

Grace's Chatter Summer Edition



A Poem by SILVIA FIORITA SMITH.

A response to the constant referral to what was discovered, on May 29, 2021.

The undocumented graves of the 215 children next to the Kamloops Indian Residential School as "the remains" ...

WHAT REMAINS OF THE REMAINS?

What remains of the remains?
Remains...what remains is shame,
A betrayal of trust,
An atrocious history that no apology
Can ever make right...
There were powerful people
That should have known,
That should have intervened,
It was not so long ago,
We celebrated a hundred years of nationhood
In 1967,
While children were being killed,
Being turned into remains,
Remains of innocence, laughter,
Curiosity, joy, a language,
Remains of a parent's love and pride,
A grandparent's legacy...
Remains of flesh and blood
Stolen from families,
Ripped from the arms that once
Held them tight,
Remains...what remains is
Our disregard of humanity,
Our faith in institutions
That tortured indiscriminately,
Our loyalty to those who

Vowed to live as Christ
But who continued to crucify Him instead,
The remains...such a sad, woeful term
For what we really found...
Beneath our collective national guilt,
Not remains....but lives...
Hands and arms, legs and feet,
That ran, and skipped and jumped,
Tongues and eyes and ears,
That spoke and heard a language
Voiced by their ancestors,
Hearts that beat against
The bosom of a Mama,
Remains....what remains is
Not remains....but our loss of innocence.
Printed with Permission –
SILVIA FIORITA SMITH - May 30, 3021

Remembering the **215**
Indigenous Children
that never made it home.

#EveryChildMatters
#215Children



Rev. Takouhi's Reflection...

Summer 2021...

***"Therefore, we do not lose heart.
Though outwardly we are wasting away,
yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."
2 Corinthians 4:16***

Dear Grace United Church Family & Friends,

The words of Apostle Paul, written so long ago to the church of Corinth, still speaks to us today. We all know that perseverance is important, in other words, not losing heart and continuing the journey even when we are facing difficulties of life. We can all agree that life can have difficult climbs at times and when we look back, we can see the incline that we have faced.

One of the reasons I love living in Rural Ontario (Rideau Lakes Township) is because of the beautiful nature and creatures that surround us, and how almost daily I can learn lessons of life in different ways. Just today, we had a deer in our backyard, a turtle laying eggs in our front yard and the regular squirrels, chipmunks and birds keeping us company and reminding us of God's symphony of love in different ways.

One of my favourite sighting on my drives is seeing the Red-winged blackbird, who sits at the edge of a thin reed in the marshes. Here is a picture taken by our neighbour, Brent Van Hooft, who is a wonderful photographer, and a gift to our region. Whenever I see these birds, I think, how much they rely on the power who holds that skinny twig in place.



I find I can relate to them, the Church can relate to them, as we wait for the day for us to get back to "normal", whatever that normal was before the pandemic. However, that does not necessarily mean that what we had pre-pandemic was a desirable way of living, but we miss that intimacy with friends and family. The freedom to travel anywhere we wanted to go, may it be a four-hour drive to see cousins in Kitchener or a flight to other places to see more family members. Did you realize, I did not say, to go places we have never been before, but to see family, friends, family, and friends, again and again, what feeds our souls and hearts. This pandemic has taught us the essence of life, and that is *RELATIONSHIPS*. We miss the hugs, the holding hands while praying, anointing children at Baptisms, or others at the end of life.

Beloved, all this is being missed, but the Church is continuing on her ministries more than ever before...

Just to name a few highlights at Grace United Church:

- ✚ Live stream continues each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube
- ✚ Cogeco TV broadcasts continue in Kingston and the surrounding areas every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. – this has been a wonderful addition to the ministries of this Community of Faith, as not everyone has access to the world of internet.

- ✚ The Audio-Visual Team of GUC is making every effort to have the sanctuary set up with the technical needs to make the worship celebrations accessible to all, in the church building and beyond.
- ✚ Caring and Sharing Team consists of six individuals who ensure to keep in touch with those who are isolated in and around our community.
- ✚ V.I.B.E. (Venturing In Biblical Education) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. via Zoom and explores our faith journey. At this time we are reading “Living the Questions” – all are welcome to join from anywhere in the world, literally, because we are on Zoom. Just contact me (revtakouhi@terrautopia.ca) and I will add you to the e-mail distribution list. An average of 10 to 12 of us meet weekly.
- ✚ And I know, as I trust the Almighty, that there is so much more ministry growth that is waiting for us, we just need to do our best, trust God, and wait patiently without losing hope.

Friends, yes, we are all anxious to get to our regular activities and gatherings, but I sense that like that red-winged bird, sometimes we need to sit with the Peace of God, even when we feel that what is holding us might be a weak stem, but that is held by the Creator, the Rock of Our Salvation. Speaking of birds, I just want to leave you with this image, every morning around 3:30 or 4 a.m. there is a choir of birds singing nearby, and I wake up with their voices and see how dark it is at that time. The darkest time of the day is right before sunrise. These birds prove to me and to the world that there is still a song, even in the darkest moments of life. If you have not seen our virtual worship of June 6, 2021, I highly recommend that you click on this link and watch for Grace United Church’s virtual choir. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7RSOJiEuhM>) You will agree that, like the birds, our songs continue to echo our Perseverance; God’s Provision and Peace.



Beloved, I know for certain that God will not disappoint us, never has and never will, we just need to work together patiently, respectfully, and most of all faithfully – as one family. There is so much to write to you about, but I want to end this short reflection by repeating the words of Apostle Paul, “*Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*” (2 Corinthians 4:16 NIV)

Thanks be to God – Amen!

Your Servant-Leader,

Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro
B.A., B.Th., M.Div.

Audio Visual Committee

By Dave Charles, Mission and Service Enthusiast & Member Audio Visual Committee

Your Audio Visual Committee has been very active in working towards improvements to the Sanctuary and to our outreach to the wider community which experiences Grace United Church through the internet, social media, and television. Recently we have started to work with Kingston Sound Works to procure, install, and train us on cameras, computers, video monitors, digital mixers, microphones, and software. These will be

used by AV Committee volunteers to transmit live worship and other events to the community. We also plan to enrich the in person experience by upgrading our sound system, improve communications to the hearing impaired, and provide video displays.



To date we have received responses from four volunteers to help operate the equipment and prepare information like slides and video content. If you are interested in being part of this Audio Visual Ministry, please contact Dave Charles or Angus Fergusson. Your commitment is whatever you want it to be. We hope to start testing the new equipment and train operators in late August or early September.

Many thanks to Paul Harding, Gary Petro, Paul Carl (Edith Rankin UC), and Brian Blowes (Elgin UC) for their ongoing technical advice for implementing the Audio Visual Committee improvements.

Photo by [Jay Wennington](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Grace Church continues to share financial blessings within the community and beyond!

By Vicki Leakey, Treasurer



As of the end of May, the good news for the church members is there is continued financial support that allows us to pay our bills. We are so thankful for the contributions that come in each week that allow us provide a variety of services to our church family and the community as needed. Our Trustee funds have managed well through the economic turmoil with no significant loss in market value to our trust funds.

Your contributions whether for general operations of our church or for special needs are carefully monitored to ensure when a need arises that funds are available. Such was the case when we were informed of the tragedy and unsafe conditions for the children and women of Goma, Congo. A volcano erupted near the village and the children had to be quickly evacuated to a nearby island. The local connection is that this is the mission that

Heather Haynes has been supporting through her Wall of Courage art exhibits. How wonderful for this church family to understand the reach their dollars have for people in great need. There was much gratitude shown for this financial aid. Our church family should feel very proud of what we continue to do.

On another note, members of the Stewards have attended a 4-week virtual workshop titled "Called to be the Church". We will bring some ideas to share when we once again can be safely together for in person fellowship on a Sunday mornings in our sanctuary. I can almost smell the coffee and muffins now!

Again, a reminder that 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 Fridays 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. As we are all aware, there are some basic costs that continue whether we are in the building or not and your financial contributions have helped immensely.

These have been very trying times for many congregations, we are so blessed to have all of you as part of the Grace United family. Thank you for your time and financial support. Stay safe, get vaccinated and together we will stay strong!

The Grace Virtual Choir is a Labour of Love

By Paul Harding, Music Director

Following in the footsteps of so many choirs and orchestras, Grace United Church's Director of Music decided to undertake a virtual choir project. A lot of people think the choir just gets together on Zoom and sings, but nothing could be further from the truth. If you have tried to sing "Happy Birthday" at a Zoom party, you know how badly *that* turned out.

Without going into *too* much detail, here is how a virtual choir is created. First, the director chooses a song and creates a "practice track", which contains the piano accompaniment, the chorister's own part (soprano, alto, tenor or bass) and a loud click to help keep everyone together. Shown here are the first few bars of the alto track.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Go Now in Peace" by Nancy Price and Don Beag. The score is arranged for a virtual choir and includes staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Piano, and Drum Set. The Alto part is highlighted in yellow. The score shows the first few bars of the music, with the Alto part starting with a series of notes and rests.

A recording of this track is emailed to each member of the choir, along with the sheet music, if necessary. Choristers practice singing their own part along with the practice track. When they are confident (or have reached the pinnacle of their confidence), they record a video of themselves singing while listening to the practice track on headphones.

This keeps the sound of the practice track out of their video. All members then send their video to the editor (who, in our case, is also the Musical Director).

Step one in editing is to separate all the audio from the videos and mix together one mass audio recording, with everyone's part synchronized in time. Individual notes in individual parts can be repaired, made louder, softer, lengthened, shortened and otherwise improved.

When the audio is complete, the videos are stacked together and synchronized with the audio. Member's images are sized to look similar and other video edits are made.

A title page is prepared for the beginning and credits for the ending and the Virtual Choir Project is ready to share. Total preparation and editing time: 60 hours.



Major volcano creates urgent plea for Heather Haynes Art of Courage mission

By Paul Harding, For the Worship Planning Team

The Worship Planning Team asked Heather Haynes, local artist and humanitarian, to speak in our virtual service about the need for funds to support her work in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Heather, through her art, has been instrumental in establishing an orphanage, school and women's centre in the city of Goma, DRC. She was to speak of the need to support the women who are taking in the orphans who cannot be accommodated by the orphanage.



Then – on May 22nd – Mount Nyiragongo, a volcano located less than 10 kilometres from the city, erupted, sending flowing lava toward Goma. The last eruption, in 2002, flowed right through the centre of the city, resulting in massive destruction. Fortunately, this time, the flow stopped just short of the city limit – for now.

There has been a frantic evacuation of children and women from Goma to the nearby island of Idjwi, where there is a desperate need for funds for food, beds and bedding, medicine and medical personnel. Food is extremely expensive and in very short supply.

Heather appealed to Grace United Church and we are responding in two ways. First, the \$500 donation approved by Stewards from Special Grace Missions was released immediately and forwarded to Heather. Second, we are asking members of our community of faith to respond generously to Heather's appeal. Time is of the essence.



The simplest way to donate is to send a cheque, made out to Grace United Church, to Grace United Church, 120 Pine Street, Gananoque, ON K7G 1C7. Please mark on the cheque "For Volcano Relief". We will see that the funds are forwarded to Heather to alleviate the hardship caused by the sudden, unexpected event.

For more information you can visit theartofcourage.ca or www.heatherhaynes.com

Getting Second Shot is Key to Return to In-Person Worship

By Colleen Harding
For the Reopening Committee



As the world around us starts to slowly move towards normal and the Province of Ontario starts to unfold its Roadmap to Reopening, it is only natural that we should start to wonder “When will it be our turn?” The answer, unfortunately, is not for a while! The situation changes almost daily so it is difficult to predict with any certainty when it will be safe for us to return to our regular services. Here is the picture as we understand it at this time.

The Roadmap to Reopen, the province’s three-step plan to safely and gradually lifting public health measures, is based on province-wide vaccination rates and improvements of key health care indicators. As of Friday, June 11th, we entered Step 1. Under the Roadmap, churches may reopen under strict guidelines as part of Step 2. If Covid numbers remain low and vaccination rates reach 70% of adults have received one shot and 20% have received both shots, our province may move to Step 2 in early July. However, the restrictions at that time would include a limit of 15% of the church’s capacity. For us that would mean a cap of about 40 people, fewer than our regular attendance on Sunday mornings. We would probably have to use a reservation system and turn away any walk-ins. We would also still be required to maintain social distancing, masks in the building, no singing and no coffee! Certainly not a return to normal services!

Covid remains a very real threat in our province. As our vaccination rates go up, the number of positive cases are going down, but we are not back to zero. A new variant is sweeping through Europe and creeping into Ontario, and there is evidence that one vaccination shot may not provide full protection against this Delta strain. That is why there is a renewed urgency to make sure we all have both shots and are fully vaccinated. That is our best protection. But we also need to continue to follow the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Health regarding masks, social distancing and other precautions.



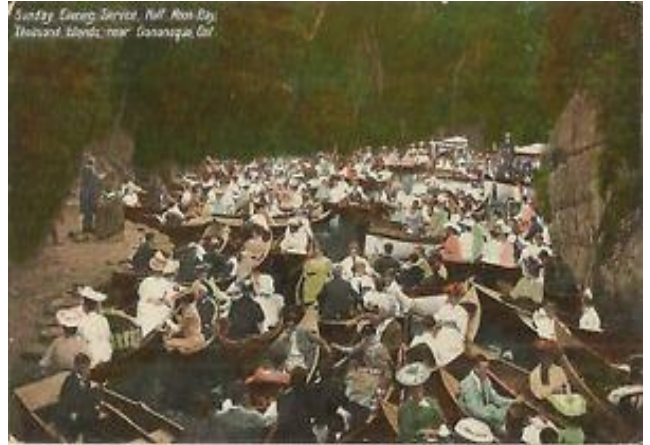
After much discussion, we have decided to wait at least until we can all come back to church together, and until the risks from variants are significantly reduced. We are hoping we will be able to open our doors again in early fall with a full congregation. It is impossible to set a date when that could happen, but September is the earliest possibility. So many of the variables are out of our control and we still need to be diligent about protecting our community.

There is one thing we can all do to speed up our return to in-person services and that is to make sure we all get fully vaccinated as quickly as possible. We are actually one of the top nations for vaccination rates and some 60% of our adult population have received their first shot. But that means 40% of our community have no protection at all, and we are lagging behind many other nations in the percentage that is fully vaccinated. The best thing you can do to move us forward on our road back to normal is to make sure you and your family,

friends, and neighbours all have both their shots. Let's all do our part, and we will be able to meet in our beautiful sanctuary again! While we are waiting, we will continue with our virtual services on Facebook, YouTube and Cogeco. Take care, and we will eventually get there!

Half Moon Bay, Cancels Season

It is with sadness that the board of directors for Half Moon Bay has decided to cancel this season. We do not have enough clarification surrounding the easing of restrictions with respect to Covid19 to feel comfortable running this season. HMB caters to both American and Canadian worshipers, we are not sure when the border will be opening to allow Americans over to the Canadian side to attend services. The St. Lawrence River is at low water now, the situation will worsen as the summer progresses. There are concerns that the levels are too low for boats to get in and out.



We regret to announce the passing of Reta Webb. Reta passed away peacefully at Brockville General Hospital on Friday June 4th. We will miss Reta and her wonderful smile. A private family service was held at Tompkins Funeral Home. Our sincere condolences are extended to Reta's family and friends.



We regret to announce the passing of Sharon Price deGuise. Sharon passed away peacefully on Monday June 14th at Fairmount Home in Kingston. A grave side service was held at the Gananoque Cemetery on June 19th. Our sincere condolences to Sharon's sons, Tyler and Myles, her mother Merna Price, brother Brian Price & his wife Julie and her nephews Jason & Jeffrey. May you find peace knowing that Sharon is now entered eternal rest.

Contributors this month

“What Remains - Silvia Fiorita Smith , Rev. Takouhi, Colleen Harding, Dave Charles, Paul Harding, Vicki Leakey, Paul Scott, Laurie Cadue.

Next deadline: Friday, September 17th 2021

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