

# The Harcourt Herald

The life and work of Harcourt Memorial United Church  
Guelph, Ontario, Canada  
September, 2017

## BACK TO SCHOOL!!!



✓ Litigation to Learning Curve: Rev. Miriam Flynn Talks about Her Back- to-School Experience

✓ Serving from the Sofa: Volunteer Opportunities You Can Do From Home

✓ Peaceful Contemplation at the All Ages Harcourt Retreat

✓ How Well Do **YOU** know your church? Take the quiz

# Harcourt Memorial United Church

*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

We are a people of God called together and sent forth by Christ to

*Seek | Connect | Act*

## **Our Mission:**

Inspired by the Spirit, we participate in Christian practices that strengthen us in the building of just, compassionate, and non-violent relationships

## **Our Vision Statement:**

To be an authentic community of spiritual growth and service

## **Our Core Values:**

Risk...Respect...Responsibility...Vulnerability...Trust

## **Our Purpose:**

To welcome and strengthen in community all who wish to serve God and follow the way of Jesus

## **Harcourt Memorial United Church**

87 Dean Avenue, Guelph, Ontario N1G 1L3

Office Hours:

Monday to Friday, 9am-noon; 1pm-4pm

Phone: 519-824-4177

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Email: [office@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:office@harcourtuc.ca)

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## **The Harcourt Herald**

*Published 10 times each year*

*by the*

*Communications Committee*

**Your contributions are welcome!**

**Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> of each month**

**Sept-June**

Editor: Gillian Joseph

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Printer: Anne Purkis



# WORSHIP SCHEDULE



*September 3*      *One intergenerational service at 10:00 AM in the Sanctuary. Nursery care available.*

*September 10*      *Regular services resume.  
Chapel 9:00 AM; Sanctuary 10:30 AM; MANNA 10:30 AM (Friendship Room). Nursery care available at 10:30.*

**ARE YOU NEW TO  
HARCOURT?**

**A BIG WELCOME FROM  
ALL OF US!**

Church Office: 519-824-4177  
E-mail: [office@harcourtuc.ca](mailto:office@harcourtuc.ca)

## **MANNA**

A friendly, all-ages, interactive, alternative worship experience that involves hands-on activities and sharing. It takes place in the Friendship Room, also at 10:30 a.m. All Welcome.



# The Ministers' Quill

by Jim Ball

Dennis Oppenheim was an artist known for creating large, often controversial, art installations. If any of you have been to Toronto's Distillery District, located near Lakeshore and Parliament streets, you will have seen an example of his work. The sprawling Victorian era complex, with its wonderful brick and stone architecture, is now home to art galleries, restaurants, theatres, shops, a microbrewery and the flagship location of Balzac's coffee. The roads and lanes are paved with brick. They remind visitors of an older, slower, cobblestoned time. In the central square sits a forty foot high copper chimney. From the top of it spirals down a great piece of galvanized tubing. It, in turn, connects to a great SUV sized, multicoloured beater. Entitled, "Still Dancing", the elements of this massive artwork remind us of the distillery's past and of the tools and people who made the industry flourish.

In 1998 he created a piece that was shown at the prestigious international art show in Venice. It was originally commissioned by Stanford University, but its Board eventually considered the piece too provocative to be installed on the distinguished American campus. It was then shipped to a more welcoming Canada where it was displayed in downtown Vancouver. Several years later it was installed at the Glenbow Museum in Alberta. The art-piece is made of galvanized steel, aluminum and transparent red Venetian glass. It is, simply put, a church turned upside down, with its steeple ploughing the earth. It has, as you might imagine, received mixed reviews. It is entitled, "Device to Root Out Evil." It is clearly a comment on the Christian religion. Perhaps on its role, or failings or present sense of embattlement. Perhaps on its opportunity to do different and need to focus more on the earthly rather than the heavenly.

The United Church of Canada in B.C. once used images of "Device" at their annual general meeting. It served as a focal point for reflection, analysis and conversation about the Church's life and work. Members shared their experiences and interpretations. Some looked at the art piece and saw an upside-down Church. Some saw an upside down world, with a Church still oriented right-side up. Some saw judgment. Some saw hope. Some felt troubled. Some felt encouraged.



What do you think? What feelings come to you when you see it? What do these thoughts and feelings suggest about you? The art-piece? Harcourt? And the times in which we live? Something else to consider when visiting with one another over coffee! September Blessings!  
*(Photo: Wiki Commons)*

# COUNCIL NEWS

by Lorraine Holding, Chair of Council

Fall's arrival highlights these items that have accumulated during the past three months.

Council opened our June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting by celebrating Miriam's 'bridging year' and looking forward to her new ministry with us. We shared a short debrief of our May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting with members of committees/teams – an event that increased awareness about the 'inside scene' of Harcourt activities, and how/when groups need to interact to carry out their work. Work continues to update the rental and group sponsorship for room/space usage policies. The Greeting Area Ad Hoc Group will continue its work in conjunction with the washrooms construction project and other input.



During June 12-22, about 50 people took part in six conversation groups focused on community, spiritual growth, social justice or music. We thank all participants, hosts, facilitators, note-takers and the planning team. Council will review the proposals and personal commitment sheets to help build a plan for action/change related to our congregation's ministries.

We often thank others for many contributions within and through our ministries. Two pieces of mail in July thanked us.

*"Thank you to all of the Harcourt community for the ongoing support to the Drop In Centre! We appreciate your generosity and support."* Gail at Drop In Centre

*"Thank you for your support of the Life Centre through prayers, financial contributions and food to the weekday and Saturday Night Supper programs. We couldn't do what we do without you."* Staff at The Life Centre, a ministry of Royal City Church ([www.thelifecentre.ca](http://www.thelifecentre.ca))

Offering 'time and talent' is key to our internal and external ministries. Personal commitments continue and some evolve into other things. In July, I received Earlla Vickers' resignation as Umbrella Councilor for Outreach. We appreciated your thoughtful and meaningful contributions to Council's work during the past two years, especially your connection with Arlene Davies-Fuhr

and Edna Miller to more clearly define Harcourt's focus for Justice & Outreach. Earlla, we look forward to your other continuing roles at Harcourt as well as your activities within Guelph. Thank you!

What's ahead for the fall? Here are a few items:

- Construction of the accessible washrooms ... and all that entails! The building committee (under Dave Hume's leadership) and our staff team (especially Darko's custodial work and Anne's coordination with renters) will be kept busy dealing with change and dust. All of us will keep smiling and anticipate the improvements!
- Ministry & Personnel Committee continues work to create a lay position based on roles identified in the Joint Needs Assessment Report. Council approval is required.
- Waterloo Presbytery and Harcourt will host a Covenanting Service to celebrate Miriam's call and officially welcome her to ministry with us. Date to be decided.
- Recruitment to Council is a priority. Three key roles are now vacant: Vice-Chair; Umbrella Councilor for Outreach; Umbrella Councilor for Congregational Life. Please consider this invitation to join eight others and the Ministers to help steer our journey through Harcourt 20/20 – Phase 2. I await your questions/interest!

With faith and hope.





## Harcourt All-Ages Retreat

Friday, September 29 at 5:30 p.m. to  
Sunday, October 1 at 1:30 p.m.

This will be Harcourt's third retreat at Loyola House, a wonderful opportunity to experience ourselves as beloved children of God. We create community, try out some spiritual practices, share in a safe environment, worship together in new ways and connect with the Ignatian traditions and practices.

### **Rates and special requirements**

Prices as quoted are Loyola rates, less a 50% subsidy from the Spiritual Life Pillar Fund. **Children under 12 are free.**

#### ***Residential***

- \$130 per person - Includes a bedroom for two nights, 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners

#### ***Commuter***

- \$65 per person - 2 lunches and 2 dinners; Does not include breakfast or use of a bedroom

#### ***Saturday only***

- \$27.50 per person - 1 lunch and 1 dinner; Does not include breakfast or use of a bedroom

#### ***Special requirements***

Loyola house **does** accommodate vegetarians, vegans, and people with food allergies, but **does not** accommodate other food preferences or dietary requests (e.g., weight control diets or "no green beans, please").

#### **Registration**

Return the registration form (next page) to the Harcourt Church office, along with the fee (cash or cheque), by **Sept. 18, 2017**. Make cheques payable to Harcourt United Church with "Retreat 2017" in the memo line.

Harcourt All-Ages Retreat

# Registration Form:

I/we register for .....number of persons

Names:.....

.....

.....

Email:.....

Phone:.....

Special requirements:

..... no stairs

..... allergies

..... dietary restrictions

Please specify:.....

.....

## **Rates:**

Residential \$130.-\*/person

Commuter \$65.-\*/person

Saturday only \$27.50\*/person

Children under 12 are FREE

Paid by: cheque – cash

Make cheque payable to Harcourt United Church  
with "retreat 2017" in the memo line

**deadline for Registration:**

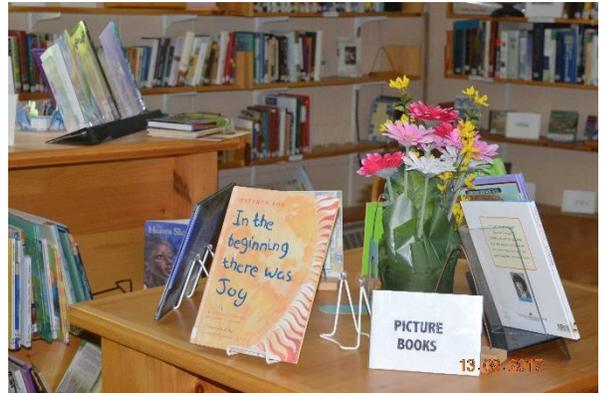
***September 18***

# Committee & Group News

## Feeling Bookish? What's Up in the Library

by Mary-Lou Funston, Library Committee

Each of these books will give you much to prayerfully consider about your personal faith and our joint faith in the context of the Christian community and the world.



\* THE PASTOR - A Memoir Eugene H. Peterson 285.1092 PET  
*The author "... presents a simple faith-filled job description of what being a pastor means today*

\* WHY I LEFT WHY I STAYED Tony Campolo & Bart Campolo 269 CAM  
*Conversations on Christianity between an evangelical father and his humanist son.*

\* THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MIGRATION: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian Brian D. McLaren 270.83 McL  
*In Chapter 10 he says, "If you want to see the future of Christianity as a great spiritual migration, don't look at a church building. Go look in the mirror and look at your neighbor."*

*And now for the Fun Stuff! Following are 4 CD's that you and/or your children can use to get to know more about the Bible and some of its stories.*

\* GALILEE FLYER  
*An interactive computer game about....The Lord's Prayer, The Beatitudes, Salt-Light, Seek First, Mustard Seed – Leaven – Treasure – Pearl. How about trying it at a dinner party!?*

\* GOOD SAM THE SAMARITAN  
*An interactive multimedia lesson about one of Jesus' most important stories.*

\* PRODIGAL SON  
*Another interactive multimedia lesson.*

\* CAL AND MARTY'S SCRIPTURE MEMORY GAME  
*If you try any or all of the above 'games', please let us know what you and your family think of them – we'd love to have feedback!*

## Caroline Harcourt Women Gearing Up

by Jean Hume

The Caroline Harcourt Friendship Circle will begin its meetings again on the second Monday of each month starting in September. The October meeting will be on the third Monday due to the Thanksgiving Monday being a holiday. All women are invited. Please join us at noon on **September 11th**, for fun, fellowship, a presentation and devotional. Bring your bag lunch. Tea and a treat will be served for dessert. The topic for the September meeting has yet to be determined as the planning meeting for the year will be held later this month but not in time for this publication to announce. Looking forward to catching up on all your activities over the summer.

## Dust and Noise – The Happy Signs of Washroom Construction

by Dave Hume, Chair of the Washroom Building Committee.



Construction has started! Walls have been erected around the construction area to keep the dust in. The cloakroom has been gutted to the steel 2 x 4's. The ceiling is gone so I can see the underside of the roof. Unto Kihlanki, the architect, Curtis Donnahee, the President of Even Construction Inc. and I met today to make some decisions. For example, some water has seeped through the cloakroom wall facing Dean Ave. and rusted one of the metal base plates along the floor. Unto and I decided to replace the rusted base plate. It also looks like we will need to install a small pump to move the effluent to the sanitary sewer that runs out to Dean Ave. on the west side of the sanctuary.

Previously, some asbestos had to be removed in the boiler room and that's finished. So we are well underway. The contract says the construction will be finished in November but, if the first week is a good indication, it will be quicker than that!

## Prayer Shawl Circle Highlights New Product

by Anne Piper

We have not met as a group all summer, but we have been busy knitting at home on quiet days. Please remember that prayer shawls are always available to support family and friends. Anne is in the office and would be glad to help you, or any member of our group.

New this year - therapeutic muffs! Do you know of anyone with Alzheimer's who can't keep their hands still? These hand-knit muffs are great for keeping hands warm - and busy twiddling with the buttons and bows sewn onto the muffs.

**What is a Therapeutic Hand Muff?** It's a basic knitted muff using different yarn textures and colours. Items, such as beads, buttons and ribbons, are then attached (inside and outside) to provide even more tactile stimulation. People with dementia often have restless hands and can be soothed by having something to keep their hands occupied. The muff provides a source of visual, tactile and sensory stimulation at the same time as keeping hands snug and warm.

## Down and Dirty in the Harcourt Gardens

by Ben Fear

Harcourt Memorial United Church Property Committee doesn't meet in July or August but that doesn't imply that they are not looking after things. Here is some visual evidence of



the committee joined by other members of the congregation on the job keeping the gardens presentable so that visitors to the church can enjoy a minute or two or three or more, sitting on a bench, listening to the birds, viewing the flowers, breathing deeply and giving thanks for a beautiful world.

The Inspiration and hospitality were provided by Sarah Lowe. The effort was by Anne and Gary Parsons, Malcom and Marta

Coutts, Walter and Joyce Johnson, Ben and Norma Fear, Roz Stevenson, Mark Sears, Carol Jones, Sarah Lowe and , Dave Hume. Entertainment by Sadie.



Join Us For

## **POTLUCK AND GAMES NIGHTS**

Saturdays, 5:30-9:30 pm

*In the Friendship Room*

**Come on your own, with your family  
or with friends**

---

September 16

January 20

October 21

February 24

November 18

March 17

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**Bring a hot or cold entrée or a dessert**

*Cards and board games will be supplied  
or bring your favourites*

**harcourt**

seek | connect | act

# Reflections from the Spiritual Life Committee – July 16<sup>th</sup> Service

by Bill Lord

On Sunday July 16, 2017 four members of the Spiritual life Committee, Andre Auger, Kathy Magee, Tammy te Winkel and Bill Lord, provided leadership at the 10 am worship service.

Several people requested that the reflections and readings be published in the Herald. The Spiritual Life committee is pleased to offer this for your further reflection.

## **Reading and Reflection 1 - Andre Auger**

Exodus 3:13-15

We said, at the beginning of this service, that spiritual life is an intentional relationship with God. We intend, in three separate reflections, to try to unpack this dense expression.

I will start by the end, and talk about “God”; Bill will talk about “relationship”; and Kathy about “intentional.”

So it's all about God. What I want to share with you is the fruit of my own personal journey in the last little while.

Spiritual life is about ways we use to place God at the centre of our concerns, of our life. Which, of course, raises the question: Who, or what, is God for you right now?

We are sometimes asked this kind of question – at retreats, in spiritual direction, in workshops on spirituality. And so we generate a range of images of God: the “rock,” the king, the eagle, the mother hen, the pillar of fire, etc.

*Take a moment right now and reflect: What are images of God that are working for you at this point in your life? What images no longer work? Which images have been downright toxic for you?*

But when we examine this exercise from a certain point of view, we note that all these images talk “about” God. They are all attempts to help us categorize, analyze, describe, this mystery we call “God.” Even the term “mystery” is an attempt to pigeonhole God. They all assume that God is some object, person or being that can be described and analyzed.

Paul R. Smith (2012), and American theologian who wrote [Integral Christianity, the Spirit’s Call to Evolve](#), invites us to approach this question of God in three ways. He invites us to look at

our language. We use three grammatical persons when we speak. First person = I, second person = you, and third person = he/she/it. Smith (2012) suggests that we spend a lot of our time talking about God – in the Third Person. That's what that first exercise was all about.

What happens when we think of God in the Second Person? God as “You” - or as the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1970) called it the “I-Thou” relationship. Think of the shift from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> person as what happens when you stop talking about someone, and start talking – and listening – to that person. When we truly are in an “I-Thou” relationship with someone, that person fills our universe. We cease to judge. We listen. The person appears as ‘other’, and we are as wholly present to this other as we can be. We do not judge, categorize, analyze; we listen. Think of early dates with your beloved... Think of intimate conversations with friends, where they can tell you anything and you just listen, without judgment.

*Take a moment to reflect right now: Can you think of a time when you had a truly I-Thou relationship with God? An intense prayer time, for instance, when you truly listened? What was that like? What did you learn?*

Smith (2012) invites us to take the next logical step: what happens when we think of God in the First Person? This is when we acknowledge that God resides deep within us, and that we, in a certain sense, are called to speak and act as God. I have been reluctant to take this step. It almost seems presumptuous. But St Catherine of Genoa, a 14<sup>th</sup> century mystic, ran through the streets of her town one day after an intense mystical experience, crying “My Me is God!” (Wikipedia1). Teresa of Avila (Journey With Jesus, 2017) composed a poem in the 16<sup>th</sup> century which captures this first person experience.

“Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours”.

So it's far from heresy to think of ourselves as unique expressions of God, and noting that our prime vocation might just be to act on God's behalf...

*Take a moment to reflect right now: Have you had an experience where you felt yourself as God's healing presence to someone else?*

And so, we approach God in three ways:

- As someone/something out there, about whom we talk. (gesture of hands reaching out)
- As someone intimate to us, to whom and with whom we talk (hands across our chest)
- As someone within us, for whom we talk and act (outstretched hand blessing)

Does this approach help us better understand how spiritual life is an intentional relationship with God? Might it at least help us explore what “relationship” might mean?

### **Reading and Reflection 2 - Bill Lord**

The late Marcus Borg stated that God is real and that Christian life is about a relationship with God as known in Jesus Christ. He suggests that it can and will change your life.

We are now exploring the word ‘relationship’ For many of us the shorthand word that we have learned for relationship is prayer. As we reflect together you may have new perspectives on your prayer life. But first a word from our sponsor.

Here these words from scripture, as found in the translation known as The Message (n.d.).

Colossians 2:6-7

Matthew 5:13-16

We might characterize what Paul R Smith (2012) wrote about the three modes of God and which Andre just briefly sketched as three narratives of how we understand God. Now, Harcourt knows how three narratives can live together. All of us have an understanding of God that is backed up by a formative story we have for God. Hopefully as we grow in faith our story changes.

What are some of the ways that we can we relate to the infinite God - the God whom we frequently call creator? The God who was so great that the Jewish people did not pronounce the four consonant name but always used a substitute name ‘Adonai’. Some people relate to this God in awe and wonder while others have been taught to fear the wrath of God. We can relate to the mystery Infinite God in awe and wonder and praise and feel beloved or we can be fearful children.

However we also are called also to relate to the intimate God. This for many is a less familiar narrative for God. It really is imagining the relationship here as a conversation. Many of us somewhere learned that in prayer we bring all our concerns to the Divine and wait in expectation for the answer. Our image of ourselves, if we are really honest, is often that of a child trying to convince a parent to do something or us for trying to understand why God allowed something to happen. Our invitation is to become involved in a two way conversation. The best example of that occurs when adult children are allowed by their parents to carry on adult conversations. The intimate God longs for us to mature in the faith and have those significant adult conversations that help us discover who we are, whose we are and our unique purpose in the world.

What in the world is a relationship with the inner God like? We have often heard the cliché that God has no hands but our hands to do God's work today. Do we really believe it? Another cliché that rolls off our lips is with great ease is the church is the Body of Christ. For these realities to become facts we are faced with what Smith (2012) called the inner God —the God who lives in us—God, the divine spark in every human life. Jesus used two powerful metaphors of salt and light—as the call of the inner God to be God's living loving presence in a broken and birthing world.

*In what ways is our story of our relationship with God changing?*

*In which of these relationships is Harcourt congregation being invited to change?*

### **Reading and Reflection 3 - Kathy Magee**

Our third reading comes from Feldman and Kornfield (1991) who write:

“The secret of beginning a life of awareness and sensitivity lies in our willingness to pay attention. Our growth as conscious beings is marked not so much by grand gestures as by extending loving attention to the minutest particulars of our lives. Every relationship, every thought, every gesture is blessed with meaning through the wholehearted attention we bring to it.

In the complexities of our minds and lives we easily forget the power of attention, yet without attention we live only on the surface of existence. It is just simple attention that allows us to listen truly to the song of a bird, to see deeply the glory of an autumn leaf, to touch the heart of another and to be touched. We need to be fully present in order to love a single thing wholeheartedly. We need to be fully awake in this moment if we are to receive and respond to the learning inherent in it.”

Being intentional. Paying attention. This is one third of our definition of Spiritual Life - having an intentional relationship with God. For me, it is what gives the other two parts life and

deeper meaning. It takes us from our heads to our hearts. Being intentional means we do something on purpose, deliberately, with intention and attention. We don't do it out of habit or by accident.

We know about being intentional in many areas of our life. In our lifestyle choices we know the importance of a healthy diet, physical activity, interactions with things that stimulate our minds. In our relationships we know the value of being attentive and intentional. We have learned that in order to nourish and sustain relationships we must pay attention to the other person, listen carefully, express ourselves honestly and with integrity.

We are aware of what happens when we are not intentional in our lives. Traffic is an easy example. When someone driving a car is inattentive, the results can be disastrous, or at least upsetting and inconvenient. That's why distracted driving is illegal.

In our interactions with others when we are not paying attention, we make unintentional mistakes, create unintended hurt, experience unfortunate oversights and missed opportunities. Our lives are on-going attempts at being intentional, of paying attention. Some days and in some situations, we are really good at it. Other times, not so much. But we keep trying. We know the benefits and significance of awareness.

When it comes to our spiritual lives and journeys, being intentional takes on even deeper meaning and importance. In the words of Thich Nhat Hanh (p. 27), he reminds us that:

"Each thought, each action in the sunlight of awareness becomes sacred. In this light, no boundary exists between the sacred and the secular".

Everything we do, every breath we take can bring us closer to God if we are aware and open to God's presence.

Being intentional in our relationship with God means we focus on being exactly who God created us to be, on hearing God's voice and on praying for wisdom and guidance. Sounds complicated and demanding, doesn't it? But it is not. It simply means being open to God in the moments of our lives, in our everyday activities. It means being present in the moment, aware that God is with us, waiting for us to feel the Spirit's breath and God's encompassing love. It doesn't mean we are doing different things, but it might mean we are doing things differently.

There is much written about mindfulness these days. There are excellent resources about this important concept of being deliberate and intentional, from all faith traditions and from the psychological perspective. But spiritual awareness is more than mindfulness. It takes us to another dimension of healing and growth. It extends us beyond ourselves. We are not alone.

God is there for us in every breath. We are blessed to be in a community that values and recognizes the gift that this is.

So, how do we develop and nourish this intentional relationship with God? There are so many ways! The most basic and most important is conscious breathing. Being aware of our breath helps us stop thinking so much, stop focusing on past sorrows and regrets, or worries about the future. It helps us recover our balance and regain perspective. How many times can you remember "just taking a deep breath" to get ready for some effort or event, to manage your emotions, to give yourself time to think? It works.

A different version of the Breath Prayer by Hanh (1991) that I find so useful is:

Breathing in I calm my body  
Breathing out I smile  
Breathing in this present moment  
I know I am beloved by God.

Try it as I say it one more time.....

You can do this anywhere. In the car, waiting in line, waiting for a return phone call or email, watching children or grandchildren play, or when you are struggling with difficult emotions.

Every activity we engage in can be a spiritual practice:

- Walking - being aware of God's world around us, the colours, the sounds, the feel of your feet on the ground, your breath
- Eating - no TV or paper, or iPad, saying grace before we begin - being aware and grateful for texture, taste, scent, nourishment.
- Waiting 3 rings before answering the phone - to ask God that you may feel God's presence in the conversation
- Driving - seeing a red light as an opportunity to do your breath prayer rather than an obstacle delaying your trip.

Miriam gave us some wonderful examples of spiritual practices in her message on the last Sunday in June:

1. The Hand Prayer: Wow Thanks Oops Please Amen.
2. The Examin from the Ignatian Traditions - Miriam's apples and onions. It means asking what brought you closer to God, what drew you away from God - is a wonderful way to book end your day or week.

There are more formal forms of spiritual practice that involve various styles of prayer and meditation. Many of the small group here at Harcourt are examples of creating or deepening intentional spiritual practices. Our Harcourt library has some excellent resources. There are good websites that support spiritual practice - Prayer Bench (<https://prayerbench.ca/>) being one.

The important thing is that you spend some time every day being intentionally aware of your hand in God's hand, of Spirit's breath on your cheek, of Jesus' guidance, and your inner wisdom. Take a breath. Smile. You are beloved by God. Amen.

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## Community News

### An Invitation to Consider – Harcourt All-Ages Retreat!

by Lynn Hancock

- ✚ If you would like to experience a weekend getaway, please consider the Ignatius Jesuit Centre: “A Place of Peace.”
- ✚ If you would like to enjoy nutritious and delicious food prepared for you, please consider the meals at Loyola House.

- ✚ If you would like to experience living in community, please consider registering as an overnight guest.
- ✚ If you enjoy opportunities to be an active participant and benefit from a wide range of perspectives, join us on an inter-active, inter-generational journey of discovery.
- ✚ If you would enjoy the benefits of a retreat experience at the end of a busy month of September, please consider these dates: Friday, **September 29**, 5:30 pm to Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> 1:30 pm.
- ✚ If you would appreciate a 50% subsidy from the Spiritual Life Pillar Fund, please register by the deadline: **SEPTEMBER 18, 2017**.

If you are someone who appreciates opportunities to learn, grow, reflect, share, walk, explore, pray, laugh, sing and co-create, please consider joining others from Harcourt. Now, imagine experiencing all of this as one of GOD’S BELOVED! Registration forms are printed in the Herald and are also available in the Greeting Area at Harcourt and from the Church office.

## Stretch Your Mind After a Long Break

by Jean Jackson

Mindstretch will resume meeting on Thursdays from 8.45 - 10 am, in the Chapel. The first meeting will be on **September 14th** and we will start the year by discussing articles from The United Church Observer. If you are interested, and want more information, please call Jean Jackson at 518 824 4364.

## An “Iconic” Summer

by Roz Stevenson

One of my summer “art camps” was a bit different – I spent a week in the chapel at St. George’s Church in Guelph, learning how to paint an icon. Or, to use correct terminology, to “write” an icon. I remember Marilyn Whitely giving a talk about icons at Harcourt some years back, and I’ve been intrigued by books with “modern saints” depicted in icon-style. So I signed myself into a workshop tutored by Regan O’Callaghan, a Church of England artist-priest from London, England (and originally from New Zealand), who visited Guelph and Hamilton in June. Some of the dozen students had previous experience with icons, but for the novices, Regan suggested “*Christ Pantocrator*” (Christ, the Almighty) as a good choice for a first icon. And so the learning began!

**Icon** means “image” and the structure of the images is formal, though styles vary with the different traditions – Greek, Coptic, Roman or Byzantine. The *Pantocrator* image dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, with a head and shoulders image of Jesus Christ, holding the New Testament in his left hand while, with his right hand, he makes the sign of blessing. When you

look at an icon, you first ask, “Where is the figure looking?” Is it directly *at* me? Or does it look over my shoulder to remind me of the world and people around me? (Some saints will look to the side, as they look towards Jesus from their position in an **iconostasis** (a wall of icons displayed in a church). The second thing you ask is, “What are the hands doing?” Are they holding something? Is the book open or closed? (Open to draw attention to a text or closed to say that the story is complete.) The position of the fingers in the blessing hand spell out “IC XC”, and three fingers point upwards, indicating the Trinity. Saints may be shown with a personal symbol – a tent for Saint Paul, for example. There is a lot to look at in an icon, which is why they are used as an aid to prayer ... praying *through* the icon, not *to* it, with eyes open to the beauty of God’s world.

So, if looking at an icon is praying, what is painting one? That’s where the “writing an icon” comes in, as it is considered to be a spiritual discipline, much like writing a prayer or sermon. The role of the iconographer is described as a service, offered to God in humility. Artistic talent and technical skill are not most important; prayer is the essential element in the process. That’s something that set the workshop apart from other art classes I’ve taken. First, we worked at tables set up inside St. George’s Chapel. We began each day’s work with the *Prayer for the Iconographer* and closed each session with a reflective reading and prayer. The expectation was that the room would be generally quiet to allow prayerful work and conversation focused on the task. (But there *were* coffee and tea breaks!).



We painted on wooden boards, eight by ten inches, which had been prepared for us with multiple layers of gesso (white chalky material in a glue binder). Each layer was sanded to create a smooth surface – but we only had to sand the final layer! If we’d done all the layers ourselves, that particular spiritual discipline would have made the workshop a week longer. We transferred our images to the board and then began to paint the layers with egg tempera pigments. The paints were made by stirring dried pigments into an egg-yolk-water mixture – with a little vinegar as preservative. (Egg yolks from happy, organic hens are preferred.) This is an old traditional style, in use before oil paints and acrylics. Applying multiple layers of egg tempera paint and glazes of the egg-yolk mixture gives a glow to the final image. We started with layers of dark colours, then added the lighter colours, so that the face of the icon gradually emerged from the darkness, like a familiar person gradually recognized. The task requires that the exemplar be copied as closely possible, as part of the

discipline of being present to the task. However, comparisons of the “same” finished icon from different hands suggests something of ourselves is reflected in the icon that emerges.

There are many things to notice – for example, traditionally the light all comes from *within* the icon, so there are no shadows and the little “spot of light” usually placed in the eye by portrait painters is missing. The halo is one of the final steps –applied as gold leaf on a layer of glue. Only Jesus has a halo with a cruciform; all other icons have a plain circle of gold.



The icon name is added – IC XC for Christ, and the Greek letters *ΩΝ* in the halo for “He Who Is”. Titanium white paint is used to mark in highlights on the face and the white of the eye, and then the icon gets a last glaze of egg-yolk mixture.

At the end of the Saturday class, the completed icons were placed on the

altar in St. George’s Chapel, for a service of blessing. After traditional prayers, each icon – and the iconographers - were blessed with a spritz of water, appropriately from a clean paintbrush! I am grateful to our instructor Regan O’Callaghan and to St. George’s Church and the Sacred Wisdom Centre for making this special opportunity available in Guelph. It was so much more than just a painting class.

## Greetings from Wendy and Tim

by Marilyn Sears

It was one year ago when Wendy and Tim Brown pulled up stakes and moved to Victoria, BC. Wendy was Jim Ball’s fellow team minister at Harcourt until she retired in 2016. Although she is greatly missed and misses all her friends at Harcourt, we can report that Wendy and Tim have settled in well in a lovely area of Victoria.



In July, Mark and I drove out west with our fifth wheel for a family trip to parts of the northwest in the US and Canada. As one of our destinations was to be the Victoria area of Vancouver Island, we contacted Wendy and arranged for a visit. Needless to say, it was wonderful to see them again and to catch up on the past year.

They have purchased her parents' home, a lovely condo in a beautiful residential section of Victoria and major renovations had just been completed before our visit. We were treated to a custom tour of much of the greater Victoria area including beaches, hilltops, lovely neighbourhoods and the Victoria harbour breakwater. Having been born and grown up for her first few years in Victoria, Wendy pointed out places that she remembers from those years. Afterward, we enjoyed appetizers on their patio overlooking lush trees and gardens, followed by a delightful dinner of BC salmon in their newly decorated dining room. We also got to meet Wendy's Father, Jack, who is very much enjoying having Wendy and Tim there with him. Mark especially engaged Jack in conversation about baseball, one of Jack's big interests and the Blue Jays are his favourite team.

Wendy shared that they are happy to have found a progressive United Church in the area where they are getting involved. She has been asked to give a couple of sermons there this summer and looks forward to those opportunities. Now that the renovations on their home are complete for now, they look forward to getting to know more people through the church and other involvements. Tim frequents the local gym regularly, so may even strike up some friendships there.

Wendy and Tim would love to welcome anyone who might make their way to the Victoria area for a visit. At some point they are looking forward to exploring the Tofino-Uclulet area on the west coast of Vancouver Island. But for now they seem quite pleased with where they are and look forward to their retirement together.



*Communication  
- Joan Barham*



*Caroline Harcourt Women  
- Jean Hume*



*AV superhero  
- Dave Mowat*

# Exciting Volunteer Opportunity – We Need A Harcourt Coordinator for Saturday Night Suppers!

by Jill Gill

The Saturday Night Supper program was started in 1998 at the former Chalmers United Church, currently Royal City Church, 50 Quebec Street. In 2008, Royal City Church requested that the program be maintained by the various churches that actually provided the meals and volunteers to serve the dinners, with the venue remaining at Royal City Church. This is still ongoing, with about 20 churches and groups providing Saturday night meals throughout the year. Harcourt folks host dinner four times per year.

These dinners serve many of the same folks that we see at the Chalmers Community Services Centre food pantry. Saturday Night suppers, for many are their special night of ‘dining out’ and they express great appreciation for both the delicious food and fellowship that it provides. I have been coordinating the dinners that Harcourt hosts for approximately ten years and am looking for a capable person(s) to shadow me for the next few dinners to learn the drill and eventually take over this responsibility.

Responsibilities include: occasionally communicating with the organizer at Royal City Church; placing a notice in the Harcourt Herald in advance of dinner dates to recruit volunteers and food donations; placing a sign-up sheet in the Greeting Place; requesting that Anne Purkis create a Sign Up Genius posting; placing notice in Harcourt bulletins in advance of dinner dates; occasional announcements in church requesting volunteers and thanking participants; purchasing food that hasn’t been donated; preparation of ‘Task Lists’ for food preparation and serving as well as clean-up after the meal. The menu is set with a well-loved recipe for Pasta Casserole. This takes place approximately quarterly.

This is such a rewarding volunteer activity, especially for anyone interested in Social Justice and food security in our community. There is a solid core of repeat volunteers who regularly prep and serve dinner, so the new folks who wish to participate have plenty of mentors. We meet wonderful folks and hear interesting and heart-warming stories over good food, in a non-threatening environment. I am willing to co-coordinate for a reasonable number of dinner events to allow a new person to gain some confidence and understanding of procedures. Our next dates to host will be **September 9 and December 2, 2017**. If this sounds intriguing and fun, please contact Jill Gill (519)767.1244 or at [peter.gill@sympatico.ca](mailto:peter.gill@sympatico.ca) for further details.

# How Well Do Know Harcourt?

1. From what Guelph Mission did Harcourt Memorial United Church emerge?
2. What year was Harcourt Memorial United Church built and dedicated?
3. In 2005 Harcourt Memorial United Church officially obtained what designation to welcome people of all sexual orientations into the life of the congregation?
4. Financed in large measure by the congregation, what did Harcourt install to generate electricity and reduce its carbon footprint?
5. Started by Chalmers United Church in 1998, what food program is supported by over 20 local churches or groups, including Harcourt, with members who cook and serve food to people in need once a week?
6. What is the name of our wonderful Custodian?
7. Who is Harcourt's Chair of Council?
8. What is the name of Harcourt's Newsletter that is printed and published online once per month for 10 months of the year?
9. Why was Harcourt's balcony removed?
10. Where is Harcourt's library located?
11. On what special day are animals encouraged to come to church?
12. What is under construction at Harcourt currently?

Answers on page 33!

# A Newbie's Experience of the Skylight Festival in Paris, Ontario

by Julie Ashley

I had heard Jim mention enthusiastically this Skylight festival that highlighted arts and social justice, and something about Manna participating last year. If it was good enough for Jim, I figured it would be good enough for me. So I went online, and I have to say, I still wasn't sure what this was going to be, exactly, organized on some fairground in little Paris, Ontario, but I decided to walk forward in "faith" and go. Gosh, am I ever glad I did!



I attended a few workshops; one of writing, where the artist writer, Katie Reid, gave us inspirational thoughts to write about. Then there was the speaker from Saskatchewan who gave a presentation on the Enneagram that really moved me to buy books he suggested. Another presentation was by a Quaker who taught us about the power of silence and waiting to be moved to speak (somewhat ironic, but he did use few words). I was so moved by the woman from Tennessee who challenged us to learn to live/move amongst the marginalized instead of seeing ourselves as just "helpers".

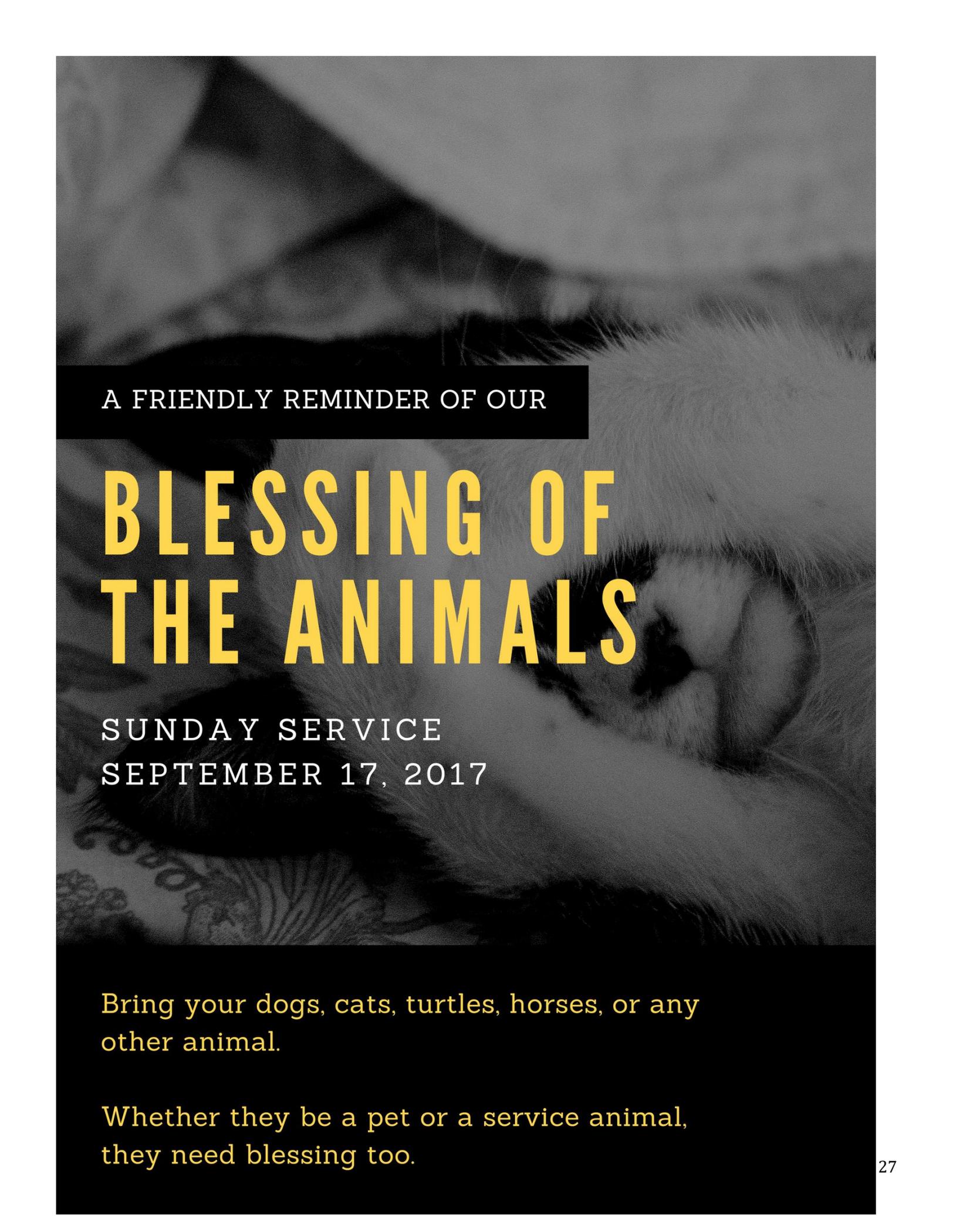
However, possibly the part that has stayed with me the most was the absolutely excellent song artists who performed the music they had written, and all I could do is look around in disbelief and wonder WHY ARE THERE NOT MORE PEOPLE HERE?! A song by Lauren Mann called "Braveface" has become an official earworm for me, for over two weeks now. If you listen to it, you will discover why – she has the voice of an angel. Just move your mouse over the following URL and click your left mouse button while pressing the CTRL key at the same time. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoO8ETUJM\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoO8ETUJM_I)



*Photos by Jerry Daminato*

Jim's and Manna's enthusiasm certainly was expressed in the thirty-some Harcourt people who were there, and with whom I had the privilege and pleasure to sit around and chat with over the course of the week end – another magical memory. Although already feeling somewhat extended in my various enthusiasms, I must say that I need to find time to help raise the profile of this amazing conference, starting by writing this little article. I would encourage anyone reading this to consider looking

up <https://www.skylightfestival.ca/> and putting it on your event calendar for next summer. I know I will.



A FRIENDLY REMINDER OF OUR

# BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

SUNDAY SERVICE  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

Bring your dogs, cats, turtles, horses, or any other animal.

Whether they be a pet or a service animal, they need blessing too.

## Serving From the Sofa: Volunteer Activities That You Can Do From Home

Sometimes people ask 'what can I do to make the world a better place'? Maybe you can't get out to do the things you'd like to do for a variety of reasons. Here are a few opportunities that might help you to make a difference... right from your own home

- PayPal is popular, well-known, and convenient, and is used by entrepreneurs, businesses, and non-profits in over two hundred countries around the world. However, PayPal has refused, so far, to contract with Palestinian businesses and banks in the West Bank or Gaza. Settlers, banks, and merchants in the illegal settlements, however, can freely access PayPal individual and merchant services, using Israeli bank accounts. The United Church of Canada is urging people to write a letter to PayPal to protest this action. They provide a sample letter and information on who to send the letter to. Visit <http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/urge-paypal-extend-its-services-palestinians> or phone Patti Talbot Team Leader, Church in Partnership 416-231-7680 ext. 4018 or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 4018.
- The Canadian Wildlife Federation's Backyard Habitat Certification Program recognizes the amazing efforts Canadians are taking to meet the habitat needs of wildlife, and allows individuals to have their property certified by officially designating their gardens as wildlife friendly. Whether you have a small patio or acres of land, your property may receive certification once specific criteria and established best practices are met. Certified gardens are eligible to purchase an official sign to place in their garden. Visit <http://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore-our-work/connecting-with-nature/in-the-garden/get-certified/> or call them at 1-877-599-5777 for more information.
- Want to raise money for a good cause but aren't as interested in that local 5K? There's a way to do so without breaking your normal routine or running in large, organized road race events. [Charity Miles](#) sends a small donation to a non-profit organization for every mile you run, walk or bike. The app tracks your activity and, when you're finished, donates 25 cents for each mile you've covered on foot (in or out of the house) to the non-profit you want to support. The app is paired with 32 different charities you're able to support, covering a range of issues. It also works on your bike. Phone Canadian Running at 416 927 0774 for more information.
- Take a photo, make an impact. For every eligible photo you share through the Donate a Photo app, Johnson & Johnson gives US\$1 to a cause you care about. Over 1,500 Canadians have participated so far. Visit [https://donateaphoto.com/en\\_CA](https://donateaphoto.com/en_CA).

## Saturday Night Supper – Cooking Up a Storm

by Jill Gill

Harcourt's next opportunity to prepare and serve Saturday Night Supper is **September 9<sup>th</sup> at Royal City Church, 50 Quebec Street**. We need twelve volunteers to serve dinner on the night and many more folks to prepare food for the meal. Our menu includes Pasta Casserole (recipe supplied – see Harcourt website), Caesar Salad, cheese, pickles, rolls, assorted fruit pies, vanilla ice cream, juice, milk and coffee. To volunteer to serve or provide food there is a sign-up sheet located on the table in the Greeting Place or you can sign up online at Sign Up Genius by going to the Harcourt website, click on "Connect with Community", then "Saturday Night Suppers". Scroll down and click on "Sign up online" to pick a slot. Servers and food should be at Royal City Church (enter via backdoor) by 5 p.m. Volunteers will be needed until approximately 8 p.m. Many thanks for the ongoing, generous support of Harcourt folks for this worthwhile outreach activity which benefits many who are in need in our community.

## Harcourt Men's Group Learns About Life-Long Learning

The Harcourt Men's group will meet on Wednesday, **September 13, 2017**. Bill Lord, one of our own members, will be the guest speaker. He will give a talk on "My life as a continuing educator and life-long learner." In May he received the Emmanuel College Distinguished Alumni Award for his contribution to the field of continuing theological education.

All men are welcome to attend and you are invited to bring a friend or a neighbour who would enjoy this session.

Sandy Middleton will have coffee and tea ready at 7:45 a.m., the meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. Dave Mowat will be the leader.

In your date book please record the date of October 11<sup>th</sup> for the next meeting and also November 8 for a meeting. The program will be announced at the October meeting.



*John Ogilvie (incognito)*

# Full Steam Ahead for Planning the All Things Christmas Event

by Janet Webster

Yes, we are asking you to SAVE THE DATE(S). Mark November 25 on your calendar now as that is when the exciting *All Things Christmas* Event returns to Harcourt. This fun and creative fundraiser is back and we are planning now.

Organizers will meet on Wednesday **September 20 at 7 p.m.** In Room 202 and YOU are welcome to join us. Please feel free to bring your energy and ideas and help make this year's sale another success. Each year we build on previous experiences and incorporate fresh suggestions.

We have booked the gym and kitchen for November 23, 24 and of course November 25. On Thursday and Friday we become elves who arrange greenery, create centrepieces, fold ribbon into bows, build reindeer, make soup, bake and so much more (and laugh a lot too!)

Please set aside any items suitable for a "Treasures" table at the sale. Popular items include new or nearly new crystal, china, serving pieces, costume jewelry. No garage sale items at this time please.

The bake table is always popular so perhaps think of preparing some extra preserves, or jams. Baked goods sell very quickly too so perhaps look over your favorite recipes now.

Your generous donation last year of large plastic planter pots was a huge help resulting in wonderful (and popular) outdoor arrangements so set them aside for now please.

Also if you plan to trim any coniferous trees or shrubs (especially pine), please consider waiting until late November so that we can use them in the arrangements.

Christmas decorations can be donated as well, every year there is a customer for lights or an artificial tree! Please watch for more details as we get closer to advent. If you have suggestions or questions, contact Janet Webster 519 821-0953 or at [fwebst0953@rogers.com](mailto:fwebst0953@rogers.com)



# Mother Nature Was Good to Harcourt Communal Gardens This Year

by Jill Gill

The vegetable and herb gardens have been producing in abundance in response to the wonderful mix of rain and sun that we have experienced so far in this growing season. The



harvest as of August 8<sup>th</sup> was just over 55 kgs (121 lbs), about 15 kgs more than this time last year! In spite of groundhogs who devoured our first planting of beans and feasted heavily on the kale and lettuce, plus cucumber beetles that wiped out half of our cuke plants; once replanting took place, our biggest yields so far have included kale, beans, cucumbers and lettuce. Yeah!

As a member of the Guelph Community Garden Network, we are taking part in a 'Salsa Challenge' this year and have planted onions, tomatoes, bell peppers, chili peppers, parsley, and cilantro to be combined in a Fruit Salsa Recipe that we will preserve by canning, to be presented at a 'Taste-Off' event between participating community gardens to see who has the most delicious salsa in town! Stay tuned...

The Harcourt Communal Garden is maintained entirely by volunteers who plant, weed, water and harvest our organically grown vegetables and herbs which are then donated to Chalmers Community Services Centre for distribution to hundreds of folks who live with food insecurity in Guelph. If you would like to participate in the garden, please contact Jill Gill at [peter.gill@sympatico.ca](mailto:peter.gill@sympatico.ca)



Cartoon by Roz Stephenson

# Announcements

## Passing:



**PHAIR**, Stephen Hugh Ward – Passed away at home peacefully on February 28, 2017 at the age of 63 years. Steve was the beloved husband of Sandy Phair of this congregation (nee: Brown) for 40 years. He was also the proud father of Theresa (Glen McMillan) and Tegan (Daryl Vermey). In lieu of flowers, donations to Hospice Wellington, The Foundation of the Guelph General Hospital or Harcourt Memorial United Church would be greatly appreciated by the family.

## Other Announcements:

- Robin Smart, Public Education Coordinator of the Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington is giving a talk on dementia at Dublin St. United Church in the sanctuary on Wednesday, **September 20th** from 7-9 p.m. It is sponsored by the Pastoral Care Committee of Guelph United Ministries. All are welcome. Please bring any questions you have. Robin is an authority on the subject. The presentation will examine what dementia is, the best approaches for interaction and communication, as well as services available in our community. Some ideas that churches may adopt to support their members journeying with dementia will be considered and there will be handouts as well as time for discussion."
- Five Oaks located in Paris, Ontario offers programs for all ages focused on deepening spirituality, learning in community and renewing leadership for work in the church and in the world. New programs are listed at <http://www.fiveoaks.on.ca/programs.htm>.

### Answers to the quiz on page 25

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Brooklyn Mission       | 7. Lorraine Holding                           |
| 2. 1961-62                | 8. The Harcourt Herald                        |
| 3. An Affirming Ministry  | 9. Gotcha....Trick question! It's still there |
| 4. Solar Panels           | 10. Beside the Friendsh                       |
| 5. Saturday Night Suppers | 11. Blessing of the Animals Sunday            |
| 6. Darko Cikovic          | 12. The Accessible Washroom                   |

## BEHIND THE SCENES

### From Litigation to Learning Curve: Rev. Miriam Flynn Talks About Going Back to School

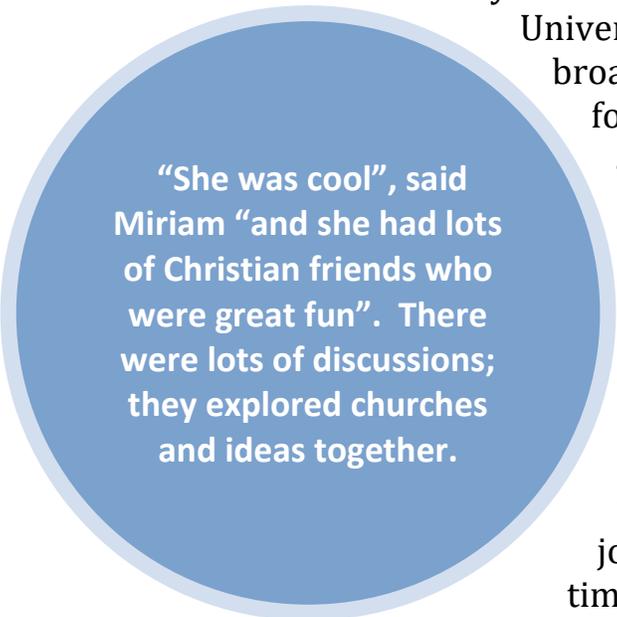
by Gillian Joseph

It was a sunny Saturday morning after a stressful evening full of thunder, lightning and tornado warnings. We had spent a few hours before bed uncertain as to what might happen in the night ahead of us. Were we prepared? Should we think about options? Or should we just go to bed and trust that all would be fine? Little did I think at the time that this scene would so closely mirror the experiences of the very person that I was about to interview the next morning.

Miriam Flynn grew up in a small Ontario town. As sometimes happens in small towns, tall poppies are not always encouraged to grow – especially tall poppies in the form of a bright young woman who was full of intellectual curiosity in the 1970s. Miriam remembers a local radio talk show advertising their latest topic “should married women work”, which seemed to sum up the opportunities that were open to a young woman in a small town in those days. “I sympathize with high school kids”, she said. “At that age you have absolutely no control over your environment, or your life”.

However, Miriam’s parents valued education and encouraged her intellectual curiosity. She was one of six children, all of whom went to university and all of whom followed professional career paths. Encouraged by her parents, at the age of 17 she was ready to leave the small town...and off she went to Queen’s

University in Kingston; a bigger city and a chance to broaden her horizons. University “opened the world” for Miriam, exposing her to others who shared her academic passion and desire to explore life’s big questions. One of the threads that began to run through her life started here through the friendship of her university roommate – a young Presbyterian woman with a strong set of beliefs that piqued Miriam’s interest. “She was cool”, said Miriam “and she had lots of Christian friends who were great fun”. There were lots of discussions; they explored churches and ideas together. Miriam joined a university church group where, for the first time, she was encouraged to challenge and ask questions about her faith. She was introduced to a more



“She was cool”, said Miriam “and she had lots of Christian friends who were great fun”. There were lots of discussions; they explored churches and ideas together.

liberal theology and different ways to think about the world around her – and she loved it. Interestingly, the leader of her university group at that time was Lois Miriam Wilson who later became the first female Moderator of the United Church of

Canada from 1980-1982. An ardent supporter of the Student Christian Movement of Canada, a youth-led ecumenical network of student collectives that are based upon spirituality and issues of social, economic and environmental justice, Wilson's influence helped seed an understanding in Miriam of faith lived out as a strong sense of justice and compassion for others.

After her undergraduate degree, Miriam went on to study Law at Osgoode Hall. The change from courses that focused on reading and essay writing to case-method learning and 100% examinations, took some adjustment. But the opportunity to develop practical skills by working at a poverty law clinic in Parkdale convinced Miriam that she was on the right track. She began practicing law at a time when women were just beginning to come into the profession in numbers and so, as a litigator, she faced the challenges that were then typical for women working in non-traditional roles. Miriam began in personal injury litigation, advocating for people hurt in accidents. Her second job was with the Ontario Workplace and Safety Board, where she sought recompense for the cost of injuries and industrial disease affecting workers. Finally, she worked for the federal government, as a lawyer on class actions and other cases involving prescription drugs, medical devices, food-borne illnesses and public health issues. What she most loved about that job was the need for a non-expert like herself to learn how things worked in basic terms and to use that knowledge to advocate for her client. "Everyone has a story" she said. Finding ways to effectively share a client's story in the interests of justice, is at the heart of good advocacy".



"Everyone has a story", she said. "Finding ways to effectively share a client's story in the interests of justice, is at the heart of good advocacy"

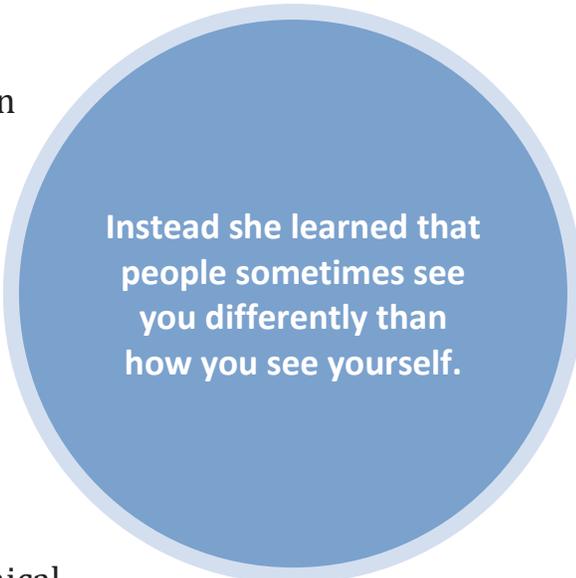
Ministry, however, was not on the radar at all from Miriam's perspective. She was a member of the United Church in her local area, but sat at the back of the church in a dark, quiet spot. She volunteered if needed, but did not have a strong desire to get involved. Then one day she was asked to sit on a church visioning committee and that experience spun more of the theology thread weaving through her life. "I had great talks with the Minister", she said, "He gave me things to read." It led her to think about taking some interest courses in theology...nothing serious, you understand, just a few for fun. She walked into Emmanuel College to register...and that was that. She was connected - body and soul.

Unsure about how her friends and family would react to her decision to go back to school to become a Minister, Miriam worried. Would they think she was crazy? She laughs as she tells me about a T-shirt she saw at Skylight Festival recently that she feels describes herself: "I love Jesus, but I curse a little" it says. Would her friends and family think this was out of character for her? Instead, she learned that people sometimes see

you differently than how you see yourself. Some said they were not surprised. Others saw her decision fitting well with her sense of justice, advocacy and fairness. Her children were grown by this time so she did not have the work-family balance challenges that some of her classmates with young children experienced. Yet Miriam continued to work full-time while undertaking her studies, which demanded that she be well-organized not only at home, but also with school work and her continuing church commitments. Her family was very supportive. In particular, her siblings saw her choice as making sense for her and encouraged her to follow her heart. This allayed her insecurity and gave her the energy she needed to keep all the balls in the air. She was, as she puts it simply, “On fire for the Lord!”

I ask her how she prepared herself to go back to school. “I didn’t prepare at all” she says, “I often felt that I didn’t know what I was doing, where I was going. I had to trust God and believe that he would plant my feet where I was supposed to go”. She talks about amazing professors, her fears about being an older student, her sense of uncertainty. For example, she found that younger students were well versed in more modern theoretical paradigms and new philosophical approaches than those that she had been taught long ago. She found that younger students had also been raised with technology which shaped their approach to learning differently from hers. While Miriam held and read the bible in class, younger students read it online. In addition, she found that experiences with social media had made her younger colleagues more open to sharing commitments and identifications arising from their personal experiences, which was harder for an older student to do. Yet she also found that younger students sometimes had more difficulty than older students in putting their experiences into a broader, collective or historical context. She loved every minute. There was a strong call. She wouldn’t have done anything differently.

Now, having looked back, I ask her what she might say to someone else who might be interested in returning to school for a career change. “I would encourage them” Miriam says, “It was a breath of fresh air for me, it feels good”. After thanking her I put the phone down, surprisingly energized myself. Then looking out to the sunshine I remember the struggle of the stormy night before and the uncertainty of what lay ahead. We are never alone on our journey. Thanks be to God.



Instead she learned that people sometimes see you differently than how you see yourself.

## Harcourt Calendar – September 2017

Updated August 8, 2017—[www.harcourtuc.ca](http://www.harcourtuc.ca) for most up-to-date information

### **Sunday September 3**

10:00am Worship [S]

### **Monday September 4**

**Labour Day – Office and Church Closed**

### **Tuesday September 5**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

### **Wednesday September 6**

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

7:00pm Creative Intentions [202]

7:00pm Rainbow Chorus Registration [S]

7:30pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### **Thursday September 7**

9:00am Stroke Recovery Executive [F]

1:30pm Park'n Dance [G/F]

6:00pm Preschool Orientation [G]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### **Saturday September 9**

10:00am Sacred Circle Dance [G]

10:00am Explorations in Progressive  
Christianity [202]

6:00pm Saturday Night Suppers

### **Sunday September 10**

9:00am Worship [C]

10:30am Worship [S]

10:30am "Manna" Service [G/F]

### **Monday September 11**

**Office Closed**

11:45am Caroline Harcourt Women's  
Fellowship [F]

6:50pm Communications Committee [L]

7:00pm Women's Spirituality [C]

7:00pm Scouts [G]

### **Tuesday September 12**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

6:45 Cubs [G]

7:00pm Finance Committee [202]

7:00pm Worship Committee [L]

### **Wednesday September 13**

7:45am Men's Group [F]

9:30am Lightshine Singers [Choir Rm]

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

6:30pm Guides [F]

6:45pm Beavers [G]

7:00pm Ministry & Personnel Committee [L]

7:30pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

### **Thursday September 14**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]

1:30pm Park'n Dance [G/F]

7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

### **Saturday September 16**

10:00am Explorations in Progressive  
Christianity [202]

5:30pm Potluck and Games Night [F]

### **Sunday September 17**

9:00am Worship [C]

10:30am Worship [S]

10:30am "Manna" Service [G/F]

### **Monday September 18**

**Office Closed**

1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]

7:00pm Scouts [G]

### **Tuesday September 19**

11:30am Stroke Recovery Lunch [F]

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings

6:45pm Cubs [G]

### **Wednesday September 20**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [Choir Rm]

1:30pm Tai Chi [F]

6:30pm Guides [F]

6:45pm Beavers [G]

7:00pm Council Meeting [C]

7:30pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

**Thursday September 21**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]  
1:30pm Park'n Dance [G/F]  
7:00pm Shared Evenings [F]  
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

**Saturday September 23**

10:00am Explorations in Progressive  
Christianity [202]

**Sunday September 24**

9:00am Worship [C]  
10:30am Worship [S]  
10:30am "Manna" Service [G/F]

**Monday September 25****Office Closed**

1:30pm Prayer Shawl Group [202]  
7:00pm Scouts [G]

**Tuesday September 26**

11:30am Staff & Admin Meetings  
6:45pm Cubs [G]  
7:00pm Handbell Choir [M]

**Wednesday September 27**

9:30am Lightshine Singers [F]  
1:30pm Tai Chi [F]  
6:30pm Guides [F]  
6:45pm Beavers [G]  
7:30pm Rainbow Chorus Rehearsal [S]

**Thursday September 28**

8:45am Mindstretch [C]  
1:30pm Park'n Dance [G/F]  
7:30pm Choir Practice [M]

**Friday September 29****Congregational Retreat****Saturday September 30****Congregational Retreat**

10:00am Explorations in Progressive  
Christianity [202]

**Sunday October 1****Congregational Retreat**