



The United Church of Canada at Elgin and Portland
Our Churches United
Winter & ADVENT News, Views and Notes



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**Elgin-Portland
Pastoral Charge**

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Portland – 9:15am
Elgin – 11:00 am

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Rev. Takouhi's Reflection

Are We Ready to Reclaim Jesus?

On May 21, I was on my way to Washington D.C. for the annual Festival of Homiletics, which is an ever nourishing and rejuvenating week-long gathering of ministers/church leaders of Faith Communities that I look forward to every single year – This year marked the fifth year that I have been able to attend, and I was one of 1,700 registered participants from all over the world – Yes, even Australia.

On my way there, I heard that there was going to be a procession on May 24, from one of the host churches, the National City Christian Church, to the White House – “Reclaiming Jesus”. Calling all disciples of Jesus to live the way Jesus did. (You may watch/listen to my sermon of June 3, 2018 on our website: www.eppc-ucc.com or you may check out the Reclaiming Jesus website: <http://www.reclaimingjesus.org/>)

Besides listening to over 20 sermons and lectures in one week, in Washington D.C. I was also thinking and praying about the United Church's 43rd General Council that is coming up in July – hosted by the Bay of Quinte Conference in Oshawa. This year at GC-43, commissioners are going to vote upon many decisions that the churches and presbyteries have already discussed and voted upon, but these remits must be approved and voted upon at the gathering for the final time.

As I thought of the future of the United Church of Canada during the Festival, I kept experiencing fear disappearing, as I heard the Spirit say, “No matter how much the courts of the church changes, the message of the church will stay the same, because the work and the message of the church is the same, from generation to generation-Living the Gospel of Jesus”.

Gospel, means "The Good News" – The Gospel of Jesus was and still is, Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, what more do we need in this life?

Beloved, Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge is one of the smallest pastoral charges within the United Church of Canada, however SHE works with Great Love – NOT only for the people within the church, or the immediate community outside the church walls but for all of God's People in the world.

Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge continues to support local ministries through, D.I.G (Dental Issues Group), Food Bank, Clothing Co-Op, Benevolent Fund, Community Lunches and other forms of Caring and Sharing that takes place in the name of Love. This year EPPC will host the 9th Annual Vacation Bible School, with the theme – "*Love in Any Language*" – thanks to hard working volunteers, we will teach the children French, Sign Language, Armenian and Arabic. At the worship celebrations of June 3rd, we learned a short refrain in Arabic from More Voices United that comes to us from Lebanon, where I was born, entitled, "May Peace Be with You". (MV 168). As we live in the Season of Pentecost, maybe it is time for us to look for the Love and the Peace of God being proclaimed all over the world in different languages and formats. Maybe it is time for us to lose the box and live in the Freedom of God's Spirit.

Beloved, Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge stands not only with those near to us but also with those far away. This year SHE has stood in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador, Honduras, and preparing to reach out to the student aged refugee kids from Syria in Lebanon – our sabbatical partnership with a few of the churches in the Middle East. Therefore, this year, more than ever before, I urge you to spring into a community of faith and dedicate your time, gifts and talents to make this world a better place. Between fake news and alternative truths, our world needs us to be disciples of Jesus and reclaim Jesus for the World.

I would like to conclude this short reflection with the words of The Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, who says in his most recent book titled, "*A Gospel of Hope*": "The world of Jesus is different. It is a world where he has made peace. And we now who are baptized are welcomed into his company and his work to be peacemakers in hard places, to refuse the way of anger and fear and hate and resentment, in order to enact a world of gratitude, generosity, and forgiveness" (Page 53).

May we ALL be the Church no matter where we are, leading a life of Gratitude, Generosity and Forgiveness. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Your Servant-Leader,
Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro
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Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge



WELCOMES ALL YOUTH

AGES 5-13

TO THE 9TH ANNUAL

Vacation Bible SCHOOL

Monday July 2 to Friday

July 6, 2017

Theme:

“LOVE IN ANY LANGUAGE”

Join us for 5 Days of Fun!

Stories, Songs, Snacks,

Games, Music & Crafts

9:15 a.m. to noon

@ Portland United Church

10 Colborne Street – Portland, ON, K0G

1V0

For More Information contact

Church Office at: **(613) 272-2002**

or OFFICE@EPPC-UCC.COM

ADMISSION IS FREE

REGISTRATION IS APPRECIATED

REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.EPPC-UCC.COM



musings of a muddled mind.....

Clinton Halladay

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

How often have you quickly formed an opinion of someone you just met? You probably were totally blown away by them, you really didn't like them, or you were simply ambivalent and quite frankly couldn't care less. All reasonable and understandable reactions and feelings I am confident in saying that we have all experienced. Have you ever thought to delve into this often kneejerk perception and figure out why? Are these feelings reactions or reflections?

Well we are more like mirrors than you might think. Others are drawn, perhaps subconsciously, to reflect your inner self back to you, and you do the same for them as well. Reflections!

When we look at other people, we see many of their qualities in innumerable and seemingly random combinations. However, the qualities that we see in the people around us are directly related to the traits that exist in us. "Like attracts like" is one of the spiritual laws of the universe. We attract individuals into our lives that mirror who we are. Those you feel drawn to reflect your inner self back at you, and you act as a mirror for them. Simply put, when you look at others, you will likely see what exists in you. When you see beauty, divinity, sweetness, or light in the soul of another, you are seeing the goodness that resides in your soul. When you see traits in others that evoke feelings of anger, annoyance, or hatred, you may be seeing those parts of yourself that you have disowned or do not like.

Because we are all mirrors for each other, looking at the people in your life can tell you a lot about yourself. Who you are can be laid bare to you through what you see in others. It is easy to see the traits you do not like in others. It is much more difficult to realize that you possess those same traits. Often, the habits, attitudes, and behaviors of others are closely linked to our own unconscious and unresolved issues.

When you come into contact with someone you admire, search your soul for similarly admirable traits. Ask yourself, "what do I possess that emulates this admirable trait"? Likewise, when you meet someone exhibiting traits that you dislike, accept that you are looking at your reflection and work on changing it.

Looking at yourself through your perception of others can be a humbling and eye-opening experience. You can also cultivate in you the traits and behaviors that you do like. Be loving and respectful to all people, and you will attract individuals that will love and respect you back. Nurture compassion and empathy and let the goodness you see in others be your mirror.

...other views are welcome



It's exciting times for the Portland Pealers!

Jan Haskin

Our membership is growing and we've learned some fabulous music. In addition to that, we are in the process of expanding our instruments to include a three octave set of choir chimes!

In January, the Bells of St. Paul's in Perth, of which Jan Haskin is now a member, graciously allowed us to use two of their octaves of choir chimes in our practices and for our spring performances. Didn't *that* light a firecracker! We wanted our own, but we needed three octaves (not just two) in order to ensure every ringer had the opportunity to play the chimes.

The financial support we received to purchase them was, and is, phenomenal! Our Portland United Church Council gave us a vote of confidence (and financial support), our congregation and community have made donations, and the generosity of the U.C.W. made our hearts sing!

The chimes add such depth to our music; the order is in and we will have them in time to start the new ringing year in September. We will continue to fund raise in the fall and hope to "pay it forward" by contributing back to the life of our church, not only through monetary donations, but also through outreach opportunities.

On another ♪: although we are now three octaves strong in membership, we still do not have any subs to help out when one of us must miss a practice (or the odd performance). Being a "sub" doesn't have the same commitment as a regular ringer, however it is a big help if someone can fill a gap on occasion. There is no obligation. It either fits into your schedule or it doesn't. If you think this would be a good fit for you, *please* get in touch with Jan Haskin.

Bluegrass Concert



Portland United Church



Linking Religion and Politics

Arie Hoogenboom, Member Portland United, Councillor Rideau Lakes Township

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi "Those who believe religion and politics aren't connected don't understand either", or said another way by Albert Einstein "Those who believe that politics and religion do not mix, understand neither.

Christians are the largest element of the Canadian population at 67.3% followed by people with no religion at 23.9%. The Christian population of course includes many denominations with Catholic being the largest. After Christians the second largest group in Canada is Muslim at 3.2%. As such we could argue that Christian values should dominate our government at all levels.

Canadian Christianity is seen as significantly different from Christianity in the United States. USA Christianity appears much more politicized with many leaders claiming to be Christian while behaving often in a less than Christian manner. Canadian Christianity is based on a more multicultural experience. We have a history of French Catholic and English Protestant conflict replaced by mutual acceptance and respect. Today the religion and politics debates tend to focus on more isolated issues like debate over Sikhs wearing turbans and Muslim women covering their faces.

The influence of religion has diminished as our multiculturalism grows. The remaining two major Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, are under fire. The need to be "politically correct" has Merry Christmas being replaced by Seasons Greetings. Christians respond by reminding all that "Jesus is the reason for the Season". Government work places and public schools are being sterilized of Christian content to the concern of devout Christians.

Many religious denominations are seen as socially conservative, often more so or less so than their local or national leadership. I believe there is a place for religion and politics to co-exist. Both are rooted in service to the community. Both espouse the need to address the needs of the less fortunate and show respect for minorities. Both rely on volunteers to put a face on their church or their community.

As a politician I note that there are few good stories in the Bible about local leaders or tax collectors. In Canadian society, taxes at all levels are a part of life and necessary to pay collectively for services. Envelop offerings are freewill; taxes, not so! Canadians, I feel, spend equal time complaining about the weather and their politicians. Municipal taxes are a regressive tax as they are not based on ability to pay. If we apply Christian thinking to Municipal Government, we recognize that property taxes and user fees must be kept in check to keep life affordable for low and fixed income earners. Both the local government and the local religious groups and churches must work together if our hamlets and rural communities are to survive and thrive.

People want a local government that is effective, efficient, transparent and compassionate. As Christians we are called to serve and deliver based on these principles.