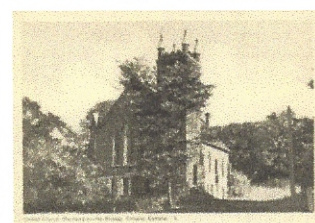


The United Church of Canada in Elgin and Portland

Our Churches United

LENT, EASTER and Spring News, Views and Notes



March 2020

Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge

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Wed.: 9 am-1 pm

Thurs.: 9 am-3 pm

Sunday Services:

Portland – 9:15am

Elgin – 11:00 am

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A Prayer During Times of COVID-19 by the Right Rev. Richard Bott.

originally posted on Facebook.

In this time of COVID-19, we pray:
When we aren't sure, God,
help us be calm;
when information comes
from all sides, correct and not,
help us to discern;
when fear makes it hard to breathe,
and anxiety seems to be the
order of the day,
slow us down, God;
help us to reach out with our hearts,
when we can't touch with our
hands;
help us to be socially connected,
when we have to be socially
distant;
help us to love as perfectly as we
can,
knowing that "perfect love casts out
all fear."

For the doctors, we pray,
for the nurses, we pray,
for the technicians and the janitors
and the
aides and the caregivers, we pray,
for the researchers and theorists,
the epidemiologists and
investigators,
for those who are sick,
and those who are grieving, we
pray,

for all who are affected,
all around the world...
we pray
for safety,
for health,
for wholeness.

May we feed the hungry,
give drink to the thirsty,
clothe the naked and house those
without homes;
may we walk with those who feel
they are alone,
and may we do all that we can to
heal
the sick—
in spite of the epidemic,
in spite of the fear.

Help us, O God,
that we might help each other.

In the love of the Creator,
in the name of the Healer,
in the life of the Holy Spirit that is
in all and with all,
we pray.

May it be so.

Rt. Rev. Richard Bott
Moderator UCC



The Impending Clergy Shortage... Coming From Left Field

[The Reluctant Xtian](#) April 25, 2018

Article submitted by Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro

Rumors of an impending clergy shortage have been circulating for years in the mainline church. The aging pastors who had put off retirement because the economy took a nosedive are finally choosing to head out to pasture, as most of that mess has rebounded.

But the more I look at the Christian landscape, and not just in the mainline, the more I see a different clergy exit looming and, yes, in process.

Largely from left field.

Many younger clergy are “giving it up for Lent,” as a colleague of mine once said, describing why he left the ministry after just five years.

Thousands of dollars in schooling and investment, while certainly not wasted, are not being used as originally intended.

The church really should take a hard look at why this is, and will continue, happening. And look at it with eyes wide open.

Many who are leaving the ministry are doing so because the churches that they are prepared to lead, and the Jesus they fell in love with, don’t live in the same place. They’re finding so many churches too occupied with propping up the past instead of embracing the future. They’re finding the Jesus of radical love and action to be hard-hearted and bound by fear.

They love the people in so many ways, but are having a hard time finding ways to let the people love themselves or others without spiraling into self-preservation and sniping. The Jesus who said, “Those who lose their lives will gain it” seems to not have been talking about whole congregations, because they are not usually willing to lose their past to gain their future.

Some who are leaving the ministry are finding their particular faith doesn’t quite align with the faith in the pews. Too esoteric. Too mystical. Too interested in justice, and not what the pews consider “Bible-based” (which, ironically, is the charge leveled at Jesus by the Pharisees who continually wanted to know what authority [scripture or tradition back-up] he was using to say and do the things he did).

Some who are leaving the ministry are finding the debt crushing. Church attendance, and therefore giving, is at 1920’s levels. Full-time calls at wages that will put food on the table and pay for seminary debt are disappearing. Health insurance costs keep rising. The business sector promises stability that the church can’t offer anymore.

If the church wants a learned clergy, it’s going to have to figure out this conundrum.

And some are leaving because they’re getting eaten up, and life is just too short to put up with that for too long. We follow a Jesus who said that we’re to give our life away, but not in the way that disregards life itself. You should hear the stories coming from clergy about what is being said to and about them from the “Beloved Kingdom.” The culture shift in the world that the institution is resisting is creating a difficult environment in many corners. Anxiety and anger fill and fuel more than hope and service do in many places. It’s not true everywhere, but in enough places to snuff out budding vocations.

Couple this with the fact that seminary enrollment is at unsustainable lows, we've really got to do some soul searching, church.

And the solution is only partly about encouraging people to go to seminary. That won't do the trick. That's like patching a road that needs to be replaced: it won't work, at least not for long.

I think there is a clergy shortage coming from two directions.

We need to take an honest look at how it all operates. Because we're pumping out non-traditional clergy these days for a church that continues to want to operate in a very traditional way.

And this just isn't going to work in the long run. *St*



Lanark Village Treats Easter Cream Eggs are returning again this year just in time for Easter.

7 delicious Flavours – count ‘em 7:

Milk Chocolate Chocolate Fudge	Dark Chocolate Mint
Dark Chocolate Butter Cream	Dark Chocolate Coconut
Milk Chocolate Bordeaux	Dark Chocolate Maple
Milk Chocolate Peanut Butter	

We are offering them at the same price as last year \$3.50 each or 3 for \$10.00. COVID-19 has disrupted plans somewhat; however, we are not derailed! These scrumptious treats will be available while supplies last. Get them soon don't be disappointed.

All proceeds to Elgin United Church.

Contact: Cindy Carbino 613-359-6085 or email at carbs308@kingston.net

Portland United Church Financial Update**Duncan Pickard**

Who would have thought that 6 of the first 13 Sundays would be cancelled as we greeted 2020 back on January 1?

In January three Sundays in a row were cancelled due to weather. These cancellations generated a great deal of disappointment as members of the congregation spoke out for or against them. The discussion really was a demonstration of the sense of community Portland United Church generates and the sense of longing we experience when our weekly rejuvenation and reflection is not available balanced by a desire to ensure all of our community is kept safe .

As treasurer there is always the concern that expenses continue while revenues are interrupted. I am happy to say that when regular gatherings resumed in February, the Portland United Church community gave generously and PUC ended February with higher donations than at the same time in 2019, both in the General Fund and our Dedicated Funds. Our General Fund expenses were up by a slight amount but overall the church ended the first 2 months on plan. I mention the Dedicated funds because this is where we identify monies earmarked for many of our church missions, which impact our local and worldwide communities and not available for general operating expenses . These missions include the Food Bank ,Benevolent fund ,Dental Issues Group, Mission and Service and the Christian Education Fund which is currently raising money for children in need in less fortunate countries .

In March our vocabulary changed and the news became dominated by COVID- 19, social distancing and self isolation so once again our ability to meet together and interact was restricted.

Or is it?

- Reverend Takouhi has led the way posting 2 YouTube reflections on the EPPC website
- Betty Hooganboom is in contact with the Sharing and Caring group encouraging contact by phone
- Clint Halladay is publishing the newsletter you are now reading
- The weekly email notice/bulletin is still being published
- The Rideau Sewers group is in contact and individuals are sewing masks for essential service personnel not at the church but from the safety of their homes.
- People are asking how to donate even in this time of restrictions

Yes the community is well and active as we all do our part to not only survive the current situation but ensure the people affected by our missions continue to receive the needed support.

Again as treasurer concern mounts as expenses continue to be realized, although at a reduced rate, revenue is limited and the potential for a longer term of cancellations is possible.

Let me first thank those of you on PAR. Your regular donation is the back bone of our revenue during this time and represents about 35% of our normal donations.

To the rest of us, **Help is NEEDED** to support the Portland United Church community during this challenging time.

With this in mind here are three ways you can continue to donate.

- A **Cheque** can still be mailed to :
Portland United Church
PO Box 251
Portland ON K0G1V0
- **Elgin Portland Pastoral Charge Web Site**
Click on **DONATE TODAY** button and follow the instructions

- **e-transfer**

Yes, we are set up to receive e-transfers

- **Go to your bank on line**
- **Add Portland United Church as a recipient of e-transfers**
- **the email address is, donateportlandunitedchurch@kingston.net**
- **follow the normal process for e-transfers**
- **In the notes section designate your distribution ie \$50 general fund \$10 food bank \$5 Building \$20 M&S etc.**
- **If an amount is not allocated it will be put into the General Fund**
- **Security question: Name of Village**
- **Security Answer: Portland**

This email address will be monitored by the Portland United Church Envelope Steward and the donations will be tracked for tax purposes in the normal manner.

Please choose the method that best serves your needs and give generously.

Be safe. Be healthy. By the Grace of God

Duncan

From the Editor

Clinton Halladay

Dear readers, I don't expect everyone to agree with me, but I claim "editorial privilege". Financial updates addressing the financial positions of our respective churches are of utmost importance. After all, money is necessary. Although we often consider our financial resources as a necessity to maintain our structures and keep our church buildings "open", that should not be our primary focus. As of this writing our church buildings are closed, not because of money, and we will discover ways of survival and growth because of it. I am reminded of a couple of quotes about money and wealth that I am sharing:

"Your wealth is not defined by your capacity to accumulate, rather by your capacity to give away."

"When money realizes that it is in good hands, it wants to stay and multiply in those hands."

Elgin United Church Financial Update

Joanne McLean

Hello my fellow congregants.

I feel very badly that we cannot be together for regular services in our church. However, we will take the proper measures and do what is necessary to stay safe and healthy during this troubled time.

Because we had to cancel three Sundays in January due to bad weather and now are closed for a number of unknown weeks, it is certainly putting a strain on our finances and certainly on our proposed budget for 2020.

We can be very thankful that we were given "the Challenge" at the end of 2019. It will certainly help to keep us afloat. We can be very thankful for all the people that have signed up and are on PAR, and also for those who have already donated on-line.

I want everyone to know that you may make donations on-line or if you want to mail your offering to me at 209 County Road 8, Elgin K0G 1E0, or just drop off in my mailbox, I would glad to process them for you.

On closing please carry out the guidelines that are put forward by government and health officials and stay home and stay healthy.

Joanne

Excerpt from the United-in-Learning Post on the UCC.ca Website:

The requirement to self-isolate and socially distance ourselves is an important part of keeping Canadians safe, but there's lots of anxiety about the impact this is having on our congregational finances. Stay tuned for information from our treasurers, councils and minister on wise ways to ensure have the financial resources they need to offer ministry that matters in these strange and trying times.

TIKKUN OLAM

Pat Greenhorn

Now that I have aroused your curiosity as to what *'tikkun olam'* is, I hope you will read this entire article! These words are a signature theme of the Jewish tradition, and translate as:

"Repair the world".

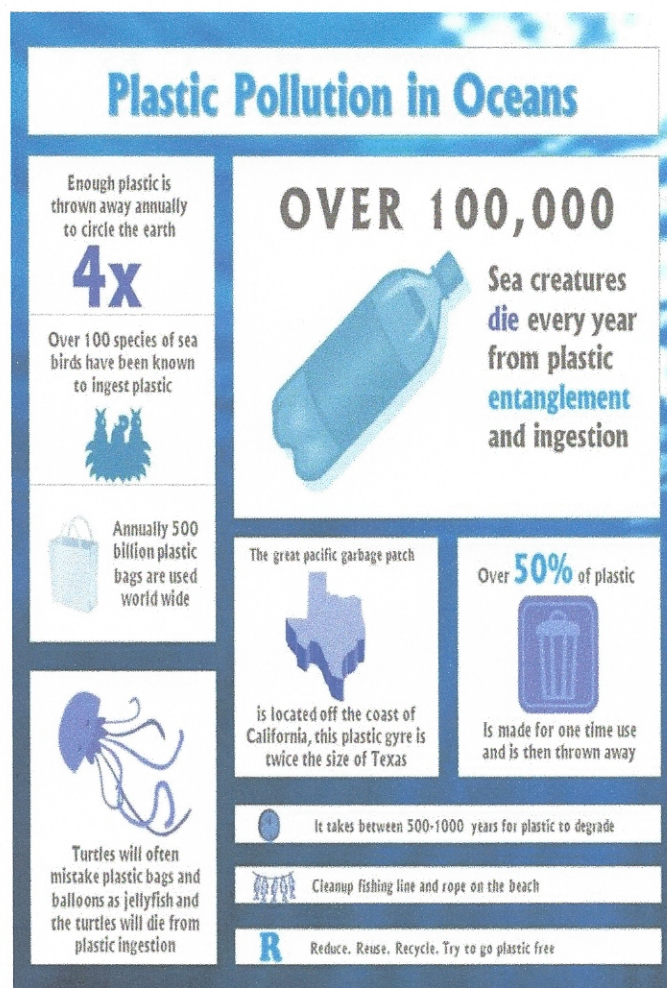
Jewish people believe they are to be role models with their acts to improve not just their own moral, spiritual, and material welfare, but that of the world as well. The New Creed of the UCC contains a similar theme in these words:

*"We are called to be the church,
To celebrate God's presence,
To live with respect in creation,
To love and serve others..."*

In Sunday School last year we talked about how God has called us to be stewards of creation, and the Worship Committee has responded with an Environmental Stewardship campaign to help us enact this vision in practical ways. Our first initiative is to decrease the amount of paper we use by reducing our production of printed reports and the number of bulletins we use weekly. Our second focus is the disposable items we use, and Ella and Alex Price shared some facts with us a few weeks ago about how much harm plastic waste inflicts on this earth.

In case you believe this is a problem happening on the other side of the world, consider that **87% of Arctic birds in Canada have ingested plastic waste, and that 10,000 tons of plastic enter the Great Lakes annually.** Even closer to home, as Alex observed, we only have to look at our local ditches and roadsides in spring to see the garbage. It takes **450 years for a plastic water bottle to disintegrate**, and if you think recycling is the answer, you can see that **only 9% of plastics are recycled.**

Even the smallest act of limiting our use of disposable products or reducing consumption will make an enormous, positive difference to our environment and eco system. We can feel hopeless and helpless in the face of such facts, but there are everyday, concrete actions we can take.



Cont'd Page 7

As a church:

- ✓ We're already using mugs and non-disposable cups for our coffee time, and Portland folks are now even bringing their own from home!
- ✓ Let's make a formal commitment at all events to ban the use of plastic water bottles and straws, and to find creative solutions to Styrofoam.
- ✓ Share **your** ideas on how we can be role models of environmental stewardship.

As individuals:

- ✓ Try following the screens during the service instead of using a bulletin or share a bulletin with a friend. Events will be listed on the screens before and after services, and there will still be monthly calendars printed.
- ✓ Switch to reusable water bottles (remember 450 years!)
- ✓ Buy reusable shopping bags (lovely, affordable ones are available from EUC, each with a beautiful image of the church. We welcome orders from PUC!)
- ✓ Participate in the **Rideau Lakes Township Pitch-In from April 19-May 2**. Free yellow plastic garbage bags are available at the township office to hold all the waste that you remove from local ditches and roadsides. Place it out with your regular garbage and pickup is **free**-no bag tag required!

Alex and Ella and I have made a pledge to clean up Hartsgravel Road together, and **we challenge you** to clean up your little part of creation. Take pictures of your efforts, and we will put them on the screens in church!

We are all feeling overwhelmed and helpless these days, but together we can do small acts that make a difference. As a church, let us work together and be role models of how to respect creation and repair God's beautiful world: *tikkum olam*.

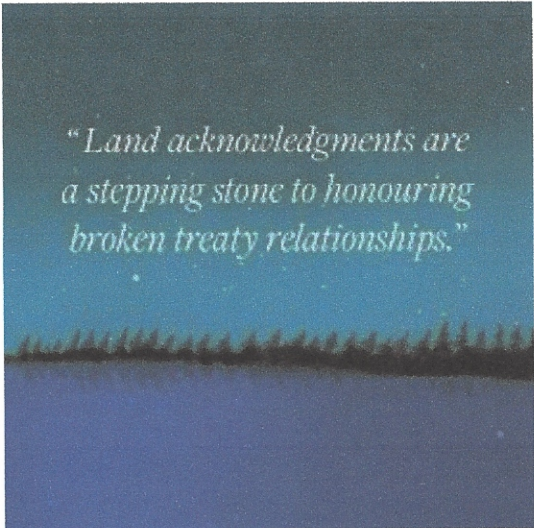
WHY DO WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TERRITORIES WE GATHER UPON AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY WORSHIP SERVICE CELEBRATION?

Rev. Takouhi

A territorial or land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation that involves making a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases still do call it home¹.

Moreover, at Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge we acknowledge the Territories we gather upon, because this act does not only build bridges of Reconciliation and Respect, it also reminds us to be thankful for those who have lived here before us as good stewards, and we seek to walk side by side in mutual respect and integrity. Our acknowledgement goes to the beginning of time when God created the Heavens and Earth. May God continue to bless our journey of Love, Growth and Service with everyone around us.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/territorial-acknowledgements-indigenous-1.4175136> - November 8, 2019



"Land acknowledgments are a stepping stone to honouring broken treaty relationships."

Why would a small rural congregation bother with becoming Affirming?

Charalee Smith

Motivation

Many United Church congregations have become Affirming. Our Elgin and Portland Congregations had thought of becoming Affirming over the last number of years with workshops and education sessions during Rev. Rodney Smith-Merkley's tenure. More recently, with Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro's encouragement, our respective Councils have both given direction to move forward with the Affirming Process.

And why wouldn't we become Affirming? Though it's still not easy for everyone, it is not the controversial issue it was years ago. Even though as congregations we are welcoming, we have never really affirmed that LGBTQ and other marginalized people are supported and in community with us.

Process

The Affirming Ministry Process (AMP) team consists of Margaret Martin, Liz Church, Mark Bee, and Charalee Smith, along with input from Alex Price. In preparation for our first meeting we spent some personal time reviewing Scripture and the Open Hearts document developed by Affirm United. We then met and listened to each other, sharing our perceptions and misperceptions, experiences and lessons learned. We came away full of enthusiasm, with a beginning understanding of the process and how we might apply all this to our particular situation. It was a great start.

Our plan was to introduce Topics for Consideration to the Congregations starting March 1, and then roughly every other week until June 7. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has interrupted this plan. We will reschedule our Topics for Consideration when we are once again able to meet.

Our plan acknowledges that becoming Affirming is a process, and Rev. Takouhi has included references and discussion points in her life lessons and prayers, giving spiritual guidance and keeping the issues in the forefront.

Goals

So why would a small rural congregation bother with becoming Affirming? To promote greater awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and to end discrimination against people in church, society, and within our own Congregations. We have a goal of helping people of all sexual orientations and gender identities to find support and community within our Congregations. It takes time, persistence, and energy.

So the conversation has begun again. There is renewed interest, and there is energy, and there is a plan.

Your Affirming Ministry Process Team



Due the rapidly changing conditions in which we currently find ourselves, a calendar is not being provided in this issue of the Our Churches United Newsletter.

Please refer to the on-line calendar on the website www.eppc-ucc.com as well as the weekly Email News for information about current events either happening or postponed.

We will communicate any time-sensitive breaking news to you by our website, email or telephone according to your emergency communication instructions. Thank you.

M & P Your Ministry and Personnel Committee is committed to educating our congregations about the normal relationship between United Church ministers and their congregations, and by extension between our own Rev. Takouhi and the Elgin and Portland congregations. This article builds on that which was published in last spring's newsletter. As always, we encourage our congregations to take the time to learn about how this most important relationship works.

Rev. Takouhi signs a covenant, or contract, with the Elgin-Portland Charge on an annual basis. It is presented to, and approved by, the Official Board. Many of the provisions in the covenant are mandated by the United Church of Canada or were contained in the original Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge Joint Needs Assessment Report (JNAC) of 2012. For those unfamiliar with the Joint Needs Assessment Report, it is the document the United Church of Canada uses to describe a pastoral charge when searching for a minister, and outlines the conditions of employment for which a minister is applying. This is the document that was used when we were looking for a new minister. It is re-visited and updated whenever a position becomes vacant.

Using these resources, the following outlines the conditions and entitlements of Rev. Takouhi's covenant with the E-P Pastoral Charge:

- Minister's Salary: the Treasurer of the Official Board budgets for this annually, keeping in mind the base salary (which includes the housing allowance) per the Covenant, and benefits as mandated by the United Church of Canada. The approved budget is included in the minutes of the Official Board Annual Meeting minutes.

- Vacation: 4 weeks (5 Sundays) – as per the JNAC of 2012
- Life-Long Learning: 3 weeks (4 Sundays) – as per the United Church of Canada
- Wider Church: 1 Sunday (an example of this is when Rev. Takouhi is asked to "guest preach" for another church's anniversary)
- EOOR (Eastern Ontario/Outaouais Region) regional meeting: 1 Sunday
- "An additional week between Christmas and New Year" as per the JNAC of 2012: 1 Sunday (also known as the "low" Sunday after Christmas)
- "An additional Sunday following Easter" ("low" Sunday after Easter) as per the JNAC of 2012: 1 Sunday

On occasion, we have a pulpit exchange. This doesn't mean Rev. T. isn't working; it just means she is working elsewhere. These are approved by the M & P Committee.

It's to be noted that the **only** times Rev. T. *isn't required to work*, is her vacation and the two low Sundays. All other "off" Sundays continue to be work days.

There is no actual provision regarding illness, within the contract. We would point out *NO Sundays* have been lost due to illness during the whole of the time Rev. Takouhi has been with us. Bereavement Leave is approved per the United Church Policy.

It needs to be emphasized that Rev. Takouhi doesn't just "work for us." She is an employee of the United Church of Canada, and as such attends meetings and workshops sponsored by the wider church on her working days (Wednesday through Sunday). We, as her home congregations, benefit from her professional development and growth through these events.

It also needs to be noted that, as a Pastoral Charge, we encourage and promote a mission for Outreach. This means that a minister must divide his/her time between that Outreach and his/her congregations, which can result in an absence from the "pulpit." We embrace the opportunity to hear other leaders, knowing that others are benefitting from *our* leader.

Other observations:

- Because many of the meetings scheduled for our charge (O.B., Councils, M & P, etc.) occur in the evenings, Rev. T. works on a flex hour system. Should her presence be required at meetings, she is entitled to balance the time spent against her daily hours. Many do not recognize that, what would ordinarily be a normal interaction during the day, may in fact be adding to hours already spent in the evening, adding to her "work day."
- This year, Rev. T. will become president of our Region (EOOR). She would be attending these meetings regardless, however her role within them is changing. It is a term position, and it highlights the high regard in which she is held.
- Although we do our best to ensure Rev. T. receives her "weekend" on Mondays and Tuesdays, it is not unusual for that time to be infringed upon (i.e., Pastoral Care needs). When members of the congregations muse about Rev. T.'s "busyness," they may need to be reminded that the role of minister does not fall into the "regular 40 hour week." Many congregants still have a perception that she be available "on demand." It is up to all of us to make sure that our own questions and demands for her time don't add to that "busyness," thus

preventing her the "down time" we all need to renew and rejuvenate.

- It takes a lot of work and a lot of time to plan weekly services and write meaningful sermons. We see the depth of Rev. T.'s messages, and they are a good portion of what we appreciate from her.
- And finally, Rev. T., like all of us, has the regular family concerns and stresses with which we all deal. We would hope our congregations are aware that what happens in our personal lives can impact our professional lives, and hope we would ALL be as compassionate and tolerant of these stresses as we would for each other.

To cap everything off, we congratulate Rev. Takouhi on being accepted as a workshop leader at Rendez-Vous 2020. Over one thousand youth and youth leaders gather every three years (more info can be found at <https://www.uccrendezvoud.ca/>) . In 2017 it was held in Montreal; in 2020 it will be in Calgary in August. In her words, "this is a life-changing experience," and we are proud that she will take a bit of the Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge with her!

Jan Haskin, Chair - Maureen Bee & Pat Greenhorn (EUC); Larry Cochran & Arie Hoogenboom (PUC)

Salut et Salut

The French expression "salut" can be used in an informal manner to say either hello or goodbye. Given this is our first newsletter since our Secretarial change, I believe it is most appropriate for the time.

So, salut Annette, welcome to the Elgin-Portland Pastoral Charge family, and salut Norma, thank you for your years of dedicated, professional service. Blessings both.

January 2020

Keeping in Touch

NEWS FOR
UCW GROUPS



The National United Church Women

Musgravetown UCW
Present Shawl

Walking in the Holy Spirit's Power



Members of Musgravetown UCW present a healing shawl to Judy Foote, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador.

*Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)*

I wish for a blessing-filled year for you and your family. It's a new year—a new beginning with your church, your UCW, and, most importantly, with God. All things from last year are gone and you can be a new person in God. I pray for your good health and that you will walk daily with the Holy Spirit. May you use God's spiritual weapons of prayer and praise each day.



Photo Alpegor | Dreamstime.com

NUCW 60th Anniversary Project: Women for Change, Zambia



Thank you to all who have donated; we have raised almost \$20,000 so far. UCW is supporting Women for Change as they work to address the number of girls dropping out of school in rural areas of Zambia. Search for

"UCW" on www.united-church.ca to find the project description. Women for Change is also featured in the 2019 Gifts with Vision online giving catalogue. Visit giftswithvision.ca and search for "keep girls in school."

As We Welcome This New Year

As we welcome this new year,
Let us God's praises sing.
Thank God that he created us;
Give him our everything.

From Jesus, the vine, we have true life—
His purpose let's fulfill.
This year, may God find each of us
Faithful, doing his will.

—Muriel Stephenson

UCW 60th Anniversary: "Continuing in Hope"

Mark your calendar for **July 11–15, 2022**—a celebration of 60 years of United Church Women taking place at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre, Sydney, NS. Please book early—there are only 22 spots available for each region.

Membertou Trade and Convention Centre



Photo: Verre Equinox, Wikimedia Commons

NUCW 2019 Survey Results

The biennial NUCW survey was sent to all units that we had contact information for.

We received 58 percent of them back. Here are some survey results that may interest you:

Units across Canada: 1,026

Members: 17,280

Members who are also licenced lay worship leaders: 112

Members who serve on other church committees: 3,962

Donations to outreach: 507 units donated a total of \$795,907.00

Donations to local churches: 519 units donated a total of \$2,240,085.00

Donations to Mission & Service: \$1,333,000.00

None of the above figures include the countless volunteer hours that UCW members contribute to their local churches and communities. You are doing wonderful service; thank you for all your endless dedication to your church.



Our next survey will take place in two years. Please complete it and send it back to us—we would love to have 100 percent of them returned next time!

The Agatha Kaasa Bursary Fund and Leadership Grants

In 2019, the NUCW approved \$19,204.12 from the Agatha Kaasa Bursary Fund to support women in pursuing their areas of interest. Thank you to all of those who took the time to tell the NUCW how these grants helped them. Details on how to apply to the Agatha Kaasa Bursary Fund are available on www.united-church.ca (search "UCW").

In 2019, the NUCW also paid out \$4,875.00 to UCW regions to offset expenses involved in training women in leadership roles.

Thursdays in Black



United Church Women participate in the Thursdays in Black campaign to end gender-based violence at their AGM on September 19, 2019.

Photo: Jennifer Reed/The United Church of Canada

Nancy Risto from Horseshoe Falls Region UCW was chosen as the new president-elect in September 2019. I know she will serve us well.

Know that, as you dance, sing, and shout your faith, the blessing of God's love is always with you. Walk with the Spirit and bring God's love to everyone you meet.

—*Beulah Hayley, President,*
National United Church Women

For all UCW matters, e-mail: ucw@united-church.ca.

The National UCW acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.

.....MUSINGS OF A MUDDLED MIND**Clinton Halladay****Trust calms Turmoil**

*"Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our
God", Psalm 20:7*

It's the bedrock of our lives: personal, professional and spiritual. It helps us work together to understand the past, build a better today and dream about a more innovative tomorrow.

Trust is also something that is in short supply these days, especially in government and society.

There is a huge crisis of confidence according to a recent survey conducted by YouGov. More than 40% of surveyed respondents said they "do not trust those in power to lawfully manage important matters, either globally or domestically".

That's not a huge surprise in light of recent scandals which seem to emanate from practically everywhere: elected government officials, religious leaders, entertainment icons or business moguls. When years of goodwill can be eroded in a nano-second by unfounded allegations, outright lies, extortion of the vulnerable and/or naïve and actual fraud. It should serve as an important moment of self-reflection for all of us.

There is no better time than now to build trust, not just externally with those whom we perceive as our leaders and persons of power, but with our colleagues, our acquaintances and internally with ourselves. This means increasing our confidence in the people with whom we stand shoulder to shoulder every day, as well as the leaders who guide us with their long-term vision. Moreover, it means believing in the mission and culture of the society in which we live and the direction it is taking.

Increasingly, we want that society to not just be good and do good work but to reflect our personal values as well. We want the future that our society and country is

building to be the future world we want to inhabit.

We want to be part of, and trust in, a social conscience whose purpose goes beyond a myopic focus on corporate greed, wealth hoarding and immediate gratification. Jobs, productivity and success in business and our personal lives are all important, but it is increasingly more important that we focus on impact, not just profit. There must be a worthy purpose, not just well-crafted empty phrases.

For such to actually occur, building trust is essential. With too little trust and too much fear, you have a terrible and toxic environment filled with tension, animosity and political infighting. Whether in your family, your neighbourhood, your workplace, your club or your church, too little trust will destroy. These entities are neither logos nor marketing campaigns. They are a living and breathing collective of intelligence, passion, and understanding.

TRUST is the cornerstone, the melding agent. TRUST is essential to the health and vitality of people, societies and organizations. It's up to all of us, individually, to ensure it is.

And where do we find the strength to embrace trust? We turn to the Spirit and our faith. The scriptures are replete with God's assurance: Psalm 121:2 - *"My help cometh from the Lord..."*; Isaiah 41:10 - *"Fear not, ...for I am your God; I will strengthen you..."*. How many promises of assurance through TRUST in GOD can you find on your own and exhibit in your daily life?

Other views are welcome. *ef*

Some Words of Assurance

God didn't promise days without PAIN, laughter without SORROW, nor sun without RAIN, but he did promise STRENGTH for the day, COMFORT for our tears, and LIGHT for the way.



Moderator's Lent Message 2020

Rt. Rev. Richard Bott

Transcript of Videotaped Message

Hello! The grace of Jesus Christ be with you. My name is Richard Bott. I'm the Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

The season of Lent begins with an important day: Ash Wednesday.

Traditionally, during worship that day, there is a ritual in which a cross is made on the forehead or the hand out of ash. In the church we call it "the imposition of ashes." When the minister makes the mark of the cross in ash, they often say, "From dust you come, to dust you will return." It's a moment in which we remember that *everything* comes to an end.

The ash, the cross—these are *memento mori*, things that we carry to remind us of the reality of death. Not just death in general, but our own individual deaths.

Morbid, eh?

Strangely, it's not. It's almost like everything gets turned upside down. This moment isn't only about lament and death; it's about celebrating life because the two are so deeply intertwined.

In a world that seems to be driven by fear, in a world where hopelessness seems to be taking over, in a world of climate crisis, in a world where leaders seem to be building tensions between people rather than working for peace, those of us who are disciples of Jesus, we need to be people who live hope: hope in God, hope in our neighbours, hope for the world.

For the 40 days of Lent, I would like to ask you to join with me in celebrating life each day.

I would like to ask you to help me to turn the world upside down.

I would like to ask you to join with other disciples of Jesus in believing in the abundant life that he said he was bringing to all creation, and to be people who live hope in that life everywhere we go.

Feel the ash on your forehead or on your hand and remember not only your death, but remember, too, all of the life that you are called to live!

In life. In death. In life-beyond-death, God is with all creation.

Alleluia!

