



The United Church of Canada in Elgin and Portland

# Our Churches United

Spring News and Notes

June, 2013



## **Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge**

Rev. Takouhi  
Demirdjian-Petro

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### **Pastoral Charge**

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Office Hours:  
Wed.: 9 am-1 pm  
Thurs.: 9 am-3 pm

Sunday Services:  
Portland – 9:15am  
Elgin – 11:05 am

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## **Rev. Takouhi's Reflection**

What a joy it is to be in your midst and serve God by serving this Community of Faith.

On Sunday, August 10, 2010, when I completed my internship/student ministry call with you and was handing the keys of the churches to Rev. Sangster, my heart whispered, "Let's see how long will it take for you to return to this community that you love so much." However, my mind echoed, "What are you talking about? That is impossible" - logic and unbelief were forgetting that God is God of possibilities.

We fast forward to February 1, 2013.... Thirty months after my departure from here, I begin my accountable ministry among you – as your Spiritual Leader.

It has been wonderful to be with these past three months even though it has been a juggling act between settling into a new life in Ontario and keeping up with the required duties of love that come with this vocation. But over all, it has been a blessing to be amongst you.

There is so much that this pastoral charge does for God's Kingdom and we still have a lot of work ahead. As Jesus always said, the Kingdom of God is at hand, therefore, the Kingdom of God is not fully apparent to everybody yet, so we need to make it visible to all. Not by our own power and might, but by God's Spirit.

We have had fantastic Seasons of Lent and Easter and we are entering the Season of Pentecost, where the Spirit is welcomed to move in us once again, and move us closer to the Presence.

**Rev. Takouhi (continued from Page 1)**

I am looking forward to continue this Season of Pentecost with you, and, as your minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care, I am excited to begin the adventures of "Living the Questions". This Christian Adult Education Series will be offered in both churches, Elgin (9:30 a.m.) and Portland (7:00 p.m.) every Wednesday, beginning June 5<sup>th</sup>.

I am looking forward to continuing this journey with you and discover new blessings that God has in store for us.

Whether summer visitors or local congregants, we are certain of one thing and one thing alone – when we think something is impossible, God says, "I'm Possible" – the same word just seen differently.

Thanks be to God – Amen.

**Report from the Chair of the Official Board**

**Joan Delaney**

What a spectacular last few days we've had with the hot, sunny weather! How nice to see the shorts, sandals, and T-shirts come out of storage and the smiles on faces that haven't felt the warmth on their skin in months. It is a blessing to see the change in seasons.

Reverend Takouhi has been with us a little over three months and we rejoice in her enthusiasm and commitment to God's work. As I write this, she and others are gearing up for the Spring-A-VanZa for youth aged grade 6 and up. I pray that there will be a good response to this day from our young members and guests.

Both Elgin and Portland Churches have been trying to repair ageing buildings, which has put a strain on budgets. If any of our dear readers have suggestions for cost-cutting or fundraising please contact me or the council chairs, Earl and Cam.

I will not describe any of the activities that have occurred since the last newsletter as the committee chairs will have included their articles, however I would just like to report that the community lunches have continued successfully in Portland with proceeds being donated to the Dental Issues Group.

In summation, please have a safe, fun summer whether you have a vacation or a "stay-cation". To the farmers out there, I hope the weatherman smiles on you and sends rain just when you need it!

## More of Clint's Musings

Clinton Halladay

### **ARE YOU ENGAGED? Engagement: What and Why? .....what it is, what it isn't, why care!**

According to a 2012 Global Workforce study, 63 percent of U.S. workers "are not fully engaged in their work and are struggling to cope with work situations that don't provide sufficient support."

So, you ask, what does that have to do with the church and especially our Church and the "Our Church" newsletter? I recently conducted a seminar on Employee Engagement and somewhere during a mind wondering moment, it struck me, *"hey, there are parallels here, explore them!"*

I've been known for throwing a curve, for being somewhat outside the box, so it is no surprise that when I start with *"I don't want to be offensive, or offend anyone"* I end up doing just that! Well, no sense in changing a good thing, so hang on, I'm going to push some buttons!

There are many, many dedicated persons amongst us who diligently and unselfishly give their time and talents, even go above and beyond, to their local and the wider church. And I thank you.

Don't be mistaken, I'm not beating a "do more" drum here. I'm talking about each and everyone of us doing our part and thereby enriching both ourselves and others. There is, in my opinion, a chasm of apathy and laissez faire towards religion,

religious affiliation, and our overall purpose, across the general population. We need to wake up to the fact that if we are not engaging people, we are hurting them and the organization.

Although individuals should certainly bear some of the responsibility for not being engaged, ultimately it's up to our leaders, and you and I, to develop and implement a strategy that boosts engagement.

The reason, I propose, for failure in this regard, is a lack of consensus on what the term "engagement" really means. "Engagement" isn't a buzzword. It isn't how happy you are or how comfortable. It is a critical indicator of success and the sustainability of success. I define engagement in terms of "how connected people are to their purpose and the organization they are supporting."

Engaged persons understand their role in achieving the goals of the organization, and the value of that role. This gives them purpose and meaning, and ensures they are contributing, more connected and more tuned in to why what they are doing is important. To bolster engagement we must foster a sense of meaning and allow individuals to craft their "engagement" according to their capabilities, strengths and like.

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**Clint's Musings (continued from page 3)**

Engagement isn't about culture, it is about communication. It's about how we announce important matters, how we keep people informed, how we spread the News, how we determine our physical, fiscal and spiritual health, how we show appreciation, how we underscore each individual's contribution and how we encourage and support each other on our personal faith journey.

Now that being said, let's be clear, we can't make anyone subscribe to one iota of this, nor can we make them participate should they chose to not; however, we are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that promotes meaning and understanding. That's a tough row to hoe, and to further complicate things, engagement isn't a project with clear deliverables and an end date. We're never done! It's a continuous process!

How engaged are you with Elgin or Portland Church? With the Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge? With Four Rivers Presbytery? With the National United Church? With Mission and Service? Or with other affiliations that strive to foster God's Grace and Glory throughout the community and the world?

We are indeed blessed to have God's presence amongst us in the form of dynamic, passionate and gifted Rev. Takouhi, and what a catalyst, leader and inspiration she is. But she must not stand in solitude. The New Creed says "we are not alone, we live in God's world", but that doesn't mean God has to do the ironing or the

dishes. We have a stake in the whole thing: the leading and the being lead.

What supports do you need to inspire your engagement, to make your engagement more meaningful or to help you reach out in support of someone else? Speak up, or listen, or better still speak up and listen.

Other views are welcome.

**30 Days To  
Rock The Bible**  
*a faith event on facebook*  
Join "Rock The Bible" today

**30 days + 30  
amazing  
United  
Church  
leaders and over a dozen posts by  
special guests (Shane Claiborne,  
Lois Wilson, Dennis Gruending,  
Donna Sinclair, Fulata Lusungu  
Moyo, our Moderator and more...) =  
one of the coolest, free (yep-free)  
social media based Bible studies  
ever. For the whole month of June,  
join spiritual seekers coast to coast  
to rock the Bible from various  
perspectives and have a rockin' time  
doing it. Get ready! Join the  
Facebook Group "Rock The Bible"  
today.**



**PORTLAND PEALERS**

**JAN HASKIN**

**We welcome Barbara Plante, who will conduct a hand bell workshop on Friday evening and Saturday, June 14/15. We are excited about this opportunity and thank Portland Council for their support. There is only 1 space left. Contact Jan at 272-2741 or [jan@haskin.ca](mailto:jan@haskin.ca) if you wish to be included, or need more info.**



Barbara Plante graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and English. She has worked with hand bells and hand bell ringers for 40 years. She studied hand bell ringing techniques at several workshops and courses in Canada, England, and the U.S., including attending a hand bell course at Westminster Choir College at Princeton University. She has conducted numerous workshops throughout Canada, Quebec, and the Maritime provinces. She also conducted massed ringing at several Ontario Festivals, and in 2004, represented Canada as Massed Conductor in Toronto, at the International Hand bell Symposium. This past May Barbara was the guest conductor at the B.C. Hand bell Festival, Spring Ring. She has run the hand bell programme at First St. Andrew's United Church, in London, ON for the past 40 years.

**Portland Visitation Committee**

**Bonnie Tackaberry**

As part of the Portland Visitation Committee things sure are a "buzz." Spring has sprung, and everyone who is able is out and about. The gardens are being planted with the hope of new things to grow. God certainly has Blessed us in our area of having the climate, to do just that...plant the seed, nurture it, keep it watered and warm, transplant when ready and really watch it grow.

With our Visitation committee we are also making changes. We have asked for some new people to help out. We know in this church in Portland, we are such a Church Family; if we just ask we will often receive the help we need. So with that, like the seeds we too have been nurtured and have grown and so we must change and/or share some of our lists. I have made changes to help out geographically, not for any other reason. So as you read my part of the newsletter, please, if someone new from Portland United Church comes to your door, welcome them in, enjoy the visit (short or long) and the newsletter. Pray Participate

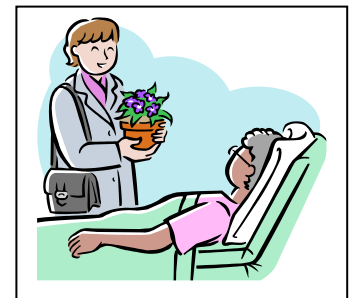
We are very pleased and blessed to have Rev. Takouhi with us now. We very much enjoyed having her as a student, watched her grow in Spirit, let her go (only for a while) and then welcomed her back. Now Rev. Takouhi shows us the way, on our Life's journey, leading us in Worship, with prayer, guidance, support, and singing. What a joy to see her smiling face and the laughter she brings to us.

Thank you so much again to our Visitation Committee:

Pam Cairncross, Norma Cummings, Bill French, Anna Greenhorn, Carol Irwin, Carolyn Long, Lois Mowat, Sheila McKeage, Jane Pickard, Marie & Went Sharpe, Brenda Smith, Eleanor Theriault, Vicki Zwiers, and Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro.

Thank you and enjoy your summer...

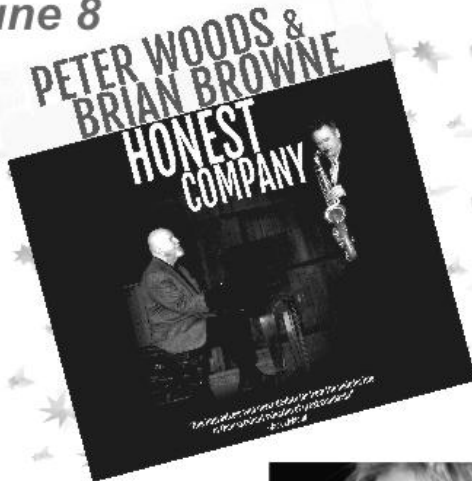
and of course your Plants !!!



The  
Elgin United Church  
**2013**  
Summer Concert Series

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**June 8**



*presents*



Tickets : \$15. Advance  
\$20. At the Door

*Gracenote*  
www.gracenotemusic.ca

**June 29**

Tickets : \$15. Advance  
\$20. At the Door

**August 3**

Tickets : \$20. Advance  
\$25. At the Door



For Tickets call 613-547-9519 or 613-273-3456

or visit [www.elginportlandunitedchurch.com](http://www.elginportlandunitedchurch.com)

Tickets are also available at : Elgin Home Furnishings, 96 Perth St., Elgin, On. 613-359-5290  
Lake Effects , 16 Bedford St. , Westport, On. 613-273-7799

**Get a Season Ticket Pack - only \$40. Good for all 3 shows !!!**

*Proceeds to EUC A/V Dept. and D.I.G.*



## SOUTH CROSBY PUBLIC SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM 2012-13

**Sandra Smith**



As another school comes to a close, we owe several special volunteers a big THANK YOU. Every Tuesday morning one of our teams goes to the school to serve students a breakfast of juice, cereal and milk. Some students come to be with their friends; some come because they can be late for class if they are eating breakfast; some come because they don't get breakfast at home and may eat 2 or 3 bowlfuls.

This last group is the one we are, especially, there for. Jesus said let the children come to me. He wanted us to realize how important these little people are. Teachers also tell us how much more productive their students are when they have had a nutritious breakfast before coming to class. Tuesday mornings are our "feel good" time. If you want to "feel good" too let me know before next September and I will gladly put you on the schedule.

Here are this year's volunteers: Irene Martin, Cheryl Stoddard, Connie Ginder, Went Sharpe, Cathy Ryan, Darwin Seward, Ann Overdulse, Jansje Keates, Howard Smith, Karen Myers, Sandra Smith ([snhsmith@kingston.net](mailto:snhsmith@kingston.net)). Thank you all.

## The Woodpeckers have to go!!



**Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark –**

- One:** Don't miss the boat.
- Two:** Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- Three:** Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- Four:** Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
- Five:** Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- Six:** Build your future on high ground.
- Seven:** For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- Eight:** Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- Nine:** When you're stressed, float a while.
- Ten:** Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- Eleven:** No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

*Thanks to Gibson Memorial Church Humour, found on the internet*

## **Dear Members of Portland and Elgin United Churches:**

***This is an education/experience report to the Pastoral Charge of Elgin-Portland. Many of you know me and will know much of the details that I share in writing this report today. As you are my 'home' congregation and Pastoral Charge, I thought our Newsletter was a great place to give some of the story behind the story of what I have been doing over the last two years.***

To begin, I want to describe my experience as a learner to become a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. I enrolled directly after retiring, to study over two years by attending for five weekend learning modules with Five Oaks Training Centre in Paris, Ontario. This community-based learning which draws upon expert leadership was very rewarding and challenging. We had guest preaching most weekends, and excellent leadership in theological topics and for deepening our understanding of the aspects of United Church worship services. As this was a focus for leadership within our denomination, we learned about specific guiding principles which guide the whole church. Not to be missed is the fact that I did not learn from home isolated behind the blue screen, but, during those weekends, surrounded by regular lay people who like me, felt drawn to offer more to their own church and/or to the wider church. Sure, lots of others were the newly, and not so newly retired, but two other large contingents were '50' something people who were working full-steam in their careers, and another group were younger people who were combining work and lay ministry, because for them, this made life more meaningful and rich.

I have all the excellent reading packages (some of which had too many big words even for me!), but the readings were all good at stretching my thinking and challenging my understanding. If anyone is interested in borrowing (selectively) or in exploring the process, I would be pleased to answer your questions. Throughout the fun parts; like being out walking the grounds with new friends, hearing consistently fantastic sermons by guest preachers who were trying to give us their best example, sharing informally about leadership experiences, eating, etc., there was excitement and pride growing about the journey of our denomination. To be in with such a group – leaders and participant learners – and to realize that that too, is the church of the future. I find it much more difficult to be discouraged about the fortunes of the denomination.

My personal conclusion to this learning experience occurs May 21<sup>st</sup>, at Four Rivers Presbytery Worship, when the Presbytery will covenant with me and present me with a license as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. I served to lead worship about six times toward the close of 2011. At the beginning of 2012 I began to keep a record. In 2012 I was out and about on sixteen occasions, and so far in 2013 I have answered four invitations. I am sure you agree, these statistics reveal that our church needs lay leadership. This also indicates what a good amount of practical application opportunity I have had.

But, this is not the whole story! I found in spring 2012, that my associate (through Kingston Presbytery), the Rev. Dr. Don Misener, was intending to teach Supervised



Pastoral Education for the last time. The program was to be offered in eastern Ontario. I produced my application, feeling somewhat uncertain as to whether this was a good fit for me. I was accepted into the program after the interview process, to sit with a group of fellow learners. Most of them were already answering a call as ordained ministry personnel – two ministers, and two chaplains. One other student is a student minister. SPE trains people to listen to others. There are successive units and with other educational programs one may become a chaplain (either as an ordained clergy, or not ordained). The newer label is Spiritual Care Provider. We met every week for face-to-face learning and practise of listening skills. Additionally we were asked to fulfil eight hours of visiting per week, in settings such as hospital, long-term care facility, church community, or prison. I was welcomed to gain valuable experience by visiting among the Elgin United Church community. I also made weekly visits to Kingston to Rideaucrest Long-term Care Facility, where I visited many residents as a spiritual care intern, supported by Chaplain, Nancy McMillan.

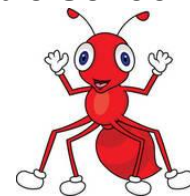
It is impossible for me to summarise about the learning over this past year, especially with the SPE program. The big quest behind the outward searching through learning programs has been my mid-life quest to truly discover better who I am, before it's over! I have a clear sense that I was led (Spirit watching over me) to the learning with the Miseners (both Bonnie and Don teach) because there was something there that I needed. The program has helped me to value relationships, and to acquire skills that will help me to be authentic in my relationships. I did not always feel comfortable in the experience of the group, or as a listener, but there is no doubt that I have been stretched and that I have learned about effective communication.

I hope that by sharing a part of my learning journey with you, I will encourage some other seekers to engage in programs for learning. A great start could be Rev. Takouhi's "Living the Questions" adult learning groups. I often say to congregations - sometimes we think that our relationship to God depends on our church, but our church actually depends on our relationship to God. How do you challenge and fuel for the discovery of who God made you to be relationship with God?

Thank you to both Portland and Elgin congregations for standing in support with me these couple of past years.

Margaret Martin

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**Come explore God's Word this summer at a Vacation Bible School Bug Fest!****Ages 5 – 12****Portland United Church****July 2 – 5, 2013****9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

**For more information or to register, please contact the Church office  
at (613) 272-2002 or [EPUC@rideau.net](mailto:EPUC@rideau.net).**

**No cost – just fly on in for some VBS fun!**

**If you are interested in helping out with this exciting ministry,  
please contact Rev. Takouhi or Pauline French.**

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**Our Churches' Outreach Supports Communities Near and Far**

**In 2012 Portland United Church made the following donations:**

Mission and Service Fund	14,540.83
Dental Issues Group	1,663.22
Haiti School Project	522.00
Benevolent Fund paid out	850.00

(This fund is to support anyone in the community in need.)

The Portland Food Bank, headed by Cheryl Stoddard, is supported by the congregation with donations of non-perishable food items and cash.

**Portland United Church Women** donated to:

Mission and Service Fund	\$ 2,400.00	World Development & Relief	200.00
Native People's Retreat	50.00	Morogoro Training Centre	200.00
Portland Food Bank	300.00	Smiths Falls Salvation Army	300.00
Cases of Caring	150.00	Brockville Interval House	100.00

Portland's Outreach also provides **Monthly Community Luncheons**. These luncheons, organized by Bob Butcher, are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month and provide a good lunch and some socializing time for whatever a person can afford to pay. In 2012 the amounts raised from these lunches were used to restock the kitchen with basic supplies such as tea and coffee, purchase two small appliances, and donate \$216 to the Dental Issues Group.

**Both Elgin and Portland United Churches, and other people from the area, support the Community Clothing Co-operative** (located in the back of the Portland Community Centre) with donations of time and clothing. Even though clothing is 'sold' at only \$5 a bag the CCC was able to make the following donations in 2012:

Martha's Table	\$250	Elgin Food Bank	\$300
CRHC Dental Issues Group	\$300	Cases For Caring (CHEO)	\$150
Elgin and District Nursery School	\$150	North Leeds Toy Drive	\$300
Bastard and South Burgess Food Bank	\$300	<b>TOTAL 2012 Donations</b>	<b>\$1,750</b>

**Both church Councils set donation goals each year for the Mission and Service Fund and the Dental Issues Group. The goals for 2013 are: Portland - M&S \$14,000 and D.I.G. \$2,000; Elgin - M&S \$7,000 and D.I.G. \$2,000.**

**South Crosby Public School Breakfast Program** is supported by volunteers from both churches who go in every Tuesday morning and serve a breakfast of juice, cereal and milk.

**In 2012 Elgin United Church made the following donations:**

Mission and Service Fund	\$4,746
Dental Issues Group	\$1,427
Elgin Food Bank	\$2,358 (and non-perishable food items)

Elgin United Church provides space for **The Elgin and District Cooperative Nursery School** 8:30 - 12:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from September through June.

**Vacation Bible School** (held in Portland) is open to all children in the area, free of charge, and both church Sunday Schools support a **Foster Child** (through World Vision and Plan Canada).

## **Leave a Legacy Month**

The sanctuary has been closed. “Unsafe,” according to building engineers.

What’s the future? Demolish and rebuild? Sell and move? Amalgamate?

I was delivering a legacy gift from life insurance to the leaders of this congregation. The donor’s gift amounted to over \$31,000. But we all knew that the gift of her life and faithfulness was worth so much more: her legacy was spirited potential.



“Spirited potential” is a good way to describe this congregation. They want ministry and mission to carry them forward—and this insurance legacy gift will help.

In a different town, two church members have been thinking about church finances, too.

They have decided to donate a gift of securities [stocks] to the United Church in order to buy a \$25,000 Gift Annuity. Yes, they will have to pay some tax on the stock’s capital gain, but the benefits outweigh the costs:

- Their yearly income from the investments had been \$740. Now they will receive twice that (\$1,470) from their Gift Annuity—and the income will be tax-exempt!
- In addition, they will receive a charitable donation receipt now for at least 20% of the principal.

Their hope is to use some of their gift annuity income to increase their giving to their congregation. Upon their death, any balance or residue that remains in the gift annuity they have chosen to be given directly to their congregation.

It is like a gift that keeps on blessing.

In a rural area, three congregations come together into one, and now must decide to renovate or build anew. Creating accessibility is costly in old buildings. A surprise bequest [gift in a will] of \$100,000 is a wonderful legacy gift that is encouraging them to seriously and prayerfully contemplate how the Spirit is leading them and what to do.

Individuals know it.

Congregations know it.

The United Church of Canada knows it.

I know it.

***Legacy Gifts can make a big difference!***

Written by Rev. Heather McLean

\* \* \* \* \*

Whatever the amount you give, how you give it, or wherever you direct it, your Legacy Gift is valued.

Contact your Financial Development Officer to help you create the right kind of legacy gift for you.

**Paul Sales**  
Financial Development Officer  
Quebec and Eastern Ontario  
613-841-9291 psales@united-church.ca

May 26, 2013

Dear Portland United Church Members:

A few weeks ago Doug Evans, our Treasurer reviewed the Financial Report for 2012 and reported that we had to dip into our Memorial Fund for \$30,000. As of the end of March, 2013, the amount of money coming into Portland United Church was \$14,000 and the amount of money going out as expenses was \$22,000 – a shortfall of \$8,000!

Now I know we all love our Portland United Church and we want to see it continue to flourish – we want to continue the wonderful Ministry, continue the beautiful music and to continue the enjoyable fellowship – but that takes money. So we are asking you to consider Step One to help fill the first quarter shortfall – can you see your way clear to increase your givings to Portland United Church by even a little bit where possible? – every additional toonie will help. Or perhaps you could sign up for PAR and have your weekly contributions automatically withdrawn from your bank account – pick up a PAR brochure in the Fellowship Room for all the details and speak to Norma.

And looking forward, we want you to be part of and participate in the following Financial Fun ways to raise funds for our Portland Church:

**FIT** - Rock Dunder Spring Walkathon – come walk, see, smell and hear the spring views at Rock Dunder – an easy walk or a longer hike for you to help Portland United Church get fit – sign up your sponsors now! We will provide donation receipts for any contributions of \$10 or more so be sure to get addresses for non PUC people.

**FUN** - Music Waves in the Sanctuary – Classical, Country and Surprise nights of beautiful sounds – let's continue to have fun at Portland United Church.

**FLOURISH** - God's children cannot live by bread alone – so let's have a BBQ chicken dinner – take-out only - and nourish Portland United Church so it can continue to flourish. And keep a watch out for the Ice Cream Sundae Sundays in different locations!!

Yes, we will have a great year at Portland United Church and we welcome any helpers and any ideas and suggestions for raising funds to enable Portland United Church to be vibrant for many years to come.

Thank you,

Doug Evans – 272-2593  
Treasurer  
[dougevans@kingston.net](mailto:dougevans@kingston.net)

Carolyn Long – 272-5388  
Fund Raiser Co-ordinator  
[carolyn.long@rbsinternet.com](mailto:carolyn.long@rbsinternet.com)

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