

## Grace's Chatter – Winter 2023

***“Advent: Redirecting our lives to God’s authority and aligning oneself to the coming of the Realm of God!”***

*Rev. Takouhi*



Dear Grace United Church,

Are you ready for Advent?

Do you remember what Advent is?

We already know the long nights are here, and the hours of daylight have become shorter and will be even shorter until December 21, and after that longest night, the daylight hours will be starting to get longer and longer, slowly but surely. We do know this, and we hold on to this Hope.

As your spiritual leader it is my duty to immerse myself in study in the Word in different forms: The Bible, study books, and reflection books. I also try to do some writing myself. In October, I took a week off to read a new Advent Devotional from around the world, “Light from Afar,” and after finishing one of the chapters, the above words came to me and I wrote them in the book. It is a great gift for ministers to have these learning opportunities, not just for our own sake but for the sake of the Communities of Faith we serve as well. The authors of these reflections are from Brazil, Philippines, Ukraine, and South Africa.

Each author shares childhood experiences of Advent and Christmas, and how they were blessed by different rituals of their own families and communities, but most of all, how they were blessed by different gifts they received from others. These gifts were sometimes material, and financial, but most of all they were gifts of Love, Respect, Dignity, Service and Grace.



It has reminded me so much of my childhood, and how I wanted to offer my voice by joining the carolers of the church who went out to sing from midnight until the morning light came up on Armenian Christmas Eve (January 5-6). I was too young to

go, I was less than eight years old, when these carolers went, before the Civil War in Lebanon started.



After April 1975, I was not even eight yet (November 18, 1975) – the Lebanese Civil War Started and it has not yet stopped. It continues in different forms that will be too long to mention in this newsletter. However, similarly to these world-renowned authors, I too remember the Light from afar. No matter how much we did not see the sun, literally, because of the smoke from bombshells covering the sun, there still was this small light that flickered on us and led the way – look where God has brought me. Every single day, my mother read a Psalm, and every night, she read another one. Psalm 91 is embedded in me, and I hear her reading it to me still. What a Gift our memories

are.

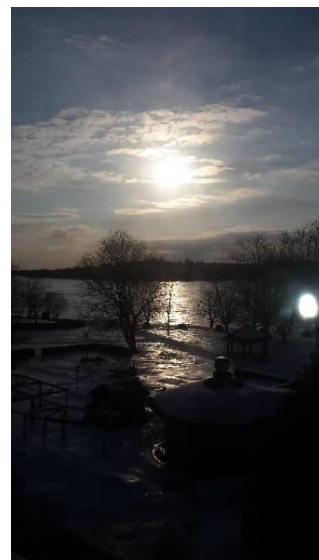
Beloved, it is easy to grow blind to the small lights around us in the middle of a world where everything and everyone competes to shine stronger than the other.

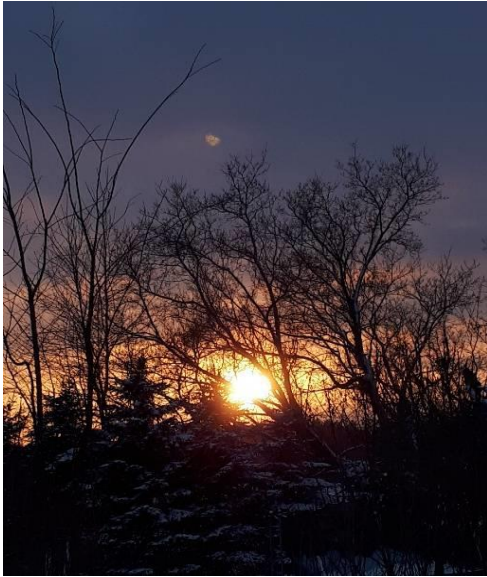
Politicians find any excuse to dehumanize children and adults equally for their own gain and greed. Controlling the world with weapons of destruction to bring Peace is not PEACE. When we are all seeking to bring PEACE in the world, some politicians seek to gather PIECEs of land in attempts to annihilate people and make their borders larger and larger – forgetting that life is a short journey and no one is able to live forever in this physical form.

Friends, the world seems so dark and difficult to live through right now, but this is NOT new. After the first Christmas, Herod killed infant children because of his own insecurity and pride. The Herods of this day are still killing children who are created in God's Image. Today the Spirit of God is reminding us to hold on to that little Light – even if it seems to be so far away

– but we know deep down inside that the **Child, Immanuel – the manifestation of God with us** – is not fake news and is with us always. **We have**

**experienced Immanuel in the past, still experience it now, and we know this Good News will continue to be shared repeatedly into eternity and beyond.**





So, today, as we might think that helplessness and hopelessness are stronger than the Light in and around us, I hope you take advantage of the Advent season, starting on Dec. 3, 2023, and journey with us in person or virtually **Redirecting our lives to God's authority and aligning ourselves to the coming of the Realm of God!**

Thanks be to Immanuel, the ever-present God who is always with us in the Good Times and Bad, who has brought us together as pilgrims so that we can help each other celebrate our Joys and carry each other through our hardships.

### **Do you see the Light from afar?**

Join us, let us help each other **See the Light, Be the Light and Spread the Light.** Thanks be to God the Source of All Light and Life. **Amen.**

I remain humbly God's Servant-Daughter – Because of Grace,

***Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro***

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

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## **Briefs from the Official Board**

By Brian Brooks

Here is the update from the Cogeco project. The company has taken the first equipment installation step and placed a monitor on our electrical panel to determine how much power the Church uses on a daily basis.

A retainer has been paid to the lawyer who is looking into the Trustees restricted funds. A follow up will take place next month.

As we work toward providing more rental space, and creating storage space, the items in the former Sunday school room (behind the stage) have been boxed up and will be taken to the Salvation Army next week.

The Maintenance group continues with its monthly inspections and an outdoor inspection was completed.

# Local revenue and M & S Support are Up

By Vicki Leakey, treasurer

As we work toward another year's end, 2023 has been an interesting year upon which to reflect. Members of Grace United Church have volunteered many hours to bring much activity into our building over the past year. We definitely are recognized in the community as a strong local outreach support and hopefully in 2024 that community outreach can increase.

Financially, our total revenue as at October 31, without Trustee transfers, was \$106,531, an increase of \$20,000 over budget. Clearly, our generosity is working! On the flip side, expenses for the same period totaled \$205,586, which would leave us with a deficit of \$99,055, however; we were able to transfer \$100,000 from our trust funds.

There has been much conversation on *finding our way forward* and based on the strength of this congregation, I am confident we will find a path and the means going forward without having to fully rely on Trustee funds. We had Trustee funds as of September 30th of \$693,469, but much of this is restricted to only using the interest from these funds. With that in mind, in 2024, there is intent to develop a plan to reduce the amount of annual transfers to subsidize operating costs.

Stewards and our church family to date have been very successful increasing fundraising revenue, rent revenue and soon revenue from the Cogeco lease will begin. We will continue to leverage off those initiatives to find new means of increasing revenue as well as look for opportunities to change the total of operating costs.

Our outreach giving's to Mission and Service as of October 31 was \$13,320, also up over last year. We continue to support secondary school bursaries and local charity needs such as the Food Bank etc.

We have the ability and will distribute brochures explaining how you can set up **Pre-Authorized Remittance** (PAR) to Grace United, which is a great way to spread out your automatic giving's throughout the year. You may also **E-transfer** from your on-line bank account. Simply look for "send an e-transfer" on your on line banking website and send to [grace.gan@outlook.com](mailto:grace.gan@outlook.com). Just follow the instructions given.

**Offerings by mail** are another option – send by mail to Grace Church at 120 Pine St. Gananoque, On K7G 1C7.

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy and Merry Christmas. Thanks to all who have given generously to Grace United Church, your time, your talents and finances. It allows us to stay strong and optimistic into our future, as well as reach out to help others in our community and abroad.

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## **Concert series and pie sales prove popular**

By Denise Wood

Stewards have been very active over the past few weeks.

### **Bob Burtch Band – November 24th**

We are wrapping up our concert series with the Bob Burtch show on Friday November 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. The Bob Burtch band is a local well-known Blue Grass Band. Tickets are available from members of Stewards and from Laurie Cadue in the office – 613-382-2161 and also at the door.

### **Concert Series**

The Turpin's Trail concert was a huge success raising \$1907.00 for our ministry. It was a wonderful evening of Celtic and Folk music enjoyed by all who attended. In total our Concert Series (Hoozhear, Mary's Merry Minstrels, Tower of Song, and Turpin's Trail) raised \$5,382.00! A big thank you to Paul Harding and Cliff Edwards for spearheading the concerts and to everyone who helped sell tickets, usher, set up and take down after the events. All your efforts are greatly appreciated.

### **Christmas Market – December 2nd**

Christmas is just around the corner and so is our annual Christmas Market - Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> in the church hall from 10 to 2. The vendor tables have sold out and the Christmas Market Committee has been planning the lunch menu, bake table and silent auction. If you have any items to donate to the raffle or silent auction, please contact Laurie Cadue in the office. Laurie has a list of basket items that can be donated. Sign up sheets for bake table donations and volunteers to help on the day are at the back of the Church. We can always use extra hands so please consider joining us at the Market. It's a fun time!

### **Christmas Pies include mincemeat and raison**

Pies for God Sake will be offering frozen pies for sale at the Market as well. The "Pie Ladies" have been very busy for the past few weeks and there is a good supply of all your favourites including mincemeat and raison pie for the holiday season. To date pie sales have raised \$2,721 since September.



## **Christmas Breakfast will return**

For many years members, including Tom and Carol Currie, have organized a Christmas Breakfast during Advent. We are going to hold this event again this year on Sunday December 17th at 9:00 a.m. We are not selling tickets but will ask for a free will offering with donations going to support services in our community. Sign-up sheets will be at the back of the Church to attend the breakfast. We need to know the number of folks attending so food for the breakfast can be ordered. We hope you can come and celebrate the Christmas season with our Church family.

## **Making a Difference**

The Board of Stewards is working on the Budget for 2024. The Nominating Committee for Grace will be looking for folks to join the various committees within the Church. If you are interested in serving on Stewards please contact Denise Wood, Chair of the Nominating Committee.

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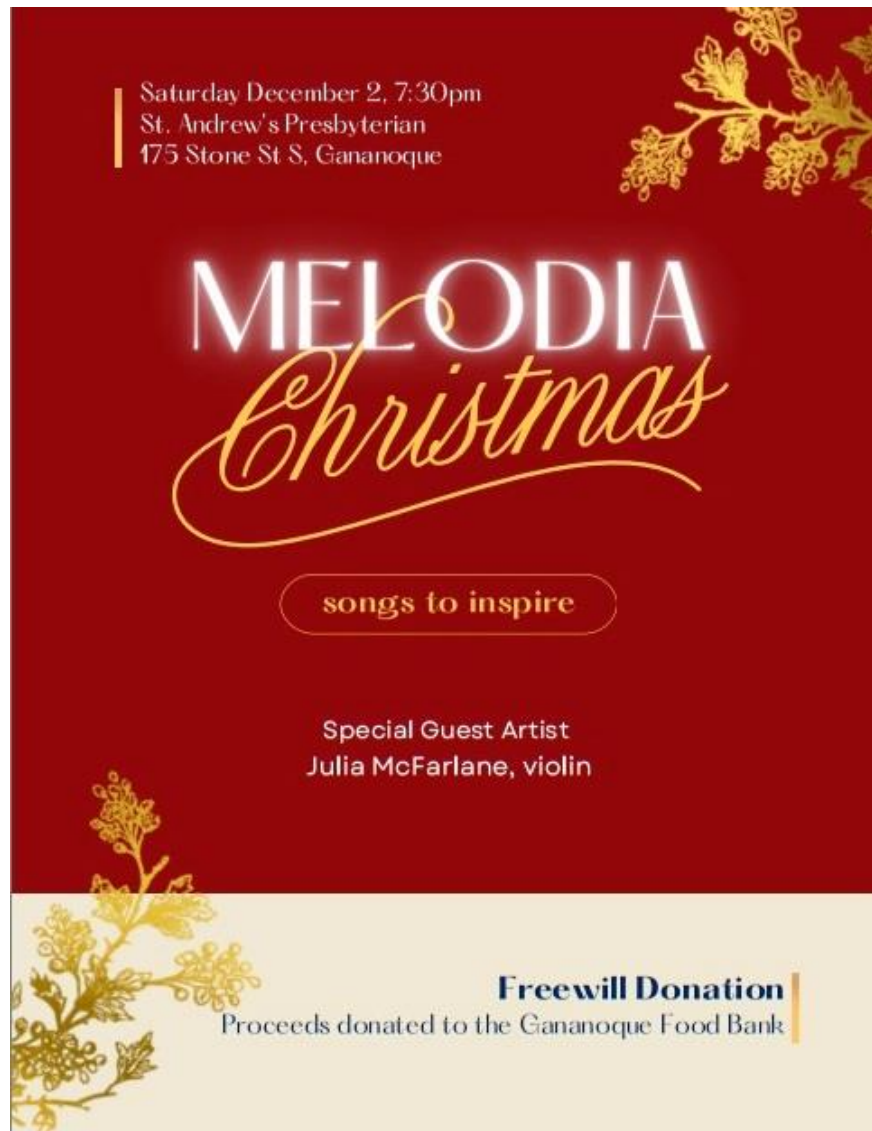
## **The Bluegrass Magic of the Bob Burtch Band**

By Paul Harding

**This** Friday evening, November 24<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 pm, Grace United Church will be the site of a concert featuring Bob Burtch and his Bluegrass band. Bob's band features some of North America's finest bluegrass players. Bob is known as the one of the top bluegrass mandolin players in the world, and plays to sold out crowds everywhere he performs. He surrounds himself with highly respected musicians and the result is an evening of unparalleled entertainment. Mary, the matriarch of the Abrams Brothers band, joins Bob, along with Shawn Kellett on fiddle, Ted Pelow on banjo and Bill Landsell on bass. Come early to get a good seat. Tickets are \$25, and available at the Gananoque Visitors Centre, Grace United Church website (click on this link <http://surl.li/nfnsl>) or Church Office (613-382-2161), as well as admission at the door. Proceeds will go to Grace United Church projects, local and global. Come join your friends for a toe-tapping evening of entertainment full of surprises.



## At St. Andrew's Church, 175 Stone St., Gananoque



### Not Just Another Christmas Concert!

On Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 pm, Grace United Church plays host to the Gananoque Choral Society as they present "**Not Just Another Christmas Concert**". Tired of the same-old, same-old Christmas music? Well this program was chosen with you in mind. The songs are *all* seasonal favourites, but *not* the ones that you hear all the time. Selections such as "The Friendly Beasts", the Beach Boys' "Little Saint Nick", Barry Manilow's "Because It's Christmas", and "Somewhere in My Memory" (from 'Home Alone') will get you in the Christmas Spirit in a kinder, gentler way. With solos from within the ranks of the choir, along with carol singing with the mighty Grace United Church pipe organ, this program promises to please. The Accompanist is Anna Basten, and the Musical Director is our own Organist, Paul Harding. Tickets are Adults \$15, Kids \$5, with a family max of \$30. The concert will be

repeated at Lansdowne United Church the afternoon of December 10<sup>th</sup> and at Fox Run by the River on December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.



## **Organ and Brass featured for Christmas Worship**

Are you looking forward to singing your favourite Christmas carols with organ and brass – a 40-year tradition at Grace United Church? On Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> bring your children and grandchildren to experience the glory of congregational singing as Samuel Sebastian Wesley required. In 1761, upon the publication of a new hymn book, he outlined his instructions for singing in church:

- ***Directions for Singing.*** *That this part of Divine Worship may be the more acceptable to God, as well as the more profitable to yourself and others, be careful to observe the following directions:*
- I. Learn these Tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.



- II. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
- III. Sing All. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.
- IV. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.
- V. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.
- VI. Sing in Time: whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can. And take care you sing not too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.



- VII. Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your Heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

# **White Gifts Will Help Make Christmas Brighter**

By Barb Jenkins

Your Session has planning meeting on Nov 29<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. to assess whether we can go ahead with bringing back Messy Church and to organize the Birthday Party for Jesus. We have sent invitations to the other churches in Gananoque. See Birthday Party for Jesus article for more details. The Party is open to all on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. Watch for more information after the planning session.

**White Gift Sunday** will be December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This year we will be collecting for *Christmas for Kids Toy Drive*. Rather than duplicate our efforts and adding to a smaller slice of the pie (ie available dollars for all Christmas collections in town), we will support this worthwhile project. And it's not all about toys. We like it because there is a group in our community collecting information anonymously about families in need and will match contributions to gifts specifically for individual children. By setting the date early in December, there will be time to purchase the right items.

Each child also receives pyjamas, a board game, toothpaste and brush, books. They do have a Facebook page. You can contact Lynda Garrah if you want to refer a family for the program. Money collected will be submitted at CIBC and we will add a white gift card to our tree here at Grace in your name.

Session meets on December 3<sup>rd</sup> following church service.

There will be a **Blue Christmas service** again this year. This is to support any who have lost a loved one or feel lonely and have difficulty at this time of year. See Blue Christmas flyer in this newsletter.

The **Church Directory** is in the process of being printed and will be coming out soon.

We have an enthusiastic group who will be decorating the church for the Advent season. All are welcome to join in. Paul and Carolyn Scott are the coordinators. Tuesday November 28<sup>th</sup> is the day. 1p.m., the time. A special thank you is extended to Connie and Steve Thompson for hanging the garlands around the arched doors, retrieving the window wreaths from storage and bringing the other decorations down from the third floor.

There is a signup sheet for **Coffee Time** before church. Please contact Barb Jenkins if you would like to usher on a Sunday. [barbjenkins1@gmail.com](mailto:barbjenkins1@gmail.com) 613-583-2077

We are on the lookout for at least 2 more people to join Session. It is a chance to be involved in the worship side of our community of faith. To conclude, a member of Session will be joining the nominating committee of the Official Board.

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## **Becoming a Flourishing church in today's society**

By David Charles



On November 10, eight members of Grace United Church attended the Flourishing Project facilitated by Moderator Rev. Carmen Lansdowne at Crossroads United Church in Kingston. The goal of the all-day workshop was to challenge all 90 + participants from various United Church of Canada Communities of Faith in Eastern Ontario to open their minds to what we could be and what we want to be as a Church in today's society. This fit very well with the concepts we have been exploring with Rev Peter Bartlett on Grace Church's "Way Forward".

An important concept we looked at was developing a "Living Above the Line" perspective to our everyday living. Folks "Above the Line" are open, curious, and committed to learning. Folks "Living Below the Line" tend to be closed, defensive, and committed to being right.

Out of the workshop I believe we came away energized and positive. We also made great contacts with other nearby Communities of Faith who want to share ideas with us and pool our resources to impact our communities. Rev Takouhi has already engaged Nikki Nel to help coordinate a Camp Awesome for youth in our area.



### Flourishing Workshop Grace UC Participants

From the left: Dave Charles, Shirley Clark, Vicki Leakey, Moderator Rev. Carmen Lansdowne, Rev Takouhi, Colleen Harding, Paul Harding, Tammy Fergusson, Angus Fergusson

## Finding our way - THE WAY FORWARD

By Rev. Takouhi

***"Nurtured by God's Love to offer Worship, Hospitality and Healing."***



The Journey, the WAY FORWARD began on Feb. 2, 2023, with Grace United Church's desire to seek how we can go Forward. With the help of the Rev. Dr. Peter Bartlett, of EOORC, we learned that **Community of Faith** is **Called** to be **Courageous**. We learned that God **Comforts** us in our **Challenges** and **Challenges** us in our **Comforts**. We also learned that with **Change** more **Challenges** arise and **Challenges** bring forth **Conflict** – **Just think how COVID brought forth Challenge and Conflict locally and globally.**

We, at Grace United Church embarked on this journey and wrestled and are still wrestling with God in search of Blessings and of Wisdom to find our Way Forward.

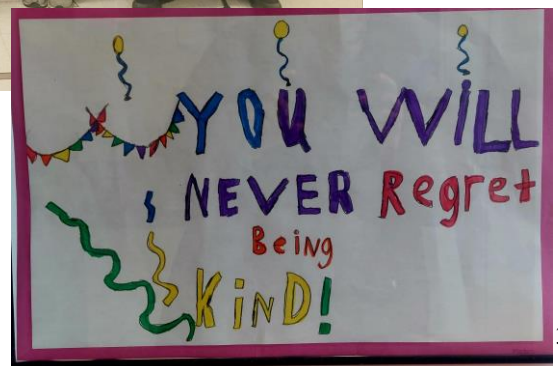


We have learned that we cannot see our WAY FORWARD unless we know who we are as a Community of Faith. Through different workshops, we have come up with a new (mission) **PURPOSE** Statement “**Nurtured by God’s Love to offer Worship, Hospitality and Healing.**” The wording of our purpose statement changes over the years, but the **purpose remains the same.**

The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development Changes, but God’s Love calls us **Perpetually, Persistently, and Peacefully** to carry out the Purpose of God in the World, Reminding us that **Faith is LOVE in ACTION.**

The next step for us, as a Community of Faith is to seek **New Ways of Being.** About twenty of us gathered on November 15 and we came up with new ways of being the Church – Offering Safe space for Musical Lunches, and more use of our commercial kitchen and multicultural and multifaith events. Remembering that we cannot do all these things all at once, but we can start with baby steps...

We have learned that we cannot LOOK for Solutions without **VISION.** There can be many more avenues to think about, however consider these starting points to stir our hearts and minds. We know that seeking **God’s Vision** requires a **Sacred Trust** – Embracing **God’s New Ways of Being, Loving and Living...** There is **No Quick Fix** - Everything requires **Time, Patience, and Process** and as pilgrims on a journey we can make our **Way Forward** through Love, Respect, and Harmony.





# **Memory Tree honours loved ones**

By Marilyn Belbin

This Christmas, honour one or more loved ones who have passed, by placing their names on our special Memory Tree in our beautiful sanctuary.

For a donation of your choosing, you can write a beloved name on a flat gold painted ornament decorated with a red or green ribbon and hang it on the Memory Tree. We can also write the name for you and place it on the tree.

The ornaments will be available at church services during Advent, or you can order in advance by contacting Marilyn Belbin at 613-382-8885, or [mbelbin@sympatico.ca](mailto:mbelbin@sympatico.ca).

The names will be recorded and printed in the church bulletin. After Epiphany, you may take your ornament home as a keepsake.

Let's fill the tree, and our hearts, with Christmas memories of those we have loved!

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## **Birthday Party for Jesus set for Sunday, December 10**

By Colleen Harding

Our popular Messy Church was shut down unexpectedly by Covid but there has been interest expressed in reviving it. However, presenting Messy Church needs a committee of about 8-10 individuals who are interested in planning the program, preparing and supervising crafts and preparing the meal. At the present time we do not have enough interested individuals to run a full Messy Church program but we want to move forward with it. We are planning to start with a Sunday afternoon Birthday Party for Jesus on December 10<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 pm. This will include crafts, snacks, a birthday cake, sharing the Bible story of the first Christmas, and other activities including a photo booth so families can pose in costume around the manger. Any families or individuals from the community who are interested will be invited to join us to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas.

Are you interested in becoming involved in this form of outreach to our community? If you are interested or have more questions, please speak to Colleen Harding (613-382-2405 or email [colleen.g.harding@gmail.com](mailto:colleen.g.harding@gmail.com)) or Barb Jenkins (613-583-2077 or email [barbjenkins1@gmail.com](mailto:barbjenkins1@gmail.com)). You are welcome to attend a planning meeting at the church on Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. Just let us know you would like to be involved. If you would like to attend the party and maybe bring your grandchildren or neighbours, you are welcome! Children must be accompanied by an adult, but adults do not need to have a child to attend. Drop in and join the fun!

# In the Spirit of Giving - Why We Give

By Paul and Carolyn Scott

Why do Carolyn and I give our money to support the work at Grace United Church? The easy answer is, "That is how we were brought up"!

We were both blessed with Christian parents of strong faith, who gave of their time, talents and money to their church and volunteered thousands of hours in their communities of Gananoque and Belleville.

When we married and settled in Gananoque, becoming involved in church life was just a natural extension of everyday life.

We volunteered our time, our talents and our treasure, aka money, to our church and community. We have been blessed!

They were busy times for us - producing a community newspaper each week, operating a successful printing company and both of us serving our community in many volunteer activities. Try as we might, keeping up with weekly church offerings was a challenge. We would get behind and then it was difficult to get caught up because an active, growing family takes a lot of time and money.

That's when we were introduced to **PAR (Pre-authorized Remittance)**. We decided what our offerings would be, signed up and have been using PAR for over 40 years.

PAR accomplished four things-

1. It ensured that we were supporting our church financially on a continual basis whether or not we were in attendance.
2. The money automatically comes out of our bank account and we don't miss what we didn't know you had.
3. We have never gotten behind with our offerings.
4. PAR provides us with peace of mind.

PAR works for us.

*So here we are at that time of year of review, reflection and giving.*

Even though all of our living costs have gone up and even though our retirement income and investments have not, we decided that this year we will add 10% to Grace Church local operating expenses. How are we going to do that? Well, we are not exactly sure, but that's where Faith comes into play .... and we know that, God willing, we will find a way.

And, to recap. Why do we give?

We give our time, talents and we give financially to Grace United Church so that our mission and good works within our community of faith, within our community of Gananoque and throughout the world may continue far into the future.

## **Why We Give:**

By Joan MacKinnon and David Charles

In the mid 1990's when we lived in Sarnia, Ontario, we had the opportunity to experience an Interdenominational Cursillo 3-day retreat on Christian Living. We learned that no other topic is mentioned more frequently in the Bible than money and that God doesn't need our money as God gave us all we need. God asks us to be good stewards of the resources that God has provided.

We are fortunate in the financial blessings we have received. We are able to share generously with others especially via the United Church Mission and Service fund and to Grace United Church general operating expenses.

We give about 80% of our annual charitable donations to these Church needs and recently decided to increase our donations significantly to see our givings in action while we are alive. The United Church of Canada and Grace United Church manage their resources well across a broad portfolio of community and global needs with very little administrative costs. We are thankful for our community of faith. It feels good to give and know that Grace United Church makes a difference transforming and saving lives.

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## **RED WAGON FOOD DRIVE**

**Our Annual Red Wagon Food Drive will begin on November 26<sup>th</sup>. We have been speaking with the Food Bank and here is a list of the items they need most. Monetary Gifts are also appreciated.**



### **November 26<sup>th</sup> - Personal Items, Cleaning products**

Toilet Paper, Paper towels, Toothpaste, Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant, Toothbrushes, Feminine products, Laundry Soap, Dish Soap, Household Cleaning products.

### **December 3<sup>rd</sup> - Breakfast Items**

Various Cereal, Oatmeal, Instant Oatmeal, Jams & Jellies, Peanut Butter, & Peanut Butter substitutes, Pancake Mix and syrup.

## **December 10<sup>th</sup> Canned goods**

Tuna, Salmon, Flaked Chicken or Ham, Spam, Vegetables, Tomatoes, Chunky Soups, Stews, Mayonnaise, Ketchup.

## **December 17<sup>th</sup> - Snack Items & Miscellaneous.**

Juice Boxes, Kids snack packs, Peanut free snacks, Granola bars, Crackers, Cookies, Popcorn, Cake mixes.

## **Santa called; he wants a slice of pie for Christmas Eve!**



**Grace United Church**  
120 Pine St., Gananoque

**Christmas Pie Sale**

Order your pies for Christmas  
and check one thing off your list.

Varieties available:  
Apple, Blueberry, Bumbleberry, Cherry  
Peach, Strawberry, Rhubarb,  
Strawberry Rhubarb,  
Raisin and Mincemeat.  
\$15 each

Raspberry also available \$20 each

Call Carol at 613-382-4376

Pick up date, Thursday December 21st  
3 to 6 pm

## **Christmas Market**



**Christmas Market**  
**Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023**  
**10 am to 2 pm**  
**Grace United Church**  
120 Pine St., Gananoque, ON

Vendors & Crafters, Woodworking,  
Paintings, Ornaments, Baked Goods,  
Candles, Jams, Jellies, Tupperware,  
Jewellery, Chocolates, Free Trade Coffee  
Clothing and so much more....

 Silent Auction – Raffle Table  
Delicious Hot Lunch 

Free Admission  
All are Welcome



## Services for Advent & New Years

**Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup>** – 10:30 am Service

Worship Leader, Barb DeJeet

**Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>** - 10:30am Worship

**Advent One – HOPE** – Communion/White GIFT Sunday

Worship Leader Rev. Takouhi

**Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** – 10:30am Worship

**Advent Two – PEACE**

Birthday Party for Jesus, 2 to 4pm

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>** – 10:30am Service

**Advent Three – JOY** – Baptism

Worship Leader – Rev. Takouhi

Fellowship Breakfast prior to service – Details to be confirmed.

**Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>** – 7:00pm

**Blue Christmas**, Memorial Tree Donations

Worship Leader, Rev. Takouhi.

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** – 10:30 am Service

**Advent Four – LOVE**

Liturgical Dance, Mary's Magnificat – Debra Marra Donaldson

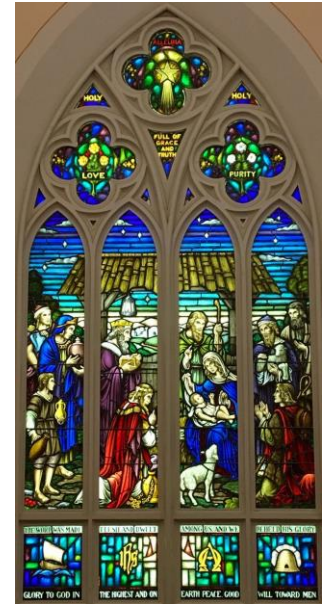
**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** – 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service

Worship Leader, Rev. Takouhi

Lessons & Carols

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>** – 10:30am Service

Worship Leader -TBD

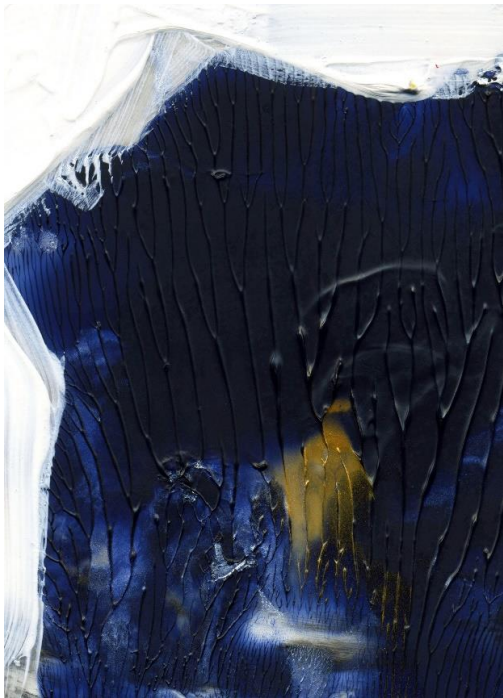


Our sincere condolences to all those who have lost loved ones this year and over the past few months. We regret to announce the passing of the following members of Grace United Church, Jean Newbury and Leona Weaver.

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

*Romans 8:38-39*





**DECEMBER 21, 2023**

**7:00 P.M.**

## **"Blue Christmas"**

**Grace United Church**

(120 Pine Street, Gananoque, ON)

**All are welcome.**

Not everyone is up for a cheery Christmas Season. People face different situations at different times of life. If you have said goodbye to a loved one, or grieving any other situation, you are invited to Grace United.

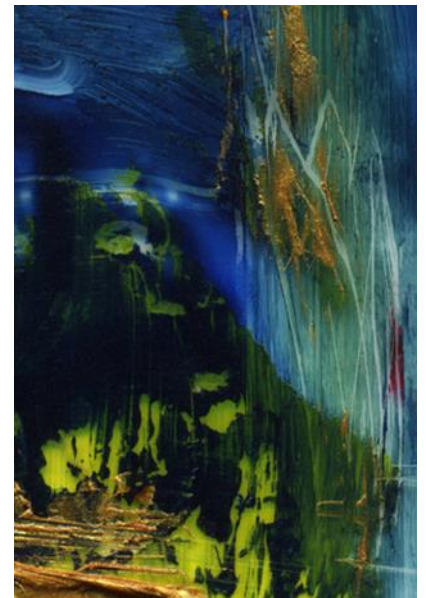
Attend this gathering to take time to breathe in Love and Exhale Gratitude - reflect upon the Heart of Christmas, which is **Hope** in the middle of hardships; **Peace** in the middle of chaos; **Joy** in the middle of grief; and **Love** in the middle of loneliness.

This gathering is for ALL – it is a gathering in honesty about grief, hearing the consolation found in God's presence and love.

Join us as you are. **We will name our losses and remember those whom we have loved and lost from this physical world.** Take time to reflect upon the Spirit of Christmas and the True light of Christ. **And be reminded that there is Life even in the longest night.**

The Offertory Gifts from this evening will go to the BENEVOLENT FUND.

Grace United Ministry that reaches beyond the walls of the church building.



Artwork by: Jan Richardson - <https://www.janrichardson.com>

**Celebrations for December, January, February & March** – Happy Birthday or Anniversary to all those who celebrating over the next few months.

**Happy Birthday** to Denise W., Steve T., Paul S., Bonnie S., Carol G., Catherine M., Vicki L., Gayle H., Cliff E., Marj C., Merna P., Gary S., Cecile B., Peter M., Henel C., Gary P., Tim B., Connie T., Dianne R., Marilyn M., Colleen H., Marg W., Diane K., Gillian M.

**Happy Anniversary** To Linda & Brian, 56 years, David & Joan, 46 Years, an Ron & Mary 51 years.

***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](mailto:scottsonhill@hotmail.com)**

Contributors this month are:

Rev. Takouhi, Paul Harding, Brian Brooks, Vicki Leakey, Barb Jenkins, Colleen Harding, Marilyn Belbin, Denise Wood, Elaine Davidson, Dave Charles, Joan MacKinnon, Gretchen Huntly, Laurie Cadue, Carolyn Scott, Paul Scott.

**Deadline for the Spring Edition of Grace's Chatter**  
**March 8, 2024**

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**Contact information:**

**Call Rev. Takouhi to book a visit. (Wednesday to Sunday)**

**Rev. Takouhi (direct Line) 613-777-0880**

**Email: [RevTakouhi@Terraautopia.ca](mailto:RevTakouhi@Terraautopia.ca)**

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**Session: Chair: Barb Jenkins: 613-583-2077 [barbjenkins1@gmail.com](mailto:barbjenkins1@gmail.com)**

**Board of Stewards: Chair: Denise Wood: 613-876-7739 [seelion89@gmail.com](mailto:seelion89@gmail.com)**

**Official Board: Chair: Brian Brooks 613-382-2385 [brooksb525@gmail.com](mailto:brooksb525@gmail.com)**



Light in the darkness

My heart is heavy  
It's the dark of night  
Pain surrounds me  
No relief in sight

I feel like I am slipping away  
I cannot hold on  
Not for one more day

I step outside  
For a breath of air  
No comfort, no help  
Oh life isn't fair

And then I look up into the sky  
The moon has appeared  
As the clouds drift by

My heart begins to lift  
My spirits begin to soar  
It is a message from heaven  
I can see an open door

I stand quietly for a moment  
My face turned to the sky  
I whisper a silent thank you  
Perhaps tonight I will not cry

***By Gretchen Huntley, Poet Laureate  
Town of Gananoque***

***Photograph by Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro  
(Portland, ON Total Lunar Eclipse – September 28, 2015)***

