irrelevant" large portions of it, because of these filters.

Something unusual happens to us once - a sudden insight into life; an experience of the Mystery Beyond; an "Aha!" moment; an inexplicable sensory experience - ... we note it, and often set it aside. Sometimes we even forget it. A similar incident occurs some time later... and again... we try to make some sense of it; we might even try to dismiss it. At some point, though, we recognize the pattern, the similarity of experiences, the repetitiveness,

the insistence... As if Someone or Something were trying to tell us something, and wouldn't let us go until we learned its lesson... Awakening means paying attention to all of our experience, claiming it all as potentially relevant. It also means paying attention to the filters we use or those that are imposed on us.

Gradually, however, we may begin to trust our experience as well as the personal process of making sense of it; at some point, we might even be prepared to articulate our experience and our thoughts about it to others; we even get up the courage to share our thoughts with a trusted friend, or in a safe small group; and we hear ourselves tell the story. We experience the respectful listening which accepts us as we are and validates our story. We gain confidence in our new hypothesis about how the world works.

And along with that confidence, we gain the understanding that our life has a logic to it, a spiritual meaning, even in its uniqueness. Now we are more attuned, more attentive, more ready to re-experience, often at a much deeper level. "Aha!"s multiply, and orient us towards further similar experiences.

Of course, there are no guarantees that the meaning we make of our experiences is "right": we could be deluding ourselves, we might not have explored all the possible hypotheses about our experiences; we might have drawn hasty conclusions. But that's what communities are for; that's what sharing is for - people helping us make sense in a way that avoids our blind spots and our self-delusions, a shared history that can provide

concepts and other exemplars to help us make sense of our experience and to be open to new hypotheses in our lifelong search for meaning.

How about you? In what ways have you learned to trust your spiritual experiences? What spiritual experiences do you need to revisit in order to make sense of them? What happened when you tried to articulate your experiences to a trusted friend or in a small group?

QUEER SPIRIT - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GAY MEN TO EXPLORE THEIR SPIRITUALITY

As part of a proactive stance, and in keeping with Harcourt's designation as an "Affirming congregation," the Spiritual Life Committee is pleased to offer a six-week series for gay men on spirituality, called "Queer Spirit." The small group format will provide a safe opportunity for gay men to discuss their spiritual journey. While there is no cost associated with this program, registration is required, as participation is limited to six. The first session will be Saturday, Oct 31st from 9:30 AM to 12 noon. For further information as well as to register, please email in strict confidence gaymenatharcourt@gmail.com

The format of each session will follow this outline: an opening prayer, a check-in time to share our week's journey, a brief presentation of a theme, a half-hour of meditation, followed by two rounds of sharing and "holy listening." The sessions end with a brief

check-out and a prayer of gratitude. A strict protocol for sharing and listening ensures confidentiality and safety. While the experience of the leaders emerges from their Christian heritage, there is no pressure for doctrinal conformity and each man's journey is honoured for its unique value.

While the topics may vary according to the needs of the particular group, the following guiding topics are proposed:

1. "I yearn": many spiritual journeys begin with the acknowledgement of deep unarticulated yearning - for love, for wholeness, for meaning, for relationship with the Mystery. This session will explore this in each of our lives.
2. "I have been sustained": discovering that, despite the pain and difficulties of our lives, we have been sustained at crucial moments is often the first step in beginning an intentional spiritual journey. In this session we will tell our unique stories, looking for those moments of grace, of peace, of acceptance, of insight.
3. "I am loved": few of us consider ourselves loved or loveable at various times of our lives. This session will attempt to ground our spiritual journey in that sense of being unconditionally loved by the Mystery within and beyond.
4. "I am aware": masters in virtually every spiritual tradition talk about "mindfulness," "awareness," or "attention" as being the very heart of spiritual practices - simply being aware of what is really happening around us, really happening. This session will help us begin develop skills of mindfulness.

5. "I am gifted": discovering that each of us is uniquely "gifted" serves as antidote to guilt, fear and shame which often plagues our lives. As the poster used to say: "God does not create junk." A spiritual journey is about acknowledging our gifts and coming to see life as a "blossoming forth." In this session, we will explore our unique "giftedness."

6. "I am called": few of us hear "voices," but a spiritual life is one that intentionally orients itself as response to the world around us. This session will explore what we each feel "called" to be and to do.

Also, please pass this invitation on to any gay men you might know.

CHALMERS COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE (CCSC)

Chalmers Community Services Centre was established in 1997. It is a registered charity helping the poor and vulnerable from any area of Guelph. Food, clothing, bedding, sundry household items and mending of clothes are offered at no cost to the recipient in need. CCSC offers two locations: Chalmers Downtown at 40 Baker Street - open Friday mornings from 10-12 noon offering food, clothing, household items and mending of clothes; and Chalmers West - 577 Willow Road (located in a portable building behind Three Willows United Church) - open Thursday mornings from 10-12 noon, offering food and clothing.

In 2008, 3545 guests were served emergency food at CCSC, or 295 guests per month. In 2009, from January to July, Chalmers Downtown and Chalmers West served 2735 guests, an average of 391 guests per month - an increase of 33%. When Chalmers West opened last November, the volunteers served 2-5 guests per week. In July, 92 guests were served at this new location.

Currently, Harcourt (via Justice and Outreach budget) contributes \$2,000 annually, which is very appreciated by the folks at CCSC. However, the weekly donations of non-perishable foods have been less than stellar. How can you help? How about bringing one non-perishable canned food product or dry pasta, or small peanut butter per week or even once a month to Harcourt and place it in the grocery cart kept in the Greeting Place? You may donate on any Sunday in the month. The donated items will then be brought forward with the offering, to be blessed and acknowledged, each week before being taken to Chalmers Downtown. The Justice and Outreach Committee hopes that eventually, with continued exposure, this practice of donating will become part of everyone's routine and greatly aid those in need of our help. Cash donations are always welcome and can be sent to CCSC at 40 Baker Street, Guelph, ON, N1H 4G1. PAR is also available. For more information call the CCSC office at 519-822-8778.

Thanks you for your continued support of this worthy cause.

Jill Gill

Groups & Events

CELEBRATING THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY OF CINDY VERRALL

On Sunday September 27, we will celebrate the contributions of Cindy Verrall, Harcourt's Children and Youth Staff Associate during the past three years. Cindy has been active in implementing and supporting a wide range of activities for children and youth, including Kid's Church, Godly Play, Breakfast Cafe, FOG and Super G, and the great WhY Be? Youth Band, and we will celebrate during the 10:30 am service and at a lunch gathering in the gym after that service. You are all invited - especially children, youth and families. Lunch will be sandwiches, "good-for-you" veggies and - yes! - great for you CAKE! Please bring along a small dish of veggies if you can and if you are willing to make up a loaf of sandwiches for the lunch, it would be much appreciated. Please let us know about sandwiches, by contacting the church office, John Phelps (519-824-4193, jphelps@porch-light.ca) or Roz Stevenson (519-821-7102, rstevens@uoguelph.ca). And it's your choice of the kind of filling (please mark) and whether they have crusts or no crusts!

The children and youth groups will have a chance to participate in the service celebrating Cindy. If you have greetings and messages for Cindy, or if you would like to contribute towards a gift, please send or drop off at the church office - as soon as possible!

Cheques may be made out to "Harcourt Memorial United Church", with "Cindy's gift" on the subject line, but you are reminded that these contributions are not eligible as donations for tax-credits.

MARGARET ROSE U.C.W.

Margaret Rose U.C.W. Summer reflections were shared in September.

Women are invited to the October meeting at 1:30 p.m. in the Friendship room. The theme is Stewardship. The U.C.W. Thankoffering will be received at that time.

Ellen Thomson will be sharing her experiences of Belize..... She is involved with a "Share" project for women.... And anyone wishing to help may bring... sewing notions. needles, buttons. scissors, zippers ,thread/ or material (a meter). All are welcome.

The Inter Church Council, Seniors Tea will be held at Harcourt on October 28. Please remember mittens for the Red Lake, to be sent in November.

UPCOMING RETREATS AT THE IGNATIUS JESUIT CENTRE

Symposium: Remembering John Veltri, S.J.

Friends and colleagues will gather to reflect on the contributions of the late John Veltri, S.J. to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and to Loyola House. Keynote speakers will be Father Monty Williams, S.J., and Father Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V. Friday, November 20 to Sunday, November 22, 2009. \$245 CAD. To register please fill out the online application form which is available on our website at www.loyolahouse.ca (Go to Application) or email registration@ignatiusguelph.ca or call 519.824.1250 ext 266

Days of Prayer

Join us for a day of quiet prayer, input and ritual. Your day will begin with an opening prayer service with suggestions of meditative themes and scripture readings for that day. Our next Days of Prayer are Thursday, November 19, 2009 and Tuesday, December 8, 2009. Each prayer day begins at 9:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm. Cost is \$25 (Please bring a bagged lunch). To register please fill out the online application form which is available on our website at www.loyolahouse.ca (Go to Application) or email registration@ignatiusguelph.ca or call 519.824.1250 ext 266.

Autumn at Ignatius: Eco-Spirituality Retreat

What insights does autumn have to say to us in our own spiritual journey? Enjoy these and other spiritual reflections at the Fall Eco-Spirituality Retreat! Enjoy hiking and images of autumn. Discover new prayer and meditation techniques and return home relaxed, re-energized and renewed through a deepened relationship with Earth. The retreat is on Saturday, October 17, 2009, beginning at 9:00 am - 8:00 pm at the Ecology Villa. Contact Registrar at 519.824.1250 ext 266 or email registration@ignatiusguelph.ca.

Food for Body and Soul: The Spiritually of Food

This weekend retreat, given by members of the Ecology Project, along with farm, retreat and kitchen staff, seeks to celebrate God's gift of food while reconnecting people to the Earth and the food it gives them. Please join us on November 13-15, 2009. The cost is \$245 CAD. To register please fill out the online application form which is available on our website at www.loyolahouse.ca (Go to Application) or email registration@ignatiusguelph.ca or call 519.824.1250 ext 266.

The Ignatius Jesuit Centre invites you to visit our new Loyola House website!

Opportunities to Serve

SATURDAY NIGHT SUPPER

Harcourt's upcoming turn to provide and serve Saturday Night Supper at Royal City Church (Quebec Street, opposite the Bookshelf) is November 7th. The guests (numbering between 135-160 in recent weeks) have always enjoyed our menu, so we will again be offering pasta casserole (recipe provided on the bulletin board), Caesar salad, cheese, pickles, milk, juice, assorted fruit pies and vanilla ice cream.

The sign up sheet for serving or providing food will be on the Volunteer Bulletin Board in the Greeting Place. This is a rewarding opportunity for fellowship and outreach to the community and we always welcome new volunteers. Pick up a copy of "Saturday Night Supper Opportunities and Challenges" for a brief outline of some expectations. It is also available on the Volunteer Board.

Food and volunteers should be at Royal City Church by 5:00 p.m., entering via the back-door.

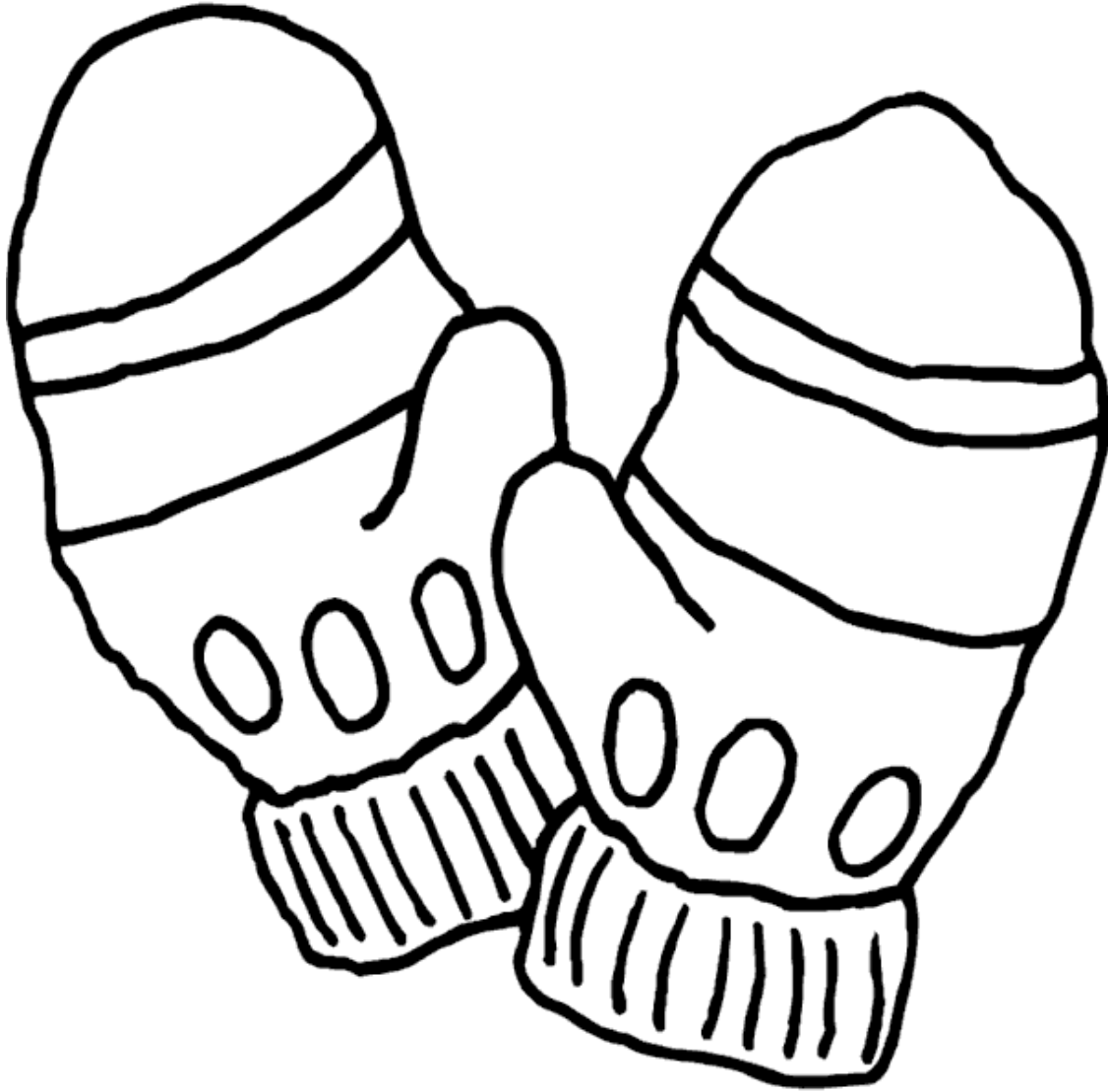
Please sign up!
Jill Gill

THE MITTEN TREE

The Greyhound Bus may no longer be going to Red Lake, Ontario after December 2nd, therefore we need to have the boxes packed and away by November 16th! The Mitten Tree will be up from October 20th till November 16th. We thank you for your participation in this worthwhile project, and trust that we can make this deadline. The Margaret Rose U.C.W.



Colouring Page



Passages

Birth:

Maxim Victor James, born Wed. Sept. 16, 2009, a son for Martin & Alison Czenki, grandson for Barbara & Richard Friend, and great-grandson for Edith Proctor.

Library Lines

Last month we recommended books by Karen Armstrong. This month there are two authors on our list- Diana Butler Bass, and Anthony Robinson - both of whom have spoken here and write about what the future may hold for churches like ours. Great reading!!

280 Bass Diana Butler
Christianity For The Rest of Us (copy 1)

280 Bass Diana Butler
Christianity For The Rest of Us (copy 2)

270 Bass Diana Butler
A People's History of Christianity

250.9 Bass Diana Butler
The Practising Congregation

262 Robinson Anthony
Changing the Conversation

Message from the Editor ...

I find it very difficult to believe that it has been 18 years since I first started working on the Herald, just one year after I transferred my membership to Harcourt. A lot has happened in those 18 years (oh, my, where would I start!!), and I have some very wonderful memories (which, I must say, far outweigh the not-so-wonderful ones!).

My life has changed dramatically, especially in the last couple of years, and will continue to change as Jerry and I move to Breslau this December. It is, therefore, with very mixed feelings that I announce my decision to submit my resignation as Harcourt Herald editor, effective whenever a replacement is found. If you are interested in taking on this responsibility, please contact me at 519-830-8630 or lbrowning@rogers.com.

Lisa Browning