

Grace's Chatter – Summer 2023

"Life is short. We do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who journey the way with us. So be swift to love and make haste to be kind."

Henri-Frédéric Amiel



Dear Grace United Church,



Marcus J. Borg, a wonderful theologian, teacher, and lecturer, passed away in 2015, but the above words from Henri-Frédéric Amiel, which Borg used at the conclusion of almost every event, still ring true to my mind and heart. They make Borg's memory a blessed one to me, personally.

Today, as I type this short reflection from my heart, my mind is racing like a horse to tell you all the wonderful and encouraging words I have heard at the Festival of Homiletics in Minneapolis, Minn. (week of May 14) and the Annual General Meeting of our Regional Council (E.O.O.R.C. May 26-27), because I am deeply inspired, encouraged and strengthened to carry on the Mission of God in this weary world through our Community of Faith and beyond our walls. I know that I cannot capture two weeks of learning and living into a page or two. So, I invite you to think of this question:

What gives you courage in this weary world to carry on?

One of the speakers at the Festival of Homiletics reminded us of Rahab, a prostitute who helped Ancient Israel to conquer Canaan. The preacher, The Rev. Dr. Anna Carter Florence, shared with us the fact that God used such a woman, from the margins of life, to save God's People and that gives us Hope. This prostitute knew more about the God of Israel than Israel knew and believed. Rahab knew that the God of Israel had been at work more than the Israelites did.

Beloved, many times Israel wanted to go back to slavery because they were lost in the desert and did not realize that the difficulties in the wilderness actually were a time of growth and transformation.

It is said that Rahab lived at the edges of the wall of the city. So, she was literally at the margins of life. However, even in the edges of life, she saw the Truth of the Living God of Ancient Israel. What is even more interesting is that this woman from the margins of life was the second female name recorded in the Genealogy of the Gospel of Matthew, in the New Testament, confirming to the audience that Rahab's story in Joshua 2, Old Testament, **is not an allegory but TRUTH.**

Beloved, today, I am not writing these words just to fill in the pages of this newsletter or have something to do in my busy schedule – I am writing these words to remind us of two things.

First, Rahab reminds us **to live a life beyond walls and fears.** God can and will use anyone, everyone and everything in life to transform this world to the better, whether we are willing or not.

Second, as Rev. Florence said, and I paraphrase – Jericho is stuck in the permeance of their status quo, but Rahab knows that a change is coming, and she knows that **moving away from the status quo is not a threat; and she rewrites her life with courage and faith.**



Beloved, Grace United Church, everyone is searching for that change to the better in the world, but as our Regional Council's theme for the AGM (May 26-27) reminded us, through our General Secretary, the **Rev. Michael Blair**, that Being Courageous Community requires: **Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice.**

Today, I invite you to make time to **deepen your spirituality, live boldly** the fact that you are a disciple of Jesus, and **dare to bring justice** everywhere you are found, because **those three will help you and all of us to live with Hope in a weary world.**

May we go where God is calling us to go, as we move forward and **not be afraid to learn from the margins of life**, because that is where **Faith becomes the eyes of our souls and Hope becomes the wings that help us move forward with Peace and Joy.** Bless everyone who comes your way as God blesses you with every breath you take and every move you make. **Amen.**

Your Servant-Leader,

Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro

B.A., B.Th., M.Div.

Youth Hangout prepares for Pride Week

By Sam Crosby

On Sunday, June 11, our band of courageous youth met to prepare for Pride Week, July 17-23. In prepping for Pride, the group assisted in button-making, building signs and banners, and sharing in community. The Youth Hangouts are a big part of our celebrations and here is the list of events for Pride.

July is Pride Week, from July 17-23.

Monday (17) is the Flag Raising at Emergency Services. There will also be a flag raising at Town Hall.

Tuesday (18) is a Youth Hangout from 2-4 pm. Plans are underway for Karaoke and Open mic for anyone who plays instruments, sings, does magic, dances, etc.

Wednesday (19) is Trivia Night at the Stonewater Pub

Thursday (20) is a Youth Hangout from 2-4 pm, which will feature Board Games. There will be a Meet & Greet at O'Connor Gallery from 6-8pm and then an Outdoor Movie at Pistachio Cafe featuring "The Birdcage" with Nathan Lane and Robin Williams.

Friday (21) will feature Drag Storytime at Gananoque Public Library (Time TBD). And in the evening, there will be a Drag Bingo scheduled with the incomparable Alynna Moore at Mavericks Restaurant.

Saturday (22) is the Parade and Festival. Individuals, families, businesses, and service clubs are encouraged to participate and to register online. Registration is required for insurance purposes and a detailed list must be submitted.

Sunday (23) is a brunch, which is currently slated to take place at Laverne's.

Our committee is ALWAYS open to new members - we meet the first Monday of each month at Emergency Services (and on Zoom for those unable to make in-person).

Ministry and Personnel move to team format.

By Elaine Davidson

The Ministry and Personnel committee is committed to working as a Team this year in assisting and supporting the staff of Grace United church. One of the benefits of this approach is that if Pam Shea, Liz Dennison, or Elaine Davidson is away, there is always a team member for staff to approach. This Team approach which we initiated in February appears to be working well. On another note, Laurie, our very capable office administrator, is moving her office to the former Minister's office effective immediately. The M&P committee think this will be an excellent space for Laurie.

Steward's plans in place – Mark your Calendars.

By Denise Wood

A few things to report on for fundraising.

Mary's Merry Minstrels

We had a very successful and fun evening of music from Mary's Merry Minstrels on May 13th. This group is a wonderful supporter of Grace United. We raised over \$800.00.

HoozHear? Concert

HoozHear? performed on Saturday, June 3rd as a fundraiser for Grace United. The event raised \$885.00. More details and pictures of the group are below.

Pies at Ribfest

The Pies for God's Sake team continue to make pies in preparation for Ribfest on July 1st weekend. We will be selling baked pies at Ribfest starting at 11:00 am at the event. Frozen pies will be available to purchase at the Church that day as well.

Fall Turkey Dinner

We are planning a family Turkey Dinner at the Curling Club in October. There will be a raffle and silent auction. Details to follow.

Christmas Market

It's early to be thinking about Christmas but your Board of Stewards is already planning for our Christmas Market in November. This event raises many needed funds for Grace. Stay tuned! We will be finalizing the date very soon!

Fall Concerts are set

More concerts are booked for the fall including a ***Leonard Cohen Tribute, Turpin's Trail*** and ***Bob Burtch Bluegrass***. Thank you to Paul Harding for providing the concert details. Your Board of Stewards is working diligently to achieve our fundraising goal!



September 21, 2023 – "TOWER OF SONG"

On his birthday we present a tribute to the poetry and music of Leonard Cohen, featuring Cliff Edwards, Chantal Thompson and Paul Harding, with guitar and a string trio

October 19, 2023, 7:30 p.m.

"TURPIN'S TRAIL" - Turpin's Trail is a Kingston-based trio consisting of Chris Murphy, Jon McLurg, and Noah St. Amand. With a closet-full of over a dozen instruments and a wealth of great original and traditional songs and tunes, Turpin's Trail brings together three veterans of Kingston's music scene.





November 24, 2023 – “THE BOB BURTCH BAND”

Bob Burtch brings together Wayne Abrams, Mary Abrams, Shawn Kellett, Ted Pelow and Bob Lansdell, some of North America's finest players for an evening of Bluegrass Magic. Get your tickets early – this concert will be sold out.

HoozHear? Talent Beyond Their Years

By Paul Harding

HoozHear? is *just that!* . **HoozHere?** started out in 2016 as the house band for **Crystalize Music Studio**, Inverary, supporting other performers at various studio concerts. The musicians on stage changed often, depending on the needs of the other performers and who was available, hence the name ...

HoozHere? has since come into their own, covering over 9 decades of music and discovering their own eclectic sound. Their repertoire comes from artists such as Stevie Wonder, Earth Wind and Fire, ELO, Ray Charles, The Doors, Fleetwood Mac, CCR, Michael Jackson, The Police, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sting, David Bowie, many jazz standards, and much more!

It was at the Joel Stone Park Bandstand in Gananoque for the Poker Run and 1000 Islands Waterfront Festival that Cliff Edwards, Vice Chair of our Board of Stewards, was struck by the uniqueness of the group and he decided they would be a perfect fit for a fundraiser at Grace United Church. Obviously his judgement was correct.

A large crowd assembled on June 3rd to hear **HoozHear?** and, according to Board Chair Brian Brooks, over \$1,200 was raised for Grace United Church's ministry. The range of age in the audience (from 9 to 90) bore evidence of the eclectic musical offerings of the group.

HoozHere? blended vocals and beautiful harmonies with keyboards, guitars, percussion, electric and double bass, and saxophone. This versatile group of multi-instrumentalists are ages 16-22. Each musician demonstrated ability on a variety of instruments, playing as many as four, as they seamlessly moved around the stage from station to station.

This writer was struck by the not only the graciousness of the group as they planned their concert here, but also the professional demeanour both on and off stage. They had immense fun with the music, but it was all business when it came to sharing the

work of loading in and out and caring for each other on stage. Kudos to mentors Jack Flannagan and Crystal Lehtimaki, who are obviously held in high regard by their musicians.

We look forward to hearing **HoozHear?** again at the waterfront concerts and would be delighted to have them at Grace United Church for a return engagement.



Session Gears Up for a Busy Fall Season

By Barb Jenkins

We are entering a quieter time for Session but there will be new initiatives in September.

Messy Church will be started up again under team leadership of Colleen Harding and Cheryl O'Leary. We are hoping to add a few more to the group organizing. Messy Church is open to all ages in the community and offers a time for fellowship with Bible stories, crafts and a meal.

Coffee time before Sunday Service will be back starting September 10th. Session will prepare that day and a sign-up sheet will be provided for other committees to take a turn. We will be placing a sandwich board outside to invite others to come in for a cup.

We are so proud of Tammy Fergusson for completing her Lay Minister program. She continues to help Rev Takouhi and Paul Harding with outreach events at Carveth and Fox Run.

Julie Price with some help from Caring and Sharing committee is just finishing up the photo sessions for our church directory. All are looking forward to having this as resource at our fingertips, including some cute pet pictures!

We will be celebrating Pride Week and having another cake after church. A kind donation has funded these beautiful cakes baked by Bonnie Robeson from the General Store.

Session continues to manage church rentals with help from Laurie Cadue. Programs through the Senior's Association hopefully will be back. Chair Yoga is being offered as package during the summer as a trial by Lindsay Keefe. Session would like to partner with Stewards going forward as this initiative falls under both roles within the church.

Session is responsible for the worship and spiritual side of our community of faith. This includes things like organizing participation in the service such as ushering, serving communion, and baptism. In coordination with the organist and minister, as part of the Worship Planning Team, we plan our journey throughout the year of Christian celebrations. Although it may appear seamless, magic is happening behind the scenes. Session also coordinates with the Regional Council of the United Church of Canada and the Mission and Service initiatives.

The Sharing and Caring Committee look after correspondence, some visitation and communication to the entire membership including delivering prayer shawls when needed.

Although it is rare these days, Session is available to help plan rentals of church space for life events such as weddings, funerals, and baptisms. As an extension of this, we help with community groups seeking to use our facilities. This has increased our presence in town as more newcomers come through the open doors.

With Messy Church starting up again in the fall, we are looking for a few more members to join us on Session. Many of us are avid travellers and we attend our monthly meetings as able throughout the year except July and August. Session meets the 1st Sunday of the month following the worship service. In bad winter weather, we may be on zoom. Everyone is welcome to join and there are different options to participate in this valuable group within our church.



Grace United will also be active throughout the summer and fall with various community groups and activities.

- 1) The Community Kitchen meets again on June 22nd teaching how to prepare nutritious and inexpensive meals.
- 2) BOOT Camp with Tricia Winger, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:30
- 3) Babysitting and Home Alone Safety courses are booked for June 30th and July 7th.
- 4) Chair YOGA, Thursdays, 1 TO 2 p.m. with Lindsay Keefe – July 7 to August 24th
- 5) Historical Society, October 17th

- 6) **December 9, 2023 – “GANANOQUE CHORAL SOCIETY”** presents “Christmas with a Twist”. Tired of the same old Christmas songs every year? This is a fresh approach to well-loved songs, with a splash of the traditional.



New Grace United photo directory in full swing

By Julie Price

Church Photo Directory



Forty-eight families signed up for photographs for our new Church photo directory. With children and grandchildren, we had about 90 people and 4 dogs. Our photographer, John, made everyone feel at ease, coaxing smiles and laughter from the humans and alert expressions from the canines.

Unfortunately, our portrait consultant was not able to join us due to an injury. Follow-up appointments had to be booked. The convenience of digital should have provided the instant gratification of seeing our photos, but a huge thank you to everyone for just rolling with it.

Back in the days of print film we would have had to wait several weeks for our follow up, but Michael will be back on the 9th and 10th of June (Friday and Saturday) for people to select their pose for the book and order any additional prints for family. For those few unable to return, Michael will choose the directory pose for them. Of course, this will already have happened by the time you get this newsletter.

Shannon and Tammy at Carveth are taking portraits of our members there who are residents and were unable to trek over to the Church. If you follow them on Facebook, you'll have seen the care and skill they put into their photographs.

Rev. Takouhi took a few pictures of people who were away or unavailable during our photoshoot, we will have a pop-up photo booth at the back of the Church after the service on June 11th and some people have photos of their own to submit. IPC (Canada Photo Services Inc.) requires the submitted photos are at least 1MB to ensure a high-resolution image for the directory.

The last steps will be choosing the layout for our pages, preparing additional pages for group photos and formatting our roster pages. If you are not having your picture included in the directory, but still wish your name and phone number in the roster, please let Julie or Colleen know a.s.a.p.

Office Relocation Provides Better Use of Space

By Brian Brooks

Not much in the way of news, good or bad.

We have heard nothing back from COGECO regarding use of the Church's steeple. I have spoken to their representative, who advises nothing to him either. Nothing more we can do at this time.

The Lawyer at Clark & Wright is looking after Conner endowment situation. Hoping to hear back from him by end June.

Laurie's office has been moved to the former Minister's office. This will allow use of her former office and adjacent room for group/committee meetings. This will also provide a more welcoming place for Rev. Takouhi to meet with folks as required. It will also provide Laurie with more space.

The increased use of the Church Hall continues with classes, quilters etc. We are hoping for more groups to sign up.

Building a Courageous Community, the next big step for Grace United Church

By David Charles

Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council held its Annual General Meeting at the Brockville Memorial Auditorium on May 26 and 27, 2023. This was the first in person AGM since 2019 and had roughly 100 in attendance.

The theme of the meeting was "Building Courageous Community" with the keynote speaker being Michael Blair, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada. Below is a photo of Michael with Rev Takouhi, Tammy Fergusson, and Dave Charles.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Covenanting ceremony of the new EOORC Executive and the Licenced Lay Worship Leaders (Tammy)
- Unanimous vote to approve EOORC as an AFFIRMING Regional Conference
- Overwhelming support by EOORC to vote yes on a remit to "Establish an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization" within The United Church of Canada". Grace United Church will also need to vote on this by June 2024. At least 50% of the Regions and Communities of Faith must approve to move forward.
- The new "Then Let Us Sing" United Church songbook was introduced and will be available in electronic form only in 2024.
- Language in our Mission and Service documents is being revised to replace the word "Mission" in reference to our outreach work due to the negative implications of mission work as it affected Indigenous peoples.
- We gave tribute to United Church clergy and leaders who passed in 2022 and those who reached service milestones.
- Rev Takouhi and Liz Church led the AGM sessions of worship and reflection.
- Table groups provided their insights into what the United Church would look like in the next 3 to 10 years and what steps needed to happen to reach this vision.

The primary take away from this year's AGM was that to be a Courageous Community at Grace United Church we must be deeply spiritual, audaciously Christian, and risking welcoming community people, whom we may be uncomfortable with, into our spaces and activities.

It is also important to focus less on the money and more on our connection to God through prayer and discernment and let God do the rest.

David Charles is the Mission and Service Enthusiast for our community of faith and the lay representative at EOORC.



Dave Charles, Tammy Fergusson, Michael Blair (General Secretary UCC), and Rev Takouhi at EOORC Annual General Meeting May 26 and 27 2023 at Brockville Memorial Auditorium

Much to be thankful for, even amid the challenges

By Vicki Leakey, Treasurer

Great news for Summer 2023 as it would appear we can be optimistic with the activity this summer can hold for us all. This Spring has seen many more visitors to our community and the Town has wonderful events for us all to enjoy with families and friends this summer.

But with the personal challenges that come our way and the devastating wildfires blazing through our amazing country we will need each other for support and kindness in the months ahead.

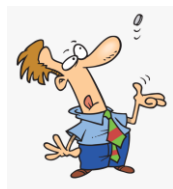
Thanks to the support of our church family through offerings and fundraising we see an increase in our revenue up to the end of May which was \$111,192 vs \$105,913 same time in 2022. Our expenses to date were \$113,085 vs \$120,421 same time in 2022.

Unfortunately, we are still reliant on our Trust Fund dollars to subsidize our operating costs. So far \$60,000 has been transferred. As we plan for our summer activities with family and friends and may be unable to attend Sunday service, please try and ensure you provide a means of planned offerings that are affordable to you, through the summer months.

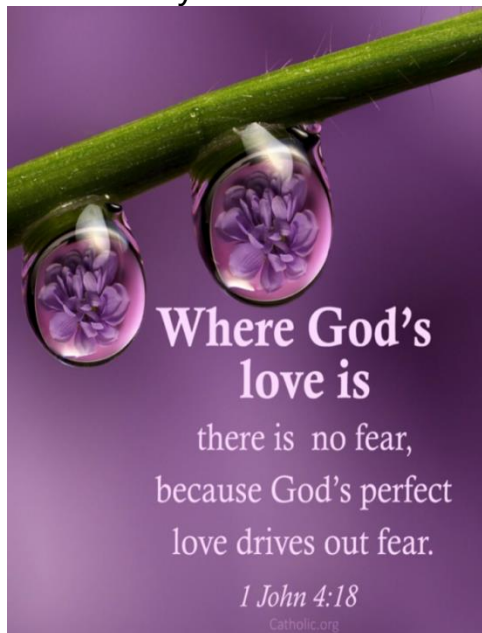
We have several Offerings' options available for those that may not attend the Sunday Service but wish to support the many programs Grace United Church continues to provide. **E-transfer** from your on-line bank account is popular; you can look for "send an e-transfer" on your on-line banking website and send to grace.gan@outlook.com. Just follow the instructions given. **Offerings by mail** are another option – just mail a cheque to Grace United Church at 120 Pine St. Gananoque, On K7G 1C7.

Our Session and Stewards are working hard to find options to bring in additional revenues to help offset general operating costs. See the upcoming events in The Chatter. Our pie makers definitely deserve the recognition of the many hours spent preparing and selling pies that are becoming very well known throughout our community and have definitely taken the lead as our top church fundraiser.

We have a strong, welcoming church family who have a lot of fun when we are together for service, committee meetings, kitchen duties or whatever. No invitation is necessary for anyone to come and join and feel the fellowship. Wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable summer!



Our sincere condolences to all who have lost loved ones over the past few months. The following members of Grace United have entered their eternal rest and are now at home with the Lord; Helen McLean, Jack Hatch, Joan Simpson, Dick Abrams and Tom Tindal. May their loved ones find comfort in the memories and peace in their hearts.



Jack Hatch - A 'Celebration of Life' will be held on Wednesday, 28 June 2023 at 2pm at the Highline Hall, located at 111 Belleville Street, Wellington.

Dick Abrams - The family will receive friends on Wednesday June 28 from 2-4 and 7-9 pm. A Memorial service will be held at Grace United Church on Thursday June 29 at 11:00 am. In Lieu of flowers donations made to the Shriner's Hospitals of Canada, Grace United Church, The Alzheimer's Society of Lanark County or to the Charity of your Choice would be appreciated by the family.

Tom Tindal - A private, family Graveside Service, (in keeping with Tom's wishes), will be held at Gananoque Cemetery. As Expressions of Sympathy, Donations in Thomas's Memory may be made to Grace United Church, or to the Gananoque Legion.

Celebrations for July, August & September – Happy Birthday or Anniversary to all those who celebrating over the next few months.

Happy Birthday to Norine (99), Brenda, Rhea, Dorothy, Choughik, Bruce, Cheryl, Shannon, Brad, Dianna, Charlie (99), Linda, Claire, Marilyn, Elaine, Jack, Michelle, Martin, Dave, Jean, Carol, Darryl, Thomas and Leanne.

Happy Anniversary to Peter & Catherine (54yrs), Tom & Carol (61yrs), Murray & Rhea (56yrs), Jack & Gloria (67yrs), Denise & Derryl (52 yrs), Doug & Liz (35 yrs) and Mel & Marg (68yrs).

Congratulations Everyone!!

We would love to hear your feed back. Do you read the newsletter?

Should we continue with the newsletter? Let us know.

Email Paul Scott scottsonhill@hotmail.com

Contributors this month are:

Rev. Takouhi, Sam Crosby, Denise Wood, Elaine Davidson, Brian Brooks, Dave Charles, Vicki Leakey, Barb Jenkins, Laurie Cadue, Paul Scott and Paul Harding.

Deadline for the Fall Edition of Grace's Chatter – September 15, 2023