

Christmas 2016

**THE**  **ritannian**  
**BRITANNIA UNITED CHURCH**

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## Editorial

### The third answer

Have you ever noticed how some people get out of tricky questions by giving a knowledgeable, reasonable, and unexpected response to a question, usually a yes/no question where both answers get you into trouble? I thought about it and I call it “the third answer”.

Think about when Jesus was asked about paying taxes (Mt. 22:21). The pharisees put him in a dilemma by asking if it was right to pay taxes. Rather than giving a yes or no answer, he said “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s”. They then asked him about the the widow whose husband dies without children, so she marries his brother, who likewise dies without children, and so on for all seven brothers. Who is her husband at the resurrection? Jesus quotes scripture to point out that the question is moot, and even chides the pharisees for not having done their homework. Pilate asked Jesus “Are you King of the Jews?”, to which he replied “You have said so”.

Jesus did that a lot. Myron Maxted once said that Jesus had a knack for turning what you thought you knew on its head and making you think about it in a totally new way. These days that’s called lateral thinking. Maybe being smart is just thinking “what’s the third answer”?

Peter Bain  
Editor

## Minister's Message

I'm loving the weather. It is supposed to be 14 degrees tomorrow, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November! It's good, because I still have some yard work to do. ☺

The only downside to nice weather in November is that Advent seems to slip up on us, unnoticed. It is hard to get into the spirit of the Christmas season when there is no snow, but the planning is in the works.

This fall, we have been reading scripture with a particular focus on the words of Jesus. And we have been interpreting it, with a view to learning how to articulate our faith; how to put what we believe into words and how to answer the questions and criticism about the church and religion that we hear every day.

We have been focusing a lot of our attention on how we live our faith, as that has always been the best witness to the Gospel of Christ. As we move into Advent, we will continue, with the theme of "active waiting".

The Hebrew people waited a very long time for the Messiah to come, but they didn't just sit idly by. They continued to practice their faith, to build their communities, to worship their God and to live their beliefs.

During the season of Advent, we will hear the ancient scriptures that foretell of the hope, peace, joy and love that will come into the world through God's Son. This year, with all of the chaos in the news, we are all praying for hope, peace, joy and love to be seen in our world. But like the Hebrew people before us, we are not called to sit idly by, waiting for God to make something happen.

A number of years ago, I saw a poster that said "Be the peace you seek." This is the sentiment that inspired the theme for each week as we move toward Christmas: Be the hope you seek. Be the peace you seek. Be the joy you seek. Be the love you seek. Christmas is a reminder that God's love was made manifest in the birth of God's Son into the world. And this year we will be reminded that God's love is still comes to the world in human form, as it is made manifest in you and in me.

We are the hands and feet of Christ. We are the body of Christ. When people look to the Church to understand the teachings of God, what they see is you and me. And the gift we can give to the world is to live in such a way that hope, peace, joy and love grow through our actions.

May the way we speak to each other, the way we treat each other, the way we work for justice for one another, the way we love one another, so reflect the teachings of Jesus, that the word of God may be seen in us.

Peace be with you,  
Rev. Jim

## Mission, Service and Outreach Report – Christmas 2016

The Mission, Service and Outreach Committee has joined forces with Christian Development and the youth of both Britannia United Church and Woodroffe United Church to raise funds for the **United Church of Canada's Hurricane Matthew Appeal**. This Appeal aims to provide humanitarian relief to the people of Haiti, Cuba, and nearby Caribbean countries affected in October by this powerful and deadly hurricane. BUC and Woodroffe United youth will begin making colourful bead bracelets for sale beginning in November and continuing in January.

BUC was represented at a **West End Interfaith (WEIF)** meeting in September by Wendy Gallant. These regular meetings are also attended by representatives of Woodroffe United Church, City View United, Bromley Road Baptist, Knox United, St. Stephen's Anglican, Christ Church Bell's Corners Anglican, Trinity United, Saint-Rémi Roman Catholic, St. Basil's Roman Catholic, St. John the Apostle Roman Catholic and Bell's Corners United Church. The meetings allow us to keep abreast of church projects and developments in our area, and of any needs in the various west end communities. Reports included:

**Foster Farm Breakfast and Lunch Program:** the breakfast program sees about 75-100 children since school resumed, though only about 20-25 for lunch on Mondays and Wednesdays.

**Pinecrest Terrace:** the community house is seeing an increase in demand for food and also a change in demographics with fewer large families but more singles and smaller family groups.

**Morrison Gardens:** the food cupboard has seen a significant increase in requests for food largely due to a number of large Syrian refugee families moving into that area.

**Winthrop Court:** the community house was successful in obtaining a grant for kitchen renovation, in partnership with Ottawa Community Housing.

**OWECC:** Steve Zink, a Baptist priest, has been hired as a part-time coordinator and has been undertaking a study of the needs that exist in the four communities served by OWECC. A new board of directors is apparently in place and OWECC is seeking funds to resume some of its programming.

**St. Basil's** held a celebration to mark the one-year anniversary of the arrival of a refugee family (mother, father and four kids) supported by St. Basil's.

## MUSICAL MAGIC FOR SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT

Brenda Hamilton is offering her Singing Telegram Services to fellow church parishioners for half price! Send a personalized musical message to someone you care about with a slideshow video via the Internet, or "Live and In Person" (pending availability). Please provide two weeks advance notice when booking. Contact Brenda by email: [singersoloist@gmail.com](mailto:singersoloist@gmail.com) or call/text: 613-286-9173.

"My music is my playground  
and I shall continue the  
magic." ☺  
Brenda Hamilton

**Saint-Rémi** reported on the success of the refugee family, sponsored by the church, who arrived in February. The mother has found work as a manicurist.

Various churches planned to hold bazaars in the upcoming months.

### **TO EAT or TO HEAT?**

As colder weather sets in, this is a question asked by people who face ‘too much month left over at the end of the money’. The Ottawa Food Bank and locally the Britannia Woods Community House Food Pantry help with the problem. Local people are supplied with very basic food - and even toilet paper if it is available - enough for 3 days. Know that your contributions help these people - AND YOU! It is more blessed to give than to receive. Thank you.

The “**Gifts with Vision**” catalogs have arrived and are located on the MS&O table in the front hall. Take a look - maybe you’ll find the perfect Christmas gift for someone!

Minute for Mission readings are done every Sunday and there is a sign-up sheet, as well as the readings, on the bulletin board in the front hall. New readers are always welcome, and a big “thank you” is given to all who have volunteered this year.

The current members of the Mission, Service and Outreach Committee are Wendy Gallant, Susan Aiken, Marilyn Bruce and Verne Bruce.

Wendy Gallant

## **Christmas Services and Events**

December 4	White Gift service
December 1	Christmas pageant
December 18, 7 p.m.	Blue Christmas
December 24, 7 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 9 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service with communion
December 25	<i>No service</i>
Jan 1, 2017	Regular service at 10:15

### **About the services**

*Blue Christmas Service:* This service is for anyone who has trouble with this time of year and needs an outlet. Some of the people who come to this service prefer to be alone, have lost someone close to them, or just want a quiet place to contemplate the season. This is a quiet, low-key service.

*Christmas Eve 7 PM Service:* This service is fun and boisterous, great for families with children! No communion at this service.

*Christmas Eve 9 PM Service:* This service is a more traditional service with communion.

## Get ahead with PAR.

As we move into a new year, it is a good time to review your commitment for 2017 and determine what you will give in thanks for all the blessings in your life.

PAR is **Pre-Authorized Remittance** of your givings through your bank account on a monthly basis. If you have automatic cheques going through your bank account to pay your monthly charges for insurance, cable, property taxes, gas bills, mortgage payments, etc., then you understand how PAR works. It means that your regular contributions throughout the year will come directly out of your bank account around the 20th of the month and be credited to the church's account.

Many people use the PAR System for their church offering, finding it a convenient way to take care of their regular commitments to the church month by month especially if they are unable to attend church regularly.

If you wish to be included in the PAR programme (pre-authorized remittance) please contact Verne Bruce.

## National Housing Day

The National Housing Day Celebration was held in Ottawa City Hall on Sunday 13 Nov. This day commemorates the day in 1998 when the mayors of Canada's largest cities declared homelessness a national disaster. There are currently about 10,000 people in Ottawa who are under housed or homeless.

The event was organized by the **Multi-faith Housing Initiative** (MHI) of Ottawa. Present were leaders of the Baha'I, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths. They each spoke briefly about the emphasis of compassion in their faith. David Sherwin spoke of this year's emphasis on MHI in the United Church of Canada Ottawa Presbytery. It has 3 goals:

1. To raise significant money [\$100,000].
2. To get more congregations in Ottawa involved.
3. To get more individuals involved.

Money raised is to go to "The Haven", a complex of 98 houses being built in Barrhaven. It comprises 30 one-bedroom, 8 two bedroom, 26 three-bedroom and 4 four-bedroom units. Ten of the units will comfortably accommodate at least one member who has a physical disability. Building started in 2015 on land donated by the city. Federal, provincial and municipal governments granted MHI \$10 million for the construction. MHI raised \$500,000 during their "A Place to Call Home" Campaign. **MHI needs your support to raise an additional \$1 million to make the project happen.** MHI will finance the remainder of the cost through a long-term mortgage. The total cost of construction is \$19.3 million.

Donations to MHI can be made under "other" in your church envelop.

Susan Aiken

## **Britannia United Church - Treasurer**

Our current Treasurer has resigned for personal reasons. We are looking for someone to fill this position as soon as possible.

I have included the Treasurer's responsibilities and Duties for your information and consideration.

### **Treasurer Responsibilities:**

The Treasurer is responsible for the church's financial policies, procedures and controls, and their implementation. He/she monitors, oversees, receives and disburses monies on behalf of the church body.

### **Treasurer Duties:**

- Prepare the annual budget, by sending out call letters to the Committee Chairs reporting to Council, tabulate the budget spread sheets, calculate the amount of funds required to operate the church for the upcoming year and develop an integrated budget
- Present the draft budget for the recommendation by the Committee of Stewards and the Church Council to the congregation at the Annual General Meeting for approval
- Collaborate with the bookkeeper for the drafting of financial reports
- Brief the Committee of Stewards and Council on the church's financial situation by presenting its financial statement at regularly scheduled meetings
- Prepare cheques for quarterly payments (e.g. Mission and Service (M&S) Fund, Presbytery Assessment, Minister's Travel Allowance, Minister's Telephone Allowance)
- Write and sign cheques in collaboration with church secretary and other members with signing authority
- Prepare the monthly cheque for the remuneration of the music director
- File necessary documentation with the head office of the United Church of Canada, Presbytery Office and government agencies
- Maintain up-to-date records of financial transactions, by tracking revenue and expenditures
- Checks the balance in the bank account to ensure there are sufficient funds to conduct church operations
- Liaise with the Committee of Trustees should funds be in short supply
- Prepare an annual financial report, in collaboration with the bookkeeper
- Ensure that the financial statements are audited
- Present audited financial report to the Committee of Stewards and Church Council, and to the congregation at the Annual General meeting for approval
- Keep the congregation informed about the finances of the church through newsletters, bulletins and meetings

If you are interested in the above position, please let the office or Stewards know. Thank you for your consideration for this very important position with the church.

Verne Bruce, Steward

## **Youth Activities**

### **Youth Movie Night**

In keeping with a recently established tradition, Britannia's Youth Group was hosted by Woodroffe United Church for a Youth Movie Night on Friday, November 4.

We watched the movie "The Intern" starring Anne Hathaway as the Chief Executive Officer of a fashion website and Robert De Niro, who decides being retired isn't all it's cracked up to be and becomes her senior intern. It was very funny and the youth really liked it.

A good time was had by all! We enjoyed popcorn and drinks, but the highlight of the evening was the ice cream sundae bar, with lots of candy toppings!

Thanks to all of the volunteers at Woodroffe United Church who made the evening a great success, especially Kim Stewart, their Youth Coordinator.

### **WE Day**

Britannia United Church was active in putting together a group to attend WE Day in Ottawa on November 9. WE Day brings together world-renowned speakers and award-winning performers with thousands of young people to celebrate their contributions to local and global communities and kick-start social action. This year's celebrity line-up featured Justin Trudeau, Margaret Trudeau, Rick Hansen, Paula Abdul, Serena Ryder and Hedley.

"I had the honour of participating in this year's WE Day 2016. We were joined by youth members of Britannia and Woodroffe United Churches, as well our invited guests from Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI)," wrote Mary Lou Farrell, Chair of Christian Development, on her Facebook page, following the event.

Shirley Dagg, Coordinator of Education at TI, thanked us and our group, stating that "the students and I had a wonderful time at WE Day. Let us know of any events you hold and I'll share them with the other programs, as well as our distribution list."

Kathy Anderson commented, "Thank you for taking Jake; he had an amazing time! :)"

"We had an amazing time too! Jake and Kevin [Jake's cousin] were a delight to have along." Diane Houston, who attended as a coordinator, continued, "I look forward to hearing how the experience may encourage them to participate in future actions to help their community. It sure gave us lots to reflect upon."

Finally, Susan Aiken, observed that, "WE Day was great! I was pleased to have gone but a bit pooped at the end of the day."

Appreciation goes out to Susan Aiken who reached out to TI and helped coordinate arrangements with them. Mary Lou Farrell and Diane Houston acted as drivers and chaperones from Britannia. Rev. Kathryn Peate attended from Woodroffe United Church, while Shirley Dagg and Jamie Lecompte oversaw the TI youth.

The youth learned that everyone can make a difference. Collectively, by changing ME to WE, we can have a world-changing impact!

### **Beading for a Cause**

With the WE Day message in mind, Britannia's Youth Group is organizing its next activity. It will be held on Friday, November 25, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, in the Little Chapel, at Britannia United Church. With the Mission, Service and Outreach Committee, we will be making and selling bracelets to raise money for the United Church's Hurricane Matthew Appeal. Everyone, including youth and their friends, is welcome to attend.

## Still November

If you are grieving the loss of someone this Christmas, this is for you.

No blanket of snow on the ground  
No Christmas lights lighting up the town  
No carolling, stillness has no sound  
No laughter, no one around

In my mind it's still November  
And I don't want to remember, How I miss you  
And shed more tears  
December... December...  
December is the longest month of the year

Just want to stay in my bed  
And let the days pass by instead  
Can't seem to clear, the fog in my head  
Can't clear the fog in my head

I used to love the holiday season  
Since you're gone I can't find a reason  
To find the strength to embrace the season  
There are no rules when you're grievin'

In my mind it's still November  
And I don't want to remember, How I miss you  
And shed more tears  
December... December...  
December is the longest month of the year

Written by Brenda Hamilton December 17, 2015

## MacMillan's Campaign

Thank you to everyone who ordered from the campaign this year! We only managed \$95 but I know the people that ordered do appreciate it! I'm looking for suggestions to make this campaign even more successful next year. Candice

Strive Martial Arts is excited to be offering karate programs for kids, teens & adults, ladies as well as a ladies kickboxing program at Britannia United Church. Strive Martial Arts teaches discipline, focus, respect and self-confidence while promoting fitness, proper technique and fun!!! Strive Martial Arts is inclusive to everyone. Our small class size allows us to focus on the individual needs of every student! Please visit our website at [www.strivemartialarts.ca](http://www.strivemartialarts.ca) or call us at 613-859-0702 for more info!





## **Ottawa West End Community Chaplaincy**

Below is a report that was read to the congregation at Bells Corners United Church on Sunday, October 16, 2016 by Peggy Aitchison, member of Bells Corners Outreach Committee and a board member with OWECC.

### **GOOD NEWS - The Ottawa West End Community Chaplaincy is experiencing a new birth!**

For 31 years the Chaplaincy provided a wide range of services and programs for the residents of four social housing neighbourhoods: Foster Farm, Morrison Gardens, Pinecrest Terrace and Regina Towers. This community work included weekly Bible studies and informal discussions, individual counseling, youth programs, summer camps and many creative get-togethers.

Over the years the demographics of the neighbourhoods and those of the supporting churches changed. Sadly in August 2015, due largely to reduced funds and the lack of volunteers on committees, the Chaplaincy stopped operating.

However, a group of concerned individuals wondered whether the Chaplaincy still had a role to play, albeit a different one. After several months of deliberation and soul searching, a new board was formed in June 2016 and by August of this year, the Rev. Steve Zink, a part time Baptist minister, was employed by OWECC for 12 hours per week with a mandate to get to know the four neighbourhoods and discover what the people would like from a renewed Chaplaincy.

Within two months, requests came from several directions. Steve is currently offering individual counseling, a martial arts program for youth and a breakfast outing for a small group of mothers from Foster Farm. A discussion group is now meeting at Regina Towers. The Ottawa West End Community Chaplaincy is up and running once more!!

Marilyn Bruce,  
OWECC Board Member.

## **Marriage!**

Graham and Nicole Whitehead on October 22nd!

## **Craft Show**

This year we had a nearly full house of vendors! Each table sells for \$30 each and that is the church income – so this year we made about \$930! There were many people that came by to see everything, some even had questions about the church itself, maybe we'll get to see them again. The scouts from the 96th Ottawa Troop ran the cafe and had a great time doing so! They made about \$120 towards their trip to the Canadian Jamboree next summer.

Thanks to everyone who came out and helped to keep our artists and scouts happy!

Candice

## Pot Luck Dinner

We are currently looking for a convenor of our pot luck dinner which is set to be held on December 11th. Please speak to the office for more information.

## Craft Group

We are surviving! We were down to 2 or 3 members for a short while, but last week we had 8, including a new member. We have fun laughing and crafting together, no matter what the craft is. If you don't have a craft but would like to learn one, we'll help with that too. This fall we have had tables at both the bazaar and the craft show, which brought in monies towards the general operating fund! We welcome any new people that would like to join our happy group, and they don't even have to come to the church either! Some people cannot make it during the day so they make items and donate them for us to sell.

Everyone have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year! Edith Kenney (613-828-1465) and Valda Boland (613-596-5396).

## How to Be a Better Forgiver

### Four tips from experts on letting bygones go

I would like to share this article from Scientific American (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-be-a-better-forgiver/>)

Sunny Sea Gold writes:

When I first decided to write about forgiveness for this end-of-year column, I was thinking about the holidays and how a little extra forgiveness among friends and family could make this season merrier. But as I delved into the rich well of research, it dawned on me how much our larger human family needs forgiveness right now. The past 12 months have seen more than their fair share of tragedy and injustice: violence between citizens and police, terror attacks, divisive elections. So much injury has been done, and so many people have been left in grief—can the anger and trauma ever be resolved? The forgiveness researchers I talked to say that it can and that it starts with you and me learning to forgive, in both big ways and small.

**#1 Forgive for your own sake.** We often talk about forgiveness as if it's a gift to bestow on someone once they have apologized or made restitution. I suppose that paradigm works fine for everyday injuries like dinging a car door. But how could anyone ever make restitution for killing a person's family member or terrorizing a nation? They can't. That's why it is important to grasp that “forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else,” says psychologist Frederic Luskin, director of the Stanford Forgiveness Project, a series of workshops and studies for people affected by everything from office politics to deadly international conflicts.

Forgiveness—deliberately letting go of negative feelings toward someone who has harmed you—appears to have significant health and wellness benefits for the person giving it. In an early seminal study, Luskin and his colleagues led a workshop for five women from Northern Ireland who had lost children to sectarian violence. After one

week, not only did the women feel dramatically less hurt, their depression scores fell by 60 percent. Six months later the women reported feeling half as stressed as they had before the workshop. Many other studies since have come to similar conclusions: a 2014 meta-analysis of 54 studies linked increased feelings of forgiveness with significant reductions in depression and anxiety.

**#2 Aim for empathy.** There are several evidence-based counseling techniques meant to help people move toward forgiveness, says psychologist Everett Worthington, co-author of the 2014 meta-analysis and a longtime researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University. In his process, known by the acronym REACH, the first step is to recall the hurt that was done to you as objectively as you can. “We try to get people to look at things from the point of view of the person who hurt them and get a sense of empathy for what was going on with that person,” Worthington says.

One exercise he uses to build such empathy is the empty chair dialogue, a decades-old therapeutic tool. In his version, you sit across from an empty chair and pour your heart out as if the person who harmed you is sitting right there; then, you switch seats and talk from that person's point of view about why “you” did what you did. If you can foster empathy—or even pity—for the person who hurt you, those less negative emotions will begin to edge out some of the pain and anger you feel, Worthington says.

**#3 Calm the fight-or-flight reaction.** Feelings of hurt and trauma often come in waves—and as the feelings crest, your body switches into fight-or-flight mode, Luskin says. In these moments, he recommends intervening with a simple stress-management technique such as deep breathing or a compassion meditation. This tends to work best in situations where you have had adequate time to grieve. If stress management doesn't make a dent in your suffering, he says, it's a sign that “the issue is something that really needs attention and may not be easy to tackle on your own.”

**#4 Keep trying. Forgiveness takes time.** “You don't go right to forgiveness when something first happens,” Luskin says. “You have to take time to let the wounds heal and allow the mind to recover from the shock.” Once you are ready to try to forgive, the more time you spend endeavoring to do it, the closer you get to it, Worthington says. “The research is clear,” he says. “You get about one tenth of a standard deviation closer to forgiveness for every hour you spend working on it.” These findings come from professionally led workshops and therapy sessions, which are much different than trying to do it on your own, but Worthington says persistence pays off in self-help situations, too. Even just making the decision to try to forgive moves you a bit closer. Although we may seek to forgive first and foremost for our own well-being, Worthington believes that it can have a cascading effect on the people around us and even society at large. “The more we can lower the amount of background bitterness, resentment and hostility, the fewer people are going to end up reaching their threshold and doing something that's terrible or violent.” It has been a hard year, and there is much to be forgiven. Yet is it crazy to think that it can start ... with each of us?

## **World Day of Prayer, March 3rd, 2017**

### **"Am I Being Unfair to You?"**

World Day of Prayer 2017 written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of The Philippines.

Before the World Wide Web, there was the World Day of Prayer, an international event that has been connecting people in a meaningful way for almost a century. Despite being planned years in advance, World Day of Prayer services have a remarkable record for anticipating major events, like the refugee crisis (France 2013), The Arab Spring (Egypt 2014) and the winding down of the U.S. embargo against Cuba (Cuba 2016).

The secret to this depth and insight is the women who plan and write each World Day of Prayer service. Too often, women have the most intimate experiences of armed conflict, violence, social injustice, and human rights violations. What might Canadians learn from women of the Philippines, a country on the front lines of climate change, foreign mining and resources interests, a regional insurgency and social upheaval due to migration, who wrote the World Day of Prayer 2017? How will we answer the question, "Am I being unfair to you?"

On March 3, 2017, Christians in more than 170 countries and in 2,000 communities across Canada will gather to learn about, pray, and celebrate in solidarity with the women of The Philippines through the World Day of Prayer. Please join us and invite your friends and family to attend the World Day of Prayer 2017.

The World Day of Prayer service for our area will be held at Britannia United Church. Please mark the date of March 3, 2017. Further details will follow later.

Contact person is: Marilyn Bruce (613-828-0704)

## **MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE**

Our committee members have continued to care for this lovely addition to the grounds of the church building. It has reached the point where just pulling the odd weed or dead-heading a flower or two, helps to maintain this beautiful 'addition' to our church. Larry waters faithfully and between Heather Wallace, Roelie Jackson and myself, this is a labour of love. The tree planted on the East lawn was planted by the Tupper and Collins families, to honour and remember Earl Tupper, and Evelyn Collins, my husband and our Mom.

We plan to have a plaque installed soon, depicting the 140 years of Britannia's serving our community to state when the garden was established in 2014 through our Quarter/Quarter drive to raise money for the project. The front garden was also 'tamed' down and presents a pleasant view to those travelling along Pinecrest Road. Take a stroll around the gardens! We are always open to suggestions if you see something missing.submitted,

Dianne Tupper.

## **New e-mail addresses**

Reverend Jim can be reached at [minister@brituc.ca](mailto:minister@brituc.ca), the church office's address is [office@brituc.ca](mailto:office@brituc.ca), nd, of course, the newsletter editors et their mail at [newsletter@brituc.ca](mailto:newsletter@brituc.ca)

## **Bazaar**

Another year gone by, and another great bazaar in the books. Despite gloomy, cold weather, Britannia Church's Bazaar was an overwhelming success. Attendance was solid, the energy was positive, and there were many instances of fellowship throughout the day.

Our successful bazaar is a testament to the many volunteers who gave tirelessly before, during, and after.

Once again the hot turkey sandwiches with warm apple crisp, topped with vanilla ice cream was a hit. Thanks to Verne Bruce, his many helpers and servers for filling the bellies of our attendees.

Thanks to everyone who provided baked goods, who donated items, who setup, who helped in the garage, jewellery, book, silent auction and Christmas sale areas.

Big thanks again to the wonderful group of women in the craft group for the many hours of knitting and crocheting.

Thanks to the parking lot attendees who braved the cold weather, to the cleanup crew, and our chipmunk mascot who entertained the parking lot crew and the many cars who honked in gratitude.

Thanks to the businesses who supported the bazaar, specifically Giant Tiger for the ice cream donation and Critter Jungle for silent auction items.

This year's bazaar realized a profit of just over **\$4000.00!!**

Please keep the bazaar in mind throughout the year, starting this Christmas should you find any Christmas items you may no longer require.

Sincerely,

Kelvin Stanke

## **White Gift**

This year's donations will go to help at the **Tewegan Housing for Aboriginal Youth**. This is an Ottawa-based transitional home for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, ages 16 to 29. Aboriginal culture is a mainstay of the home's mission. It provides a safe, culture-oriented environment where women can celebrate their traditions and acquire skills that will help them in life.



*Forgiveness doesn't excuse their actions. Forgiveness stops their actions from destroying your heart.*

## **Deconstruction**

The original temple of Solomon was a magnificent building but it was destroyed in 586 B.C. by the Chaldeans. When the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon it was rebuilt, but by comparison, it was relatively small and simple. Herod the Great - who ruled over the Jewish people from 37 to 4 B.C. - was a great lover of architecture, and he was responsible for the temple being built up to a massive and artistic complex that was nearly 500 yards long and 400 yards wide.

To put that into perspective, the average football field is about 130 yards long by 80 yards wide. So the temple was about four times the size of the average football field, and the outer court alone could hold about 400,000 people. Herod himself drew up the grand architectural plan. He even had a thousand priests trained as builders to do the work, so the Hebraic people could not accuse him of having the temple built with unclean hands.

By the time Jesus and his disciples stood in the temple, it had been under construction for 46 years and it would be another 30 years before it was completed. When you think about it, Jesus and the disciples had not even been born when the construction of the temple began, and it was still being built after they were gone. It was in this context - in this place - that the disciples would hear Jesus speak about the end times.

The disciples were not from Jerusalem, they were from Galilee. They would not have gone to Jerusalem often so it is no wonder that they were awestruck by the magnificence and beauty of the temple. But Jesus was just about to deconstruct everything they thought they knew about beauty and glory and what it would mean to follow him.

When you go back a few verses, you see that Jesus was awestruck by something very different in the temple. It wasn't the brickwork, or the design. It wasn't the magnificence or grandeur of the architecture. It was something far more humble. What attracted Jesus' attention that day was a poor widow, dropping two coins into the offering box.

There were others giving gifts that day. They made a huge display of their offering, and their offerings were very great indeed. But the small gift of the widow was singled out by Jesus, for it was all the woman had. The others gave an offering out of their abundance, but she gave out of her need, and Jesus commended her gift because it was evidence of her love of God and her faith that God would see her through the most challenging times of her life.

This is the event that sets up our story for today. The disciples were caught up in the grandeur and the glory of the temple - just as at times, they were caught up in their idea of the grandeur and the glory of being the disciples of Christ - and so he tells them what it would mean when it all came crashing down.

For the past couple of weeks now, I've been working on our basement in my spare time. It an unfinished basement, so it has become somewhat of a catch-all over the years. Every now and again, I go down and purge the space of what is no longer needed and attempt to organize the rest. And typically, as I go through boxes and bins that have accumulated over the past 22

years of our history in the house, I am flooded with memories of the time we have spent there – which explains why I don't do it often enough, and why it takes me so long.

The other day I came across a box of building blocks that Val's dad made for Jason. Now this isn't just any set of building blocks. The box that holds them is about two feet square and another two and a half feet high, and it has about five tiers of blocks in every shape and size; some with holes so they can be strung together to make bridges. There are literally hundreds of hundreds of wooden blocks all lovingly shaped by hand. I'll never forget the wide-eyed look on Jason's face when he opened the box, and our living room would never be the same.

Over the years Jason built many fine structures. Like his engineering grandfather, he loved to design and to build and he had a natural flair for it. Some of the structures filled me with awe and wonder and we would leave them for days before insisting that it was time to put the blocks away. At other times he would spend hours building something that only his mind could see, only to have one of his younger siblings pull out one of the blocks, or ride by on their tricycle, only to have it all come crashing down.

It really didn't matter though, because the joy was in the building, and even on those days when things didn't go as planned and he was devastated by the fall, it just meant that he could start all over again and create something even better.

It's funny, how when we are children we love to build and to break down, so that we can start over and build something new. But as we get older, we are far more resistant to change – especially when it feels as though something that we have created and love comes crashing down. It could be the theology that we have accepted our whole life, it might be our ideas about the person and nature of God. It could be the style of music we want to hear at worship, or how we run the fundraising events at church. I remember the day one of the kitchens of a country church exploded over the amount of liquid there was in the coleslaw – because it had been done the same way for fifty years! And through the years, I have seen our church struggle as our ideas about who can be ordained, who can get married and even who will get to heaven have gone through major renovations.

Change is never easy. I like to see change happen as an evolution, where new things grow out of old, and we naturally let go of those that served us well, but are no longer relevant to our faith or our ministry.

But it is seldom that easy. From time to time the church has had to do some major house cleaning with all of the distractions and emotions that go along with it. And sometimes things have had to fall apart completely so that there was room for change to grow. Some people even choose the last option – choosing to let go of everything that is familiar, so that something new can be created – it's called a theology of deconstruction, and it feels like someone pulled out the block that was holding everything together, only to have it all come crashing down.

Most of the time, when that happens, it is not by our choosing, but when it happens and when we trust in God to guide us, we do make it through. And every time, we are stronger for it.

Recently, our presbytery heard a report from a group of churches who are living through some major changes, but instead of giving up hope, they are seeing this as an opportunity to build something new.

The churches are all up in the area surrounding Wakefield and Cantley; five congregations all struggling to attract new members, to pay the bills and to keep their buildings in good repair. It has been a losing battle, and eventually they had to accept the fact that none of them were going to succeed on their own. But instead of giving up, instead of walking away, and instead of holding on until the buildings came crashing down around them, they decided to work together and make a change.

What has grown out of their struggle and a five-year process is a new beginning that they are calling Grace United. They are selling all five of their churches – churches that were built by their great-grandparents before them and that have been home to generations of weddings, funerals and baptisms – buildings that hold everything it means to be the church in these small communities. For now they are worshipping together from one church to the next, but the long-term plan once the buildings are sold is to find a place where they can start something new. It will not only be a home for their newly founded congregation, but they hope it will be a gathering place for people of other denominations or even other faiths – one space where all of God's people work and worship in peace and harmony in the spirit of Grace.

It hasn't been easy. There have been lots of struggles and many emotions, but those who have stayed open to God's leading and committed to the process recently held a celebration that is filled with hope and promise.

When Jesus spoke in the temple that day, he had a sense that the temple would one day come crashing down, but he was also deconstructing the ideas and values of those who would lead the new Christian community that was developing.

Jesus was constantly turning the world of his followers upside-down; challenging their theology and what they held as important in life. He knew it was tough. And he knew great changes would come. Some would start in their own hearts and some would be cast upon them by the outside world. There would be times of conflict and persecution, even times when the people closest to them would turn against them, but the one thing they would be able to count on through all these trials and tribulations, would be the love and guidance and presence of God.

History has shown that his words were true, and history will show that God is with us still. Trials come to all of us. We are challenged as the church and as individuals by the changes in our lives, but our faith assures us that God will give us the wisdom and the words to see us through. Living by God's word, living by grace, having faith in difficult times and hope for something better – these are the greatest testimonies to our faith – they lay the true foundation for any community that loves and serves God, and they will bring us all together, as the God of old makes all things new, in Christ's name. Amen