



# Grace's Chatter

## November 2020 Advent

*Hope, Peace, Joy, Love*



### **Grace United – an unexpected gift, our new journey together**

Reflection by Rev. Takouhi

Dear Grace United Church Family and Friends,

What a gift it is to start this journey with you. Amid a pandemic we have this unexpected gift. In a world of fear and scarcity the Creator gifted us a new beginning.

Would you ponder with me?

Have you ever received a gift that you never forgot about?

I have...



When I was about nine or ten, Christmas 1976 or 1977, in Beirut, my parents bought me a small electric piano, from the toy store right across the street from our apartment, so that it could help me start piano lessons. They could not afford a full-size piano; moreover, there was no place in our one-bedroom apartment where nine individuals lived – Yes, we were a family of eight, plus my paternal grandmother, with a broken hip, living with us, in a one-bedroom and a one-bathroom apartment.

I loved music and I still do, and wanted to learn how to play this amazing instrument made of wood and strings that when touched by skillful hands produces music that touches our emotions, and most of all, our hearts. The dream of pursuing piano lessons lasted only six months, because of the ongoing Civil War in Lebanon. Snipers did not allow people to cross bridges or overpasses, even when the shelling had stopped. The closest conservatory was a good 30-minute walk and required crossing an overpass – a dangerous road for anyone to cross let alone a young girl who wants to learn how to play the piano. Therefore, this little electric piano was the best, and unforgettable gift ever.

This gift did not only represent my parents' love for me, but it was also a testament that abundance is possible in the scarcities of our lives. This unexpected gift not only gave me hope for a better future, but it also taught me that difficult patches of life cannot hold us down – Hope is the supreme leader to a better tomorrow.

Today, I am reminded of this gift once again, as I am amazed how this new Call to ministry at Grace United Church came around in the middle of a pandemic. Unexpected gifts wake us up to realities of life that we thought impossible. However, it is through these unexpected moments our faith is strengthened to trust the Goodness of the Creator who offers us more than we can imagine.

In scarcity this Provisional Spirit reminds us to see beyond what is in front of us – prompting us that **hope** is the best gift that we can embrace in darkness and daylight. **Peace** is the best state of being that is beyond the absence of war, but a Shalom that offers wholeness - Peace that surpasses all understanding. Moreover, the gift of God that offers perpetual **Joy** beyond just mere happiness, but deep joy that offers music in the night. And finally, **Love**, Love, Love, and more Love. The most important ingredient of life, which overflows in our hearts from the source of Life, Light and Love - the Creator.

These four ingredients, **HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE** are the four pillars of life upon which all of humanity relies, desires, and attempts to live through. These four pillars are the four pillars of the Season of Advent. They do not belong to Christian Faith alone because they are the four most desired passions of the human condition.

Beloved, this year, 2020, has been an unprecedented year like none other, at least in my own life. I have lived through war and broken glass ceilings, but 2020 has cleared our vision. Even in all of the difficulties, we are also experiencing many unexpected gifts, lessons, and blessings. One of the blessings is that we have slowed down, paying closer attention to life and all that matters.

Even in the cloud of COVID-19 we are still able to see glimpses of God's Light through the kindness of strangers, the dedication of frontline workers but most of all realizing that my neighbour is also precious, as we are all created in the image of God. A Light that helps us not to take anyone and anything for granted.

Today, as you read these words, I invite you to pay attention to the unexpected gifts within and around you. Hold on tight to the four most powerful God-given gifts to all of humanity: **HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE**. Four words that call us to accept the unexpected gifts of God and in turn to become unexpected gifts to ourselves and to others – thereby helping us transform this world with kindness and respect.

This year, I truly pray that you make time to participate in a Community of Faith, where **HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE** are upheld in every act. No matter where you are found, take time to unwrap the **Unexpected Gift** of God that is offered to you freely always, not just once a year, at Advent and Christmas, but always.

You can join us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/GraceUnitedChurchGananoque](https://www.facebook.com/GraceUnitedChurchGananoque)), and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCNVYi-R3mmIG7LnX1jKJnEg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNVYi-R3mmIG7LnX1jKJnEg)). Social media has become a great unexpected gift to many of us, as we try to make our way out of the dark woods of COVID-19. Join us to unwrap God's Gift and journey to the heart of Christmas, through these different avenues.

As for now, I would love to leave you with one of my poems. Written Christmas, 2011, when I was serving Ayer's Cliff-Magog-Georgeville Pastoral Charge in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. This is found in my very first published book, **"The True Gift Lives ON..."** – a book of poetry, photography, and prayers (2016). I invite you to be open; to accept, embrace and share the True Gifts of God: **HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE**, not just during Advent or Christmas, but ALWAYS.

## **Unexpectedly**

*Unexpectedly you came to us  
God of Love in human form.  
Understanding our shortfalls and strife  
You hold us in Love beyond our regard.*

*Hope is your message  
Peace is your Song  
Joy is the result  
Of your Abundant Love.*

*Unexpectedly wake us up  
God of Love beyond our thoughts.  
May Your Message be our Song  
Your Vision be Our Guide*

*Unexpectedly let us Love  
Through the Ceaseless Love of God. **Amen.***

From: "The True Gift Lives On..." page 34 – Available through: [www.revtakouhi.ca](http://www.revtakouhi.ca)



## **Advent: The Spirit of Giving**

By Colleen Harding

Advent is a very special time in the life of Grace United Church. It is a time of anticipation and excitement, and a time of hope and joy. It is also a traditional time of giving, especially giving to those in our community who need a little extra help at this time of the year.

This year we will be participating in two Spirit of Giving Missions. On Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be celebrating our traditional White Gift Sunday, in support of the Gananoque and District Food Bank. On Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> we will be holding our second annual Baby Shower for Jesus.

### **White Gift Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

Due to Covid-19 constraints, it is not feasible to have our regular Red Wagon Collection to support the Food Bank. Instead, the Food Bank has invited us to participate in their Christmas Hamper Program. For a \$40 donation we can fill a hamper of food for a local family with all the perishables, including a turkey and fresh vegetables, and non-perishables they will need for Christmas dinner. Monetary donations will enable the Food Bank to take advantage of bulk purchases and your donation will go further.



It is our goal to fill as many of these hampers as we can! You can choose to make a \$40 donation to fill a hamper yourself, but donations of any amount will be welcomed! For every donation we will put your name on a White Gift card to hang on the Christmas tree at the church. Let's fill our tree with White Gift cards!

We will be accepting donations at church on Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, but you do not have to be in church that day to participate. Donations will be accepted at the church office either in person, by mail or by e-transfer or can be placed on the offering plate any time during Advent. Please make sure your name is on the envelope for income tax credits and that it is clearly labelled White Gift or Food Hamper. (Cheques payable to Grace United Church)



## **Baby Shower for Jesus, Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Last year, our first Baby Shower was well-attended and much enjoyed, and we filled the manger to overflowing with gifts for the babies and toddlers at the Leeds and Grenville Interval House. We have chosen Interval House as our special Baby Shower Mission again this year. Interval House provides emergency shelter, outreach counselling and transitional support for abused women and their children throughout Leeds and Grenville.

With the uncertainties of Covid-19 restrictions, we are not sure what format the shower will take this year, if we can have an in-person gathering at the church or will need to move our celebration online. Stay tuned for details as the time gets closer!

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## **Thank you Rev. Jolyn Campbell!**



In the spring of 2019, our Grace Church family was in need of a Minister of Pastoral Care to respond to urgent pastoral care needs. These included hospital, retirement and care home visits, palliative care, bereavement counselling and funerals.

Rev. Jolyn Campbell, recently called to our neighbouring community as Minister at Lansdowne United Church, was approached on our behalf. Her immediate response was "I would be happy to help in any way I can" and that she has been doing since May 1, 2019. Indeed, she began meeting our congregational need prior to the start of her contract

as a call came to the church the day we met with her to discuss this opportunity.

Over the past 18 months, Jolyn's friendly, compassionate, positive manner has brought comfort and hope to many families in our community of faith through personal challenges and those associated with the unprecedented time we have been experiencing.

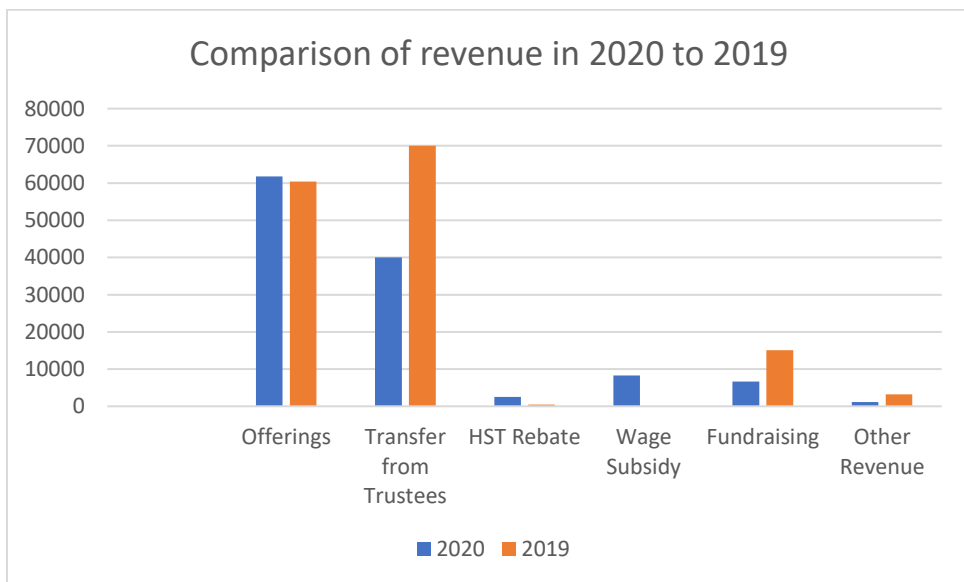
Thank you, Rev. Jolyn, for your valued contribution to the wellbeing of our church family. We look forward to future opportunities to share in the ministry of our communities of faith.

Blessings, Nancy Abrams, Member Ministry and Personnel Committee

## Preparing for the Road Ahead

By Treasurer Vicki Leakey

As treasurer, I am including a snapshot of where we are today, compared to where we were a year ago. It is good news that with services now being held in the sanctuary, our church family can have moments of safe visiting with each other. Weekly offerings remain constant and we look forward to engaging more interest from the community with the arrival of Rev. Takouhi who will lead us into the next chapter for Grace United Church.



**Total revenue for year to date October 2020 was \$120,341 compared to \$149,110 in 2019.**

**Total expense for year to date October 2020 was \$119,168 compared to \$140,455 in 2019.**

Heartfelt thanks to those who continue to financially support our church family. Here is a reminder of several Offerings' options available for those that are not comfortable coming out in a public setting to attend the Sunday Service in the sanctuary. **E-transfer** from your on-line bank account is popular. Look for "send an e-transfer" and send to [grace.gan@outlook.com](mailto:grace.gan@outlook.com). Just follow the instructions given. **Offerings by mail** is another option – send by mail to Grace Church at 120 Pine St. Gananoque, On K7G 1C7.

Last Sunday, was an opportunity to thank the countless hours behind the scenes to keep services available during the pandemic when the sanctuary was closed as well as continuing to improve and find ways of distributing Sunday Service on line to be shared with those of us in the sanctuary or in our home.

Also thank you for your patience while the Town of Gananoque works on Pine Street, it has been a trial for some of our seniors to try and manage to get up to the doorway, but it will be great when the project is completed.

**Again, thank you for your continued support. We have had challenges and they will continue, but this church family works diligently and works hard to make sure Grace United Church will succeed to be a strong arm of assistance for our members and the community.**

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## **Our Sympathies**

The Grace United Church family wish to extend our sincere sympathies to Jack & Gloria Petch on the passing of Jack's sister, Carol Thorburn. Carol passed away peacefully on Thursday, October 22 in Windsor Ontario. A service will be held for Carol & Bill sometime in 2021.

The Grace Church family also extend our sincere sympathies to Joan MacKinnon, Dave Charles and family on the passing of Joan's mother Marion Mackinnon. Marion passed away at Carveth Care Centre on Friday November 13<sup>th</sup>, just days after celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. A service will be held at McKay United Church Ottawa at a later date.

May all those affected by the passing of a loved one find comfort knowing that their loved ones are no longer suffering and resting with the Lord and those who have passed before them.

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## **Pies and more pies for goodness sake**

By Carol Currie

If you know someone who has been "good for goodness sake" now you can treat them to a freshly made pie from the Pies for God's Sake team.

With Christmas fast approaching the pie makers at Grace United have had a busy but enjoyable time preparing 12 varieties of pies for your holiday entertaining.



The specialty at this time of year is Mincemeat; however, they didn't forget the other favourites – Apple, Apple Crumble, Blueberry, Bumbleberry, Cherry, Peach, Raspberry, Rhubarb, Strawberry, Strawberry Rhubarb and Strawberry Rhubarb Crumble. The fruit pies are selling for \$12.00 each while the Mincemeat is \$15.00.

**Pre-orders are now being accepted, so please call:**

**Betty Mathews 613-382-3315 or Carol Currie 613-382-4376**

**Pies will be available for sale and pick-up at Grace United Church on Thursday and Friday, November 26 and 27 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.**

**At the Stone Street/Tower door entrance.**

***Payment accepted: cash, cheque and eTransfer***

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## Celebrations for the month of November

Celebrating Birthday's this month are Betty Wooding, Bill Lussier, Joan MacKinnon, Brian Brooks, Rev. Takouhi, Carolyn Scott, Murray Roantree & Bud Wooding.



Celebrating an Anniversary this month are John & Helen Chapman.

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### COVID REMINDERS

Grace United is open for Worship and we are so happy to have some of you back at service. However, we do have to maintain the guidelines that are set out by the Leeds & Grenville Health United, the Government of Canada, and the United Church of Canada to ensure that our Minister, Staff and Congregation Members stay safe & healthy.

Please remember the following;

- **If you are not feeling well, stay home.**
- Officiants must be 2 metres/6 feet from each other and from the congregation at all times.
- Members maintain 2 metres/6 feet distance unless from the same household
- Members line up to be seated and leave in a safe an orderly manner, maintaining social distance.
- Singing, Choirs and Wind Instruments are not allowed (Soloists permitted)
- Face masks are mandatory (Face shields permitted for those who have breathing/health issues)
- No hugging, (nod, smile, air hug each other)
- Maintain a record of names and contact information of those attending service for contact tracing
- Do not share micro phones, books, papers etc.
- Service will continue to be shown on line (YouTube & Facebook)

If you would like to sign out a Hymn book or Bible please contact the church office.

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### Contacts:

**Minister:** Rev. Takouhi Demirdijian-Petro Direct line: 613-777-0880

You can also follow and learn more about Rev. Takouhi on Facebook, YouTube and her Blog [www.RevTakouhi.ca](http://www.RevTakouhi.ca)

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**Church Contact:** Laurie Cadue 613-382-2161 [grace.gan@outlook.com](mailto:grace.gan@outlook.com)

### Church Boards:

Official Board – Brian Brooks 613-382-2385

Session – Paul Scott 613-382-4386

Board of Stewards – Carolyn Scott 613-382-4386 or Vicki Leakey 613-382-4015

**Church Office Hours are:**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 8:00am to 1:00 p.m.  
**(Closed on Wednesday)**

**Sunday Morning Worship is at 10:30am**

**November 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Morning Worship, Reign of Christ

**November 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>** - PIE SALE, 3 pm to 6pm

**November 27<sup>th</sup>** - Decorate the Church, 1:00 pm

**November 29<sup>th</sup>** - Morning Worship, Communion / **Advent # 1 - HOPE**

**December 6<sup>th</sup>** - Morning Worship, **Advent # 2 - PEACE** - *White Gift/Food Hamper*

**December 13<sup>th</sup>** - Morning Worship, **Advent # 3 -JOY**

**December 20<sup>th</sup>** - Morning Worship, **Advent # 4- LOVE**

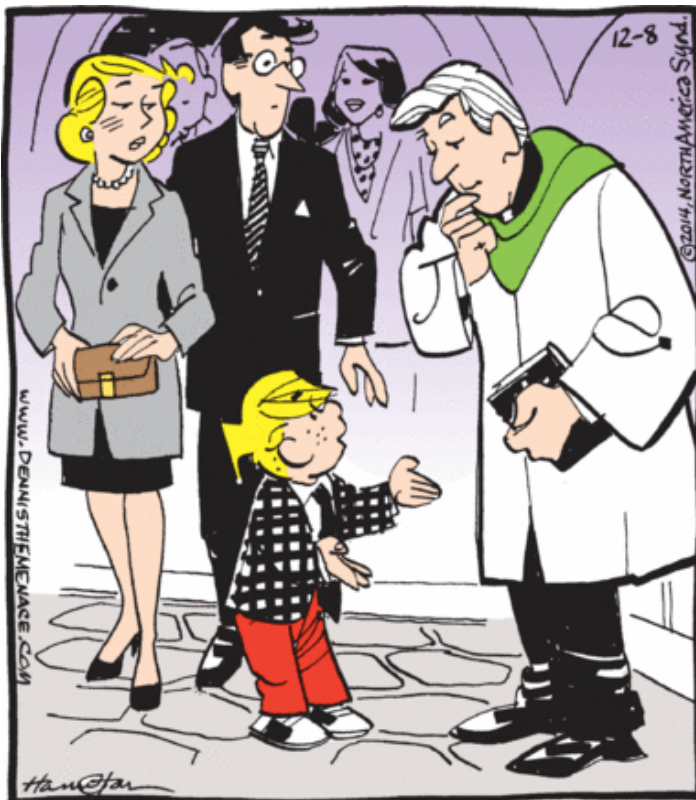
**December 24<sup>th</sup>** - Christmas Eve Service 7:00pm

**December 25<sup>th</sup>** - *Merry Christmas*

**December 27<sup>th</sup>** - Morning Worship, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas  
***Baby Shower for Jesus***, more info to come.



*(Please note all events are subject to change)*



**"YOU SEEM TO KNOW EVERYONE. YOU GOT ANY PULL WITH SANTA CLAUS?"**

**Grace's Chatter  
published monthly.**

Editor - Paul Scott,  
Managing Editor - Laurie Cadue

Contributors this month are; Rev. Takouhi, Nancy Abrams, Laurie Cadue, Carol Currie, Colleen Harding, Vicki Leakey and Paul Scott

**Christmas Newsletter deadline is  
Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Stay Tuned, we are learning more  
about having Sunday Worship  
shown on Cogeco TV.**

