

Grace's Chatter

September 2020 – Edition

Grace is Reopening on October 4th - Here's the new reality

By Colleen Harding, reopening committee



After being closed for services for the past six months, Grace Church is making plans to reopen for in-person services on October 4th. However, it will not be a return to services as we remember them. Our Reopening Committee has drawn up a proposal based on regulations set out by the Province and the Health Unit. This is a snapshot of what we think church will look like on October 4th.

Entering the Sanctuary

You will enter through the Pine Street door. As you arrive you will be asked some questions related to Covid-19, and we will take attendance and record contact information.

Masks still mandatory

Masks will be mandatory. When you are in the building you will be expected to wear a mask that covers your mouth, nose and chin. If you cannot wear a mask for a medical reason, then a facial shield that comes below your chin and wraps around the sides of your face will be acceptable. However, a mask is more effective protection.

Keeping your distance

Physical distancing will be expected. Pews will be marked to ensure recommended spacing. Persons from the same household or social circle can be seated together, but a 2-metre space must be maintained between all others. Ushers will assist you to find seating. Once you are seated, we will ask you to remain in your seat.

Silent Singing

Singing is considered a high-risk activity for the spread of the Covid-19 virus. However, hymns will still be included in the service. Hymns will be played on the organ and the words will be printed in the bulletin, but you will be invited to stay seated and "sing silently" in your head and hum along. And as long as we don't shout, we can participate in unison prayers, and responsive readings. They will also be in the bulletin.

Socialize outside

There will be no socializing within the building - so no coffee time before the service and no visiting at the coat rack. You are welcome to greet friends outside after the service, but we still encourage social distancing. Children are welcome, of course, but they must remain with their parents. There will be no Sunday School at this time.

Offerings, hymn books and earbuds

There are many things we cannot share. If you wish to use the hearing assist devices, you will need to bring your own earbuds or headphones, as we cannot share these. We also cannot pass the offering plates. The offering plates will be available at the entrance and the exits so you can drop your offering in the plate as you arrive or leave. Alternatively, we will be encouraging you to consider other ways to support the church through PAR, direct deposits, e-transfers or donations on our webpage. Hymn books and Bibles have been removed from the pews, but will

be available as you arrive if you would like to have one. Books used must be collected and set aside for 7 days as quarantine.

Services will be live streamed

Even with these changes in place and with the extra cleaning required, it is still recommended that people over the age of 70 or with underlying medical conditions or immunocompromised family members not attend services. But we have not forgotten you! We are also making plans to stream services live on the internet, probably via Facebook. However, you will not need to have a Facebook account to view the service. We will email you a link to watch the service as it is happening, or later at your convenience. We will also send you a link to the bulletin which you can print out. The words for the hymns will not be posted on the screen but we can lend you a hymnbook if you wish. Contact the church office at 613-382-2161 or Paul Harding at 613-382-2405 and let us know if you want music or words only, and your address. We will bring you a book that you can borrow until things return to normal.

Let us know if you are attending

This pandemic is far from over. As we move forward with our reopening it is important that we are more vigilant than ever. While we may feel that worship services are essential, we need to proceed carefully. This plan will help us do that. There is a cap on the number of people we can accommodate, so if you are planning to attend on October 4th, please call the church office at 613-382-2161 to reserve your spot. If you have any questions or concerns, give me a call at 613-382-2405.

Charma and Covid create precious opportunities to serve

By Donna Norman



There are times in life when life has taken a turn, and events have unfolded in unison, creating welcome moments for growth and joy that I will treasure always. I count the last 18 months I have spent volunteering and working at Grace Church as one of those precious times.

My early retirement found me feeling a little adrift, looking for something meaningful to do personally, and in giving back to the community that has nurtured me and my children, and now my three grandchildren. After a career in managing change in the not-for-profit sector, I found myself amongst a warm, loving, but sometimes hurting group of people, who were looking to throw open their doors (both literally and figuratively) and invite the community into our church family.

Together we have forged a new path forward. We have studied new ways of thinking through books like "If the Church Were Christian" and "Fishing Tips". Together, we have discovered that asking questions (and we asked many, many questions) about what we believe and why we believe, have helped us position ourselves as a growing church, eager to discover ways to be relevant and of service to others in the 21st Century. We were able to articulate our values and what is important to us as a community of faith – all in the absence of a minister at the helm.

Heavy lifting was done by the Community Profile and Search Committees, and we now find ourselves in the awesome position of looking forward to having Rev. Takouhi join us in mid November. All this was accomplished in the midst of Covid 19, which turned our world, and our way of "being a Church" upside down.

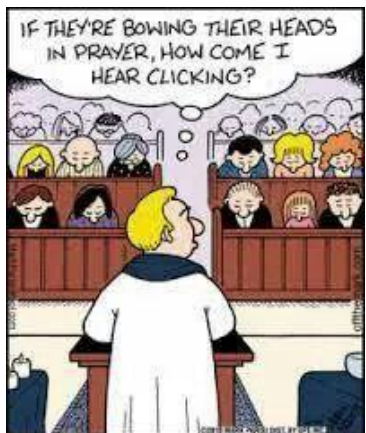
The move to online services was a wee bit intimidating for me, at least at first. . . new technologies, new equipment, going from room to room in my house during taping to catch the best light, remembering to wear the same clothes if I recorded the various components over a couple of days (did any of you notice when I did a wardrobe change during a service?)

The most challenging part for me each week was to decide what aspect of my faith journey and my own studies I could share the congregation, a congregation filled with people who I see as unwavering in their faith. With no formal training but a lot of prayers and hopefully divine inspiration along the way, I've managed to find something to say each week. Thank you all for your patience and understanding, and for giving me this wonderful opportunity to learn and grow. I hope that in some small way I have inspired you on your individual faith journeys.

The months ahead will bring challenges, as we look for innovative ways to connect with each other and to be the hands and feet of Christ in this pandemic world. I know that you will welcome Rev. Takouhi and her husband, Gary, with arms filled with love. We are blessed that she has responded to our call. Know that together we have the capacity to do great things. Know that you have inspired me and continue to do so.

With many thanks, and in the love of Christ,
Donna

Fill the Pulpit schedule full for final six - By Christina Gordon Charney



For over a year and a half the Fill the Pulpit Committee has been charged with the task of procuring worship leaders for the weekly services. They have recently been relieved for a spell by our wonderful virtual services. The original committee consisted of Nancy Abrams, David Charles, Donna Norman and Christina Gordon Charney. When David Charles exited Colleen Harding stepped in. Since then Joan Shaw and Marg Worth have joined up so the current committee consists of six members:- Nancy Abrams, Colleen Harding, Donna Norman, Joan Shaw, Marg Worth and Christina Gordon.

The committee had a list of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) and retired ministers who were available for us to contact. We have called on several different worship leaders. The following seventeen people have ably conducted services for us:- Marilyn Belbin, Dave Charles, Barb DeJeet, Elaine Farley, Caroline Giesbrecht, Charlotte Hoy, Margaret Martin, Sharon MacDonald, Lillian McNamee, Gary Morton, Donna Norman, Ken Norman, Bill Smith, Wanda Stride, Kathy Walton, Tom Walton and Paul Whiteley. We are grateful for each and every one of these individuals for helping out.

According to our plan of reopening the building for services on Sunday, October 4th there will be

six Sundays of visiting worship leaders before our new minister Rev. Takouhi Demerdjian-Petro commences on Sunday, November 15th. For those six Sundays we are happy that the two people who have consented to be our worship leaders are Barb DeJeet on October 4th, 11th and 18th and Kathy Walton on October 25th, November 1st and 8th. Your Fill the Pulpit committee wishes to thank all those who have assisted and volunteered throughout this period while we worked hard to find a new minister.

Brighter Birds, Elevated! - By Brian Brooks

Lighting

The new LED lighting is now installed in the sanctuary. Those that have seen it were very impressed with the brightness and overall appearance that the new bulbs bring to our Church. The Company who installed the new lights estimated that the old bulbs used, on an annual basis, 37,019 KWH (kilowatt hours) of electricity. The new bulbs will use only 7,207 KWH. They estimated that the annual cost of lighting the sanctuary was \$4,442. The new cost is estimated to be \$864. An annual savings of \$3,578.

Battle with the birds.

Thanks to Murray Roantree, yours truly and the JET Electric bucket truck, the bird spikes are now over the Stone Street Tower door. The ledge was larger than anticipated so we may have one or two visitors, but not the dozen or so that were there each night before the spikes were put up.

The elevator

The elevators annual inspection has been completed and everything is good to go, with one exception. The bottom of the shaft must be repainted. This will be done by the elevator company as soon as they can. They are from Ottawa. In the mean time the elevator is working fine and can be used by the Church.

Another 200 pies sold in two days! - By Paul Scott

Thank goodness the Pies for God's Sake committee keeps making pies. These delicious desserts continue to be a popular item in this community.

On Thursday and Friday, August 27 and 28, and with Covid protocols in place, another 200 pies were sold adding a further \$2,400 plus a \$400 donation was received.

There are still some pies available for sale (\$12.00 each) and you can find out what is still available and arrange pick up by calling the church office (613-382-2161) on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. When going to the church to pick up, call ahead, make sure you wear a mask and use the hand sanitizer upon entering.

Meanwhile the Pies for God's Sake team continue making more pies which will be available in early December.



Offerings stay strong, expenses down – we can do this!

By Vicki Leakey, treasurer

We have the August financial update and...wow, just wow!!

I am so pleased to inform you that we have been able to maintain 98% of the offerings that we received in the same 8-month period in 2019. This is excellent work, folks!

Our total revenue is 75% compared to 2019, however; in 2019 we had to draw \$30,000 more out of trust funds than we have had to withdraw in the current year.

Mission and Service receipts are 79% of what we received in 2019, still showing strong giving's for the many worthwhile M and S projects.

Total operating expenses are lower - 83% of the 2019 expenses, with most savings being in salaries, as was expected.

More good news. With the government programs that were made available to help employers like us continue with full time staff, we have not had to reduce hours or cut time for contract work. Laurie has been on top of the required eligibility, so we continue to maximize the subsidies that are made available to reduce staff costs.

As of the end of August, we have been able to maintain a surplus of \$5,460. But here's the challenge. We truly hope to work towards finding new fundraising options in the fall and encourage our church family members to continue with their contributions so we can maintain our financial health.

Again, there are several Offerings' options available which you may consider. **E-transfer** from your on-line bank account is popular. Look for "send an e-transfer" and send to grace.gan@outlook.com. Just follow the instructions given.

If more convenient, you may drop an **Envelope in the mail box** at the Pine St. choir door on Thursdays before 1:00 pm that day as Laurie will be at the church office and will make sure contributions are safely received. **Offerings by mail** is another option – send by mail to Grace Church at 120 Pine St. Gananoque, On K7G 1C7. We are so thankful for your continued support.

We wish to give each and every one of you the full appreciation you all deserve. We all need to remain aware that many are not doing so well during the constraints of the pandemic and be sure to communicate through our church office of any assistance we may, as a group, be able to provide.

Our Grace United Church family has much for which to be proud. Together, we will stay strong and be ready to welcome Rev. Takouhi in November.

Celebrations for the month of September



Birthdays for September are, Jean Newbury, Carol Currie, Barry Winfield and Leanne Crawford

Anniversaries in September are Liz & Doug Dennison and Marg and Mel Worth, Marg & Mel are celebrating 65 years of marriage. Congratulations everyone.

Church Humour

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It is a good chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.





CONSEIL RÉGIONAL
DE L'OUTAOUAIS ET DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO
EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Small (Rural) Church, Big Ideas!

Online (Zoom) Workshop to explore how your Community of Faith can focus your ideas for a project to offer your unique gifts in new and creative ways. A second online workshop on applying for grants to put your ideas into action will follow in October or November.

Two dates/times available:

Wednesday, September 23, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

To register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAvcumhrTosGdS-yOtgZWQL1JveYa5cpytH>

OR

Saturday, September 26, 2:30 – 4:00 pm

register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAuce2rpj8vGNQDEYcg4IGcldfKCKP0nbGg>

(phone-in option is available for both times)

Please register by September 18, 2020

For more information: Jane Dawson, jdawson@united-church.ca - Cell: 613-290-1882

Contacts

Church Contact: Laurie Cadue 613-382-2161 grace.gan@outlook.com

Emergent Pastoral Care & Funerals: Rev. Jolyn Campbell 613-929-7195

Education & Pastoral Care Coordinator: Donna Norman 613-970-0128

Church Boards:

Official Board – Brian Brooks 613-382-2385

Session – Paul Scott 613-382-4386

Board of Stewards – Carolyn Scott 613-382-4386

Vicki Leakey 613-382-4015

Grace's Chatter published monthly.

Editor – Paul Scott, Managing Editor – Laurie Cadue

Contributors this month are; Colleen Harding, Vicki Leakey, Donna Norman, Christina Gordon, Laurie Cadue Brian Brooks and Paul Scott.

Next deadline is Monday, Oct. 12.

