

Grace's Chatter – Spring 2024



"And my God will <u>fully</u> satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19 (NRSV)

Dear Grace United Church,

Lent has begun and we are journeying through the wilderness of life. This wilderness does not appear at Lent only and disappear at other times. If we really think about it, life is a journey in the wilderness. Sometimes we hit luscious greenery with beautiful waterfalls, other times we are lost in the sandstorms of life, left dried and brittle, not knowing which way to go.

This year, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, was also Valentine's Day. This intersection reminds me of a fact of life. Ash Wednesday prompts us that we are dust and dust we will return, this physical Life is temporary and no money, nor other powers, can change this fact. Valentine's Day reminds us that Love lives forever. Often, we forget that that we are all living on **Borrowed Time**.

Moreover, today, while I gather my thoughts to write this reflection, is leap day (Feb. 29, 2024) and these words keep on echoing in my mind and heart, "**Do not be afraid, take a Leap of Faith.**"

Beloved, it is a human condition to always focus on what we want, rather than what we

already have. Most of the time we live from the angle of scarcity and fear instead of abundance and knowledge. Think about it: The opposite of fear is NOT fearless, but **Knowledge**. Not knowledge from books or scholastic degrees, but **knowledge that you are not alone. Knowledge that God will Provide**. Knowledge that you live in God's World, who has created, and still creating this world with Love through you and me. **Lent reminds us to focus on the abundance of God's Persistent Love, Permanent Provision and Peace, even in the desert of our life.**

2024 marks the fourth year of our ministry together. I know many of you have been part of Grace United Church before I arrived, better yet, you have been part of this Community of Faith before I was born. But more importantly, God has been part of Grace United Church before time began.

You know what is the most time-consuming topic at any and every official board meeting? **THE BUDGET**. Money has been and continues to be the top priority of the church. Do not get me wrong, money is important to pay bills and have enough to eat and survive. However, what will happen if we spend more time on bringing together ideas of new ways of ministries? What will happen if we focus on how to welcome people with sincerity and joy? What will happen if we did ministry with deep Gratitude, by trusting God with the KNOWLEDGE that God will provide all our needs; as God has in the past, does in the present time, and will do in the future? What will happen if we spend ALL the money, we have in doing amazing ministry? At the end we would have had a good run in doing the best that we could do for God's Glory. Money is just a tool to do MINISTRY for God's Glory!

Beloved, the Church is a non-profit entity. Yes, it is run like a business to a certain aspect, we are all accountable on how to run the day-to-day work, but the **Church's driver is and MUST Be GRACE, MERCY & TRUST!**

We all know that the world has changed by many historical moments and in our most



recent recollection is COVID-19. Yes, this pandemic brought many painful moments from loneliness to losing loved ones. Surging prices of necessities of life to getting out of our comfort zones. Churches who had no intentions to livestream are on YouTube, Facebook, and other virtual medias. Reality has interwoven with virtuality. There are more meetings and conferences online than ever before. These are just small examples of God still working through us even in the middle of pandemics of life – in the

middle of wildernesses of life.

Friends, as we journey through Lent to Easter, what knowledge do you want to hold on to? The knowledge that God will provide all our needs if we claim the stories of the past that our forefathers and foremothers experienced. I always say, our story is God's Story. We do not live for ourselves alone, but we live for the glory of God and do our best to make this world a better place for everyone.

Robin Steinke, president of Luther Seminary mentions in her most recent article, (**From Fixing to Wondering** – February 20, 2024):

"You may be reading this message weighed down with the worries of the day, or struggling with health or family concerns. Perhaps you are wondering, as we all do at times, if the new life Jesus promises is for you too."

Grace United Church, the new life that Jesus promises is for you too!

My journey, my parents' journey, all your journeys are to lead us to a new and abundant life – but you need to open your eyes and heart to follow the Spirit's Guidance.

Do not let this Lenten Season, Holy Week, and Easter slip by. Make every effort to stick with Jesus, even if the cross that Jesus is carrying appears heavy, he still carried it through to the end and death did not have the last word - Love, Life and Laughter did.

As this Lenten Season arrives to the Victorious Easter Morning, after journeying through the hardships of Holy Week, what knowledge are you going to hold on to? What Songs of Praise will your lips and HEARTS sing in unison? God does not need any lip service but seeks a heart that truly trusts and obeys the Call of a new way of living.

Remember the words of Apostle Paul, "And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever."

Amen. (Philippians 4:19-20 – NRSV)

May this be your knowledge and truth today and always.

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

Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro

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

Grace United Church 2024 Directory for Boards & Committees

Official Board (includes Session, Stewards, Trustees and all full members of Grace United Church)

Chair: Brian Brooks Clerk: Diane Nuttall

Treasurer: Vicki Leakey

Board of Stewards: Members (note positions have not been assigned yet)

Vicki Leakey, Cliff Edwards, Chuck Galway, Dave Charles, Diane Hayward, Mary Haussler,

Shirley Clark, Denise Wood

Session

Chair: Barb Jenkins **Clerk:** Julie Price

Members: Colleen Harding, Tammy Fergusson, Joan Shaw, Michele Denis, Wes Rideout,

Gary Seitl

Ministry & Personnel Committee:

Elaine Davidson, Pamela Shea & Liz Dennison

Order your pies for Easter Celebrations

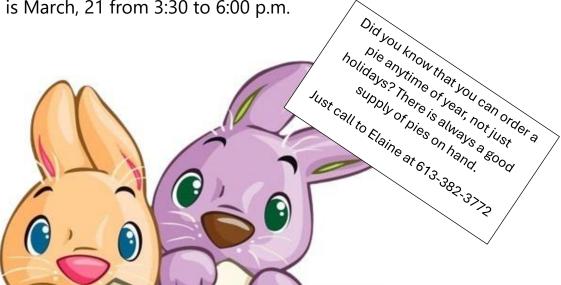
By Elaine Davidson

As coordinator for the Pies for God's Sake committee, I am happy to report that our wonderful volunteers are back in the kitchen at Grace – with aprons on, rolling pins ready to make pies for Easter.

This fun group meets twice a month on Tuesdays from 8:30 to about 11:30 a.m. We work hard but there's lots of laughter and a great sense of community ... and we even have a coffee break! If you feel like joining our merry group to help make pies to sell to our church family and the Gananoque community, to raise funds for our church, just call Elaine Davidson at 613-382-3772.

Check out the poster in this newsletter and place your order for Easter. Just give me a





Grace United Church Easter Pie Sale

Give Elaine a call 613-382-3772

Apple. Blueberry, Bumbleberry, Cherry, Peach, Strawberry, Strawberry/Rhubarb, Rhubarb \$15

Raspberry \$20

Easter Orders can be picked up March 21, 2024, 3:30 to 6:00pm

Don't Miss Out - Order Early

Message from the Official Board re the Conner Estate

By Brian Brooks

As you know, and as directed by motions at past Official Board meetings, Grace United engaged a lawyer to investigate the possibility of amending the Virginia Conner endowment. This amendment would allow the church to use all or a portion of the remaining pledged monies as operating funds. The endowment states that only the interest from the Conner endowment may be used as operating funds.

Brian Gillingham of Cunningham Swan legal firm agreed to represent the church and Mr. Cunningham spoke to an official at the office of the Public Trustee for Ontario. Bottom line is that this person's reply was not favourable to the church's request. The trustee's explanation was that our proposed action was not what Virginia Conner had stipulated in her will. So, we can continue to use the interest generated, as we have in the past, but not the principal.

Consequently, as directed by the majority of members present at the February25th Annual Congregational Meeting, the solicitor acting on behalf of Grace was contacted. Lawyer Gillingham was instructed to cease all legal action regarding the Virginia Conner endowment fund. A letter was received dated February 29, 2024 from Mr. Gillingham confirming the instructions. Additionally, a cheque payable to Grace Church was received in the amount of \$214.54, this amount being the remainder of the \$1,500 retainer funds paid to the law firm by Grace United.

A final invoice was also enclosed for service rendered to date along with a copy of the deeds registered against the church property dated 1862 and 1906 by The Methodist Church. These documents and copies of related email correspondence will be kept in the church office.

Solar Eclipse April 8, 2024: What is a total solar eclipse?

In a total solar eclipse, the moon passes between the sun and Earth, entirely covering the face of the sun along a small path of our planet's surface. This is called the "path of totality." The daytime sky turns dark, akin to dusk or dawn, and nocturnal animals have been known to wake up, confused into believing night has arrived.

In places along the path of totality, people will be able to view the sun's corona - the star's outer atmosphere - that typically is not visible because of solar brightness. People observing from outside the path of totality will see a partial eclipse in which the moon obscures most of the sun's face but not all of it.

Events are being planned for Gananoque, as we are in the path for prime viewing of the Eclipse. Grace United is also in the process of planning an event for Eclipse Day. Stay tuned for more details.

Membership can sooth the soul

By Rev. Takouhi

Why bother to become a Full Member at a Community of Faith?

There are many things in life that make us wonder. So, imagine how many more questions people have about Spirituality, Religion, and being part of a Community of Faith.

By no means does a minister have all the answers, but sometimes a minister can offer explanations to help us find our way.

Today, I invite you to think how your home address is essential to your everyday life; and how it is the place that you connect with your immediate family, and also how friends and extended family know to connect with you there.

First, your home address is where you live. It's where you hang your hat, put your head on a pillow, and go to sleep at night in safety. Your home is where you take time to rest, rejuvenate and restore your tired body and mind. Of course, there are many other things we can list here, but you get the picture. Similarly, being a full member of a Community of Faith is to know where you belong. **This is not about an exclusive membership, where we are offered the front of the line benefits – NO!**

Of course, we all belong to God, we are all called Beloved by the Creator. However, to officially be a **Full Member of a church** community is to know the address of your Spiritual Home; and go to the front of the line to offer your gifts to the world and make a difference.

A Community of Faith is that safe space/community that you belong to, and it is the place where your soul rests, rejuvenates, and restores itself. Moreover, as mentioned before, it is the place where you offer your God-given gifts and talents and make this world a better place. It is a place where respectful relationships grow in a safe environment.

Beloved, at Grace United Church we welcome all who want to officially become Full Members of this small Community of Faith and live with us through the Perfect Love of God. As I always say, we are all imperfect human beings attempting to live through the Perfect Love of God.

The process to become a Full Member at Grace United is simple, but a sacred invitation. A few times a year, we officially welcome Full Members during our Worship Celebration. Those who decide to join this small but loving community should contact Rev. Takouhi by e-mail, revtakouhi@terrautopia.ca or confidential direct tel.: 613-777-0880.



Annual Pancake Supper, A Great Success.

Our annual Shrove Tuesday, Pancake supper was a great success. Under the Leadership of Murray Roantree, the United Church Women and a group of volunteers a great evening was enjoyed by many. People arrived early and continued a steady stream until 6:30pm. We thank everyone for attending and helping with our dinner.

Including donations the event raised \$1313.50.



Everyone was busy serving, talking, and eating hot, fresh pancakes at Grace United Church on Shrove Tuesday. Lorraine Payette/for Postmedia Network PHOTO BY LORRAINE PAYETTE /for Postmedia Network

Pancake suppers sweeten Shrove Tuesday | Gananogue Reporter

Session Report

By Barb Jenkins

Session is excited to start off the new year with four new members! We are thankful for the devotion and past participation of our members who have fulfilled their time. Departing are Marg Worth, Susan Barwell, Diane Kirkby and Cheryl O,Leary. Welcome to Gary Seitl, Wes Rideout, Joan Shaw and Michele Denis. Julie Price will take over the role of Clerk of Session. Thanks to Tammy Fergusson for doing such a great job up till now.

We are thrilled to be getting our Sharing and Caring sub committee off the ground again. Joan Shaw will head this up and is already working on organising visits to shut ins. Anyone who would like to do some of these visits is welcome. Susan Barwell will continue to hand make any cards we need to send. She does such lovely artwork.

Rev Takouhi and Tammy continue to outreach to Fox Run and Carveth by doing services and musical events for them. This is very well received.

We are looking forward to Easter here at Grace. The Scotts will do the decorating again for us. Thank you Paul and Carolyn. There will also be Communion on Easter Sunday, so we are looking for helpers to participate in this important part of our service. You do not have to belong to Session to serve Communion or Usher or Read. Just let Laurie or Barb know.

Coffee time is back every Sunday and it seems to be working to divide the weeks between the different groups within Grace. Anyone from those groups can sign the sheet and look after it so no one has to do it all the time. There are detailed instructions attached to the cart. Homemade sweets are not necessary but always appreciated. The hardest part is getting here early enough to plug in the pot. Just ask Colleen or Barb about it. The ushers usually make sure everyone in the pews knows when it is ready to drink.

Our Lenten Calendar (Count your Blessings) is fun and hopefully will bring in some needed funds for the Gananoque Refuge Settlement Group. This effort is focused on "Counting our Blessings" and helping someone in need by sharing our money which will be collected at Easter. Hamse is a refuge trying to bring his family to Canada.

We look forward to helping out with an April 8th Eclipse Event.

Sunday⊭	Monday⊭	Tuesday¤	Wednesday⊭	Thursday¤	Friday¤	Saturday¤
COUNT-YOUR-BLESSINGS¶ LENT2024¶ Lent-is-40-DaysExcept-Sundays¶ February-14Ends-March-30,-2024			1425-cents- for-each-car- your-family- owns¤	1550-cents- if-you-own-a- PVR-box¤	1625-cents- for-each- window-in- your-housex	1750-cents- for-each- fireplace-or- woodstove¤
1 <u>**-Sunday</u> -in-Lent¶ Feb.·18¶ Worship-10:30-a.m.·¶	1925-cents- for-each-bible- in-your-home¤	2025-cents- for-each- subscription- that-comes-to- your-home¤	21.50-cents-for- each-T.Vin- your-home¤	22.25-cents- for-each- microwave-in- your-homes	2325-cent- for-each-CD- and-DVD¤	2450-cents- for-each-fruit- eaten-today¤
2 nd -Sunday-in-Lent¶ Feb25¶ Worship-10:30-a.m¶ ¤	2625-cents- for-each- piece-of- bread-you- ate-today¤	2725-cents-if- you-celebrate- birthdays-with- candle-and- cake¤	2825-cents for each toy in- your-housed	2925-cents- for-each- vehicle-tire- owned-(cars,- bikes,-etc.)¤	March-1.1 25-cents for each light- bulb-in-your- house-¤	250-cents- for-each-sweet- eaten-today¤
3 <u>rdSunday</u> -in-Lent¶ March-3¶ Worship-10:30-a.m¶ ¤	425-cents- for-each- electrical- appliance-in- your-homed	525-cents-for- each-water-tap- in-your-housed	625-cents-for- each-grade-level- achieved-by- each-member- of-the-family¤	7.25-cents-if- you-have- ever-had-a- family- portrait-taken¤	825-cents-if- someone-in- your-family- uses-a-clock- radio-in-the- morning¤	925-cents-for- each-T.Vshow- watched-today¤
3 <u>™-Sunday</u> -in-Lent¶ March-10¶ Worship-10:30-a.m.:⊭	11 -25-cents- for-each-pot- or-pan-¤	1225-cents-if- you-had- dessert-today¤	13-50-cents-if- you-had-a- family-holiday- in-the-last-year¤	1450-cents- for-each-cell- phone-in- your-housed	1525-cents- for-each- family- member-who- has-life-Insii	1625-cents- each-time-a- toilet-is- flushed-today¤
4 th -Sunday-in-Lent1 March-171 Worship-10:30-a.m.¤	18.25-cents- for-each- member-of- your-family- who-has-3- outfits¤	1925-cents- for-each-meal- you-ate-today¤	20.50-cents- eachif-you- use-a-tablet computer,-or-a- laptop.¤	2150-cents- if-you-own-a- printer¤	2225-cents- if-anyone- refuses-to-eat- part-of-their- dinner¤	2350-cents- for-each-hour- you-slept-last- night¤
5 th -Sunday-in-Lent¶ March-24¶ Worship:	25.25-cents- for-each-pair- of-shoes-in- your-home¤	2650-cents- for-each-meal- eaten-today-by- each-persond	27.50-cents-for- each-time-your- family-ate-in-a- restaurant-this- month¤	28.50-cents- if-your-house- is-not-rented¤	2950-cents- for-each- vegetable- eaten-today¤	30.·25-cents- for-every- drinking-glass- in-your-kitchen¤
Easter-Sunday-1 March-311 Worship/Communion1 10:30-a.m.x	How to use the calendar. Count Your Blessings daily, and write the dollar amount for each day on the back-of the calendar. On Easter Sunday, bring the Grand Total as your donation to the Refugee Settlement Committee of Gananoque through Grace United Church Session and see how little blessings can make a huge difference. Identify your gift as "Count Your Blessings"; cheques should be payable to Grace United Church. Easter Sunday is March 31, 2024. Count your blessings and see how much your are blessed and able to bless others!					

Your financial support is sincerely appreciated.

By Treasurer Vicki Leakey

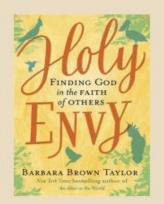
We have been recently blessed with some wonderful sunny and warm days, perhaps a sign of good things to come. As we all spend a moment's worry on the impact of this warming on climate change let us take strength in the fellowship of our church family. On April 8, 2024 we will see minutes of darkness late afternoon in this area as we experience the solar eclipse. Let us remember the sunshine up to that moment of darkness and the sunshine following, maybe this is nature's way of reminding us there will be light to come after a moment of darkness.

As at the end of February, we are showing a marginal financial improvement over 2023, where we overspent by \$1,536 compared to an overspend of \$7,816 in 2023. To boost our Spring revenue, we have some wonderful concerts coming up in the next few months, our pie making group is ready for Easter sales and there are community groups renting space as well. Whether a member of any specific committee, please feel free to offer to help with any of the activities you see that are planned and you have an interest in. We so welcome extra hands for any task we take on.

Our Benevolent Fund continues to provide local financial support to community groups, should you know of an instance where funds might be of assistance, please contact a member of Stewards or myself. We are aware there are many local families in need and Grace United Church has been helpful to many over the years and will work to continue to do so. Our giving's to Mission and Service remains strong as well, therefore supporting outreach to both local and international needs.

We have several Offerings' options available for those that may not attend the Sunday Service but wish to support the many programs on which Grace United Church continues to work. Families can sign up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) forms which can be sent to you from our church office. **E-transfer** from your on-line bank account is popular. Just 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 – send your donation cheque by mail to Grace Church at 120 Pine St. Gananoque, On K7G 1C7.

Thank you to all that provide the strength and direction to help us follow our mission of working hard to help those in need. Grace United Church has a wonderful community reputation of being approachable by community groups whether for space for their programs or financial assistance etc. Hopefully many of you will find Spring as a season of promise and new beginnings.



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOURNEY WITH US...

"Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others"

By: The Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor

March 13, 2024 - Session #1: "Introduction: The Smaller Picture"

Chapter 1: "Religion 101"

March 20, 2024 - Session #2:

Chapter 2: "Vishnu's Almonds"

March 27, 2024 - Session #3: Chapter 3: "Wave Not Ocean"

April 3, 10, & 17 - NO Sessions!

April 24, 2024 - Session #4: Chapter 4: "Holy Envy

May 1, 2024 - Session #5: Chapter 5: "The Nearest Neighbors"

May 8, 2024 - Session #6: Chapter 6: "Disowning God"

May 15 & 22 - NO Sessions!

May 29, 2024 - Session #7: Chapter 7: "The Shadow Bearers'

Tune 5, 2024 - Session #8: Chapter 8: "Failing Christianity"

June 12, 2024 - Session #9 Chapter 9: "Born Again"

June 19, 2024 - Session 10: Chapter 10: "Divine Diversity"

June 26, 2024 - Session #11:

Chapter 11: "The God You Didn't Make Up"

July 10, 2024 - Session #12: Chapter 12: "The Final Exam"

Epilogue: "Church of the Common Ground"



New Book Study All are invited to attend

All Are Welcome...

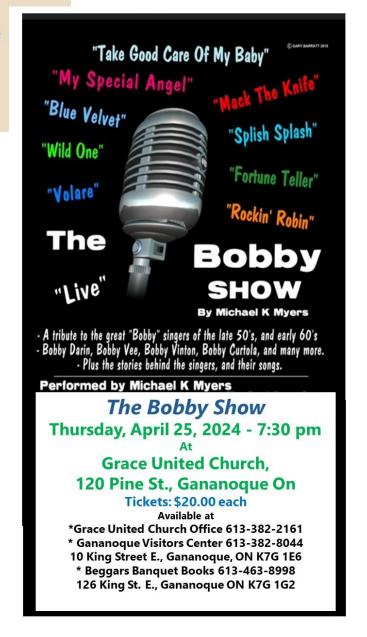
This is a safe space where we wrestle with our faith and find hidden blessings!

Contact Rev. Takouhi to Receive the Zoom Link ... revtakouhi@terrautopia.ca

Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m. - on Zoom

Great Concert April 25th at 7:30pm Featuring Micheal Myers, Tim Hallman and more. A tribute to the Great Bobby Singers of the 50"s and 60's Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the places specified on the poster or copy and paste the link below to your browser for online purchases.

The Bobby Show - CanadaHelps





120 Pine St., Gananoque, ON invites you to journey through

Holy Week and Easter Services









Come Worship With Us!

Sunday March 24, 2024 – Palm Sunday – 10:30 A.M. (Marks the beginning of Holy Week)

Maundy (Holy) Thursday March 28, 2024-7:00 P.M.

(Commemorates the Washing of the Feet and Last Supper of Jesus with the disciples)

Good Friday Walk of the Cross March 29, 2024 – 10:00 A.M.

(Starting at Christ Church **30 Church St**, Gananoque, proceeding through town with various stops along the way to Grace United Church).

All are welcome.

Sunday March 31, 2024 – Easter Sunday – 10:30 A.M.

(Special Music – Brass Quintet & Communion)

ALL Are Welcome!

Celebrations for April, May, June – Happy Birthday or Anniversary to all those who celebrating over the next few months.

Happy Birthday to Graham A., Jack H., Paul H., Joan S., Connie P., Connor A., Dorothy M., David T., John C., Mackensie A., Maryfil H., Nicole M., Vera D., Max W., Angus F., Gloria P., Betty M., Diane H., Christina K., Reta B., Shirley C., Alyn M., Tammy F., Mel W., tom C., Doreen W., Nancy A., Eileen T., Laurie C., Anne C.,

Happy Anniversary to Diane & Jim (53yrs), Paul & Carolyn (55yrs), Brian & Cecile (25yrs), Connie & Steve (36yrs) Paul & Colleen (52yrs) Laurie & Gerard (36yrs), Doug & Betty (62yrs), Tammy & Angus (39yrs), Brian & Susan (42yrs) and Neil & Gillian (45yrs).

Congratulations Everyone!!

Contributors this month are:

Rev. Takouhi, Brian Brooks, Vicki Leakey, Barb Jenkins, Elaine Davidson, Laurie Cadue, Julie Price, Paul Scott.

<u>Deadline for the Spring Edition of Grace's Chatter</u> <u>June 7, 2024</u>

Contact information:

Call Rev. Takouhi to book a visit. (Wednesday to Sunday) Rev. Takouhi (direct Line) 613-777-0880

Email: RevTakouhi@Terrautopia.ca

