

Easter 2018

BRITANNIA UNITED CHURCH

THE  **Britannian**

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Editorial

Myles Frosst pointed out some time ago that home isn't necessarily a house or an apartment, or even the place you live. It's where you feel "at home": comfortable, safe, and welcome. I felt "at home" at my relatives' house, or visiting my best friend's parents, even though we had no other connection. Marg Campbell made me feel "at home" at Britannia in the autumn of 1985, and that's why I stayed.

We have lots of new members in the Britannia family, not least our Music Director Lauren Saindon and Secretary Melissa McEwen, whose biographies you will find later in the newsletter. Please make them and all our new members feel at home in the Britannia family.

Peter Bain
Editor

Minister's Letter

As the minister of this congregation, I have a rather unique perspective on Sunday morning... literally... while all of you are looking at me, I am looking at all of you! While my main objective is to facilitate worship, my mind and thoughts often wander to other things. (I know, you thought you were the only one. lol)

Take our last communion service, for instance. While I was sitting at the front of the church, I saw the most beautiful scene in front of me; two children from our Sunday School walking forward with the communion trays, each followed by a grandparent. It was a moment I wished I could have captured on film. It said so much about our congregation; how we value the contribution of children, and how many grandparents are fulfilling the role of introducing their grandchildren to a community and a faith that will bless them for a lifetime.

Then there was the Sunday when I looked out and noticed five of the younger people who were there: Lana, Lauren, Adam, Danielle and Kristen. These five people are still relatively new to our congregation but each one of them jumped right in and started volunteering. Lana, Lauren Danielle and Kristen each take turns in the Sunday School, Danielle also sings with the choir, and Adam prepares the overhead we use every Sunday for worship. If you haven't had a chance to speak with them yet, please make sure that you do, and let them know how much their presence and their participation means to the life and worship of our congregation!

Sometimes when I look out into the congregation, I see empty seats that were once filled by longtime, dedicated members of the congregation who are no longer with us. Some have passed, some have moved into long-term care, and some have moved away. Other times, I see new faces whom have come to us looking for a church home. Some have a lifetime of church experience behind them. Others are brand new to this notion of a Christian faith. Let's make sure each one is welcome and encouraged to find their place in this community of faith that we call home.

I know that some Sundays it seems like the Prayers of Joy and Concern go on forever, but let me assure you, that for every joy or concern that is expressed, there are ten more that are held in silence. That's why I pray about specific needs in general terms, because I know that for every person who speaks up, there are other hearts breaking, or other fears just under the surface, or other grateful souls too shy to draw attention to their own situation. But then we join our voices as one and we say the prayer that Jesus taught, and I can feel everyone come together in the Spirit of the One who hears every prayer and responds to every need.

I think that is why I like the services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. For these services, the chairs are placed in a circle. The communion table and the cross are placed in the centre, I get to move to the back, and we all get to look at each other. At these services, perhaps more than any other, we really see each other as we focus on the symbols of our faith, and hear the good news of God's grace.

It was around these symbols that the new Christian church was formed, that people of different backgrounds gathered, and everyone knew they were welcomed, encouraged and loved. May this always be the centre of our church, and as we look to the world outside, and may this be what the world sees when it looks back inside.

Rev. Jim

The Haven

The Haven in Barrhaven was started by the Multifaith Housing Initiative, a Canadian-based not-for-profit charity focused on providing safe and affordable housing in Ottawa. Construction of The Haven began in 2015 and finished in the summer of 2017. By the end of May 2017, 100 apartments were completed and most had been rented. The townhouses were finished during the summer and looked like this picture.

In November 2017 the federal government recognized that there is a housing crisis in Canada and announced \$40 billion towards affordable housing. The funding will start in two years and be spread over 10 years. It plans to build 10,000 new units. The Haven is a model of how they might consider doing this.



Susan Aiken

From the Music Director

Hello Britannia United Church! My name is Lauren Saindon and I'm happy to be the new music director. Music has always been an important part of my life. I have a wide variety of experience both as a pianist and vocalist. An Ottawa native, I pursued a university degree in music which then led me to complete a Bachelor of Education. Teaching has always been a joy for me and my work at the university included research into piano pedagogy. After graduating, my husband and I moved to Toronto and I embarked on a series of musical adventures, touring both North America as the Associate Musical Director of the US National Tour of "Mamma Mia!", and Japan as a vocal soloist for a 50-concert series with the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra. Now back in Ottawa to raise our children, I run a busy home music studio while musical directing and performing - most recently in December onstage with the National Arts Centre Orchestra. When I'm not working, I can be found with my wonderful husband, running after my two lovely kids.

I'm excited to be part of a wonderful congregation and working with a fantastic choir! My faith life has always been important to me and I have a long history of music ministry in various congregations. I look forward to exploring the eclectic mix of music resources available at the church while bringing in some of my own favourites. Do you like to sing or play an instrument? We'd love to have you join us regularly or for a special service. Music reading is not necessary! Please feel free to come chat with me after a service and we can see how you can be part of our collective musical offering. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve both God and the community with this ministry and look forward to the Easter season ahead!

Lauren Saindon, Music Director

A Little Boy's Explanation of God

I certainly don't think an adult could explain this more beautifully.

It was written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, California. He wrote it for this third grade homework assignment, to 'explain God'. I wonder if any of us could have done as well?

Explanation of God:

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.

Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God.

They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said 'O.K.'

His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And beside the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

But... you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

Our Sympathies

Al Boles passed away at Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre on September 13th at the age of 96. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

The family writes:

His passing was peaceful as his Alzheimer's disease just slowly took the life out of him. His memorial service was held at the Perley on October 21 and was presided over by our cousin Reverend Carl Sawler of Hamilton ON.

We thank you and the congregation for your past kindness and friendship to Dad. He thought very highly of everyone at Britannia.

Kim, Bev and Marilee Boles

Annie Doris McCausland (née Hodges), Elaine McCausland's mother, passed away peacefully in her sleep on November 24, 2017. Our deepest condolences to Elaine and her family

Beloved wife of the late Samuel Charles McCausland. Loving mother of Bernice Sceviour (the late Robert), Sandra Elliott (the late George), the late Graydon 'Red' (Barbara), Graham (Janice), Alvin 'Al' (Marlene), Elaine (Sue Fowler Dacey). Cherished Grannie and GG to 17 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. She will be missed by many nieces, nephews and friends.

Annie loved to play the piano, accordion and harmonica. She was well-known in the Old Time Fiddlers Associations and Retirement Homes in the Ottawa area. Even in her last days, she entertained the staff and residents where she lived.

Keeping The Dream Alive - February 2018 Update

Britannia United and the local community continue to be huge supporters of the Shaaou Artin Syrian refugee family as they adapt to their new country. The help has come in the form of financial donations, friendship, driving to appointments, tutoring, prayers and many acts of kindness. This help is greatly appreciated by the family.

Rim, the mother, is pursuing her studies and internship under the Ryerson University midwifery program. She will be spending several months in Kitchener and Toronto. Winter driving continues to be a challenge.

Abboud, the father, is continuing with language training and being a house husband and single parent at times. It is not an easy journey. Recently, his father passed away in Syria. His mother passed away in 2016.

Their sons Jack and Christian are embracing Canadian winter sports. They enjoy skating and cross-country skiing. Several volunteers have taken them to the Nakkertok Ski Club this winter, and the club has provided them with equipment and free lessons.

Grandparents Raymond and Nadia find Canadian winters hard and are experiencing health challenges. Son Salem does a lot for them as he lives nearby.

This new Canadian family still needs our support and prayers as they seek to make themselves independent and adapt to life here. Donations are, as always, welcome and cheques can be made out to Britannia United Church with the memo line "Local Syrian Refugee Family". For more information, contact Project Coordinators Don Cullen and Marie-Therese O'Sullivan, at 613-726-1863 or britunitedref@gmail.com.

From the Secretary

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new secretary at Britannia United Church. My name is Melissa McEwen (née Connors). I was born and raised in Ottawa and presently live in Orleans with my three beautiful children, Liam (8), Zoe (7), Ronin (1) and my incredibly supportive and wonderful partner, Alejandro (Alex) Hannecke.

Previous to joining the Britannia family, I was working for over ten years for Youturn youth support services as a counsellor for youth in conflict with the law with significant mental health issues, addictions, developmental delays, and those on the autism spectrum. This career allowed me the opportunity to meet with many wonderful youth, their families, and community members. I have been faced with many challenging clients and situations that have allowed me to grow as a counsellor and I am forever grateful for everything these youth have taught me.

After my third child was born, I decided it was time for a new challenge! I decided to start my own business, Mel's Thread Shed. I specialize in bibs, blankets, clothing and teething accessories for infants and children. I also do custom embroidery which is very popular. Since being a mother and running my own business isn't enough, I am also a personal assistant and bookkeeper maintaining the office equipment, the financial statements, and records for two successful small businesses.

I am amazed and overjoyed by all the kind words and open welcomes I have received from the members at Britannia United Church. I am very happy to be here and look forward to meeting each and every one of you. Please do not hesitate to pop into the office to say hello!

Minutes for Missions/

Scripture Readers:

We are always happy to welcome more volunteers. If you would like to read, please sign up on the board(s) by the stairs.

Cookie (Olympic) Medals at Nakkertok

On Saturday February 24, Nakkertok Ski Club in Cantley, Quebec held its annual Cookie Race for all young persons at the club. Our Syrian family boys, Jack and Christian, competed in the races and received medals (cookies on ribbons). Everyone who competed was a winner. It was a joyous event with lots of family and community support shown for the participants, just like in the Olympics. The spirit of the event was fabulous.

Jack and Christian, along with father Abboud, have participated with members of other Syrian refugee families in the Nakkertok ski program. Loaned equipment and free lessons have been provided by the club for several weeks. Club coaches Parham Momtahan, John Stephenson and Guylaine Carrière, deserve a special thanks for their kindness and support, together with volunteer drivers Dara, Ravi, Pauline, Louis, John and Don.

Food Pantry News

Donations put in our food collection bin are taken to the Britannia Woods Community House Food Pantry in the basement of the Community house on Ritchie Street.

The Community has 178 town house units. These house 4-5 people per unit; about 800 people live in the Community. Anyone in this area, which has several low income housing communities, may access to the Food Pantry.

The very good news is that the Community on Ritchie Street has not been in the news for all the wrong reasons, as it had some years back. This is a credit to the work of Mohamed Sofa, the Director, and Diane Belgahli, both pictured here. Mohamed was born in Somalia and came to Canada when he was 13 years old. He resided in a Britannia Woods Community house for many years and received a degree from Carleton University. Diane is from Lebanon and speaks Arabic. She does amazing work with women in the Community.



On Thursdays the community hosts a brunch. On a recent Thursday a resident dressed in typical Moroccan clothing served Moroccan food.

The women in the Community have little money to spend on any form of entertainment and it is tempting for them to stay at home. The brunch brings them together where they get to know each other before going back to their houses in different parts of the community.

If they see things going on are suspicious – fights or possible drug dealing, they feel comfortable passing the news to each other and to Diane. Police cruisers then turn up at times and in places where their presence sends a message. This network of women deserves credit for keeping Ritchie Street out of the news.

The women also have the opportunity to learn computer skills. The teacher is a volunteer from iSisters, a technology mentoring registered Canadian charity with a mission to connect women in need with technology through mentoring.

The approximately 40 volunteers who work at the Food Pantry were fed and then asked for ideas on how things might be improved. Many suggestions have been implemented.

Food lunch program good news

Previously Britannia Woods Community House prepared lunches twice a week for students registered in the program: 120 at the beginning of a month when benefit cheques had arrived and 190 at the end of the month.

The numbers are now down to 90 -120 lunches twice a week. Students who used the program when they were in primary school are now in high school.

Students in high school get “gift tokens” from fast food outlets and they use these to buy their lunches.

Food delivery has been made easier

The delivery used to require a paid driver and two volunteers. Individual boxes of goods were laden onto a trolley and pushed to the back entrance. There the bucket brigade worked to get the items down the stairs. Now when the truck arrives, the order is on shipping pallets and shrink wrapped. The driver gets into the back of the truck and moves a machine under the shipping pallet and then onto a platform at the back of the truck.

The platform is lowered to the ground and the driver moves a whole pallet of food at a time to where the bucket brigade takes over. Volunteers from the Ottawa Food Bank are freed up to work elsewhere.

Our Lady of Fatima Church, the Catholic church at the corner of Woodroffe and Richmond, had a food drive on November 25th and 26th. The Knights of Columbus delivered 1,600 lbs of food donations! The Food Pantry knew it was coming and was able to reduce its order from the Ottawa Food Bank.

Consider the donations that go in here all through the year. There is a story of a pig and a cow discussing which gave most. The pig argued that when it was killed all of it could be eaten. The cow answer, “Yes! But I give milk everyday. It may be less but I give much more often”.

Thank you everyone at Britannia who has given often. Sometimes the Food Pantry is very well stocked, but there is always space for donations that come in an envelope! Such donations are used for things other than dried food that arrives from food drives. They are very useful in the winter when the generous food given at Christmas has been used up.

Thank you!
Susan Aiken

Photo Directory:

Curious to know where your photo directories are? Don't worry: proofs have been sent to the coordinators for review and editing.

Garage Sale

Saturday, May 12, 8 AM to 1 PM

Do you want to do some spring cleaning? Bring your excess kitchen and household goods, sporting goods (no skis, please), books, small furniture, small appliances and electronics, luggage, books, and toys. Please, no clothes, large furniture or CRTs. Drop off items at the church starting May 7.

Can you help? Absolutely! Can you come in the week before the sale and organize the items? Help with sales in the morning or early afternoon? Take the leftovers to Value Village or Salvation Army after the sale in your truck or van? That would be great! Make or sell coffee and baked goods? People love that! Thanks!

Peter Bain, Garage sale convenor.

Sermon

February 11, 2018

Today's gospel reading is simple and to the point. A man suffering with leprosy comes to Jesus, begging to be healed. Jesus healed him and sent him to the temple to show himself to the priests – so that he would be officially declared clean, and restored to his place in society and in the temple. Jesus told the man to tell no one, in order that he might continue to do his work quietly and without attention, but the man told everyone who would listen, and people came to Jesus from every town.

These healing stories were included in the Bible to authenticate Jesus as the Son of God and the coming Messiah, and they are often told during the season of Epiphany to show how the news of God's love and light is spread throughout the world.

One of my favourite stories in the Old Testament also deals with a prophet and a healing. It is the story of Namaan; the military leader who commanded the army of the king of Aram.

Namaan was considered to be a great and powerful man. He was both feared and respected because of his many victories, and he held the favour of the king – but there was one battle he hadn't won: Namaan suffered from a skin disease.

Now there was a slave girl living in Namaan's home. She had been taken captive in one of Namaan's raids against the land of Israel. She served Namaan's wife, and one day she told his wife about a prophet, living in Samaria, who could heal her master of his leprosy.

So Namaan went to Samaria with ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, ten sets of garments and a letter from his king to the king of Israel, asking him to cure his servant.

As the story goes, the king of Israel thought it was a trick. He thought that the king of Aram had asked him to do something impossible, so that he could pick a fight with him and that this powerful general was about to lay siege to his country once again.

The king of Israel was beside himself, crying out and tearing his clothes, but when the prophet Elisha heard about it, he sent a message to the king, saying "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel."

And Namaan came. He came with his horses, and his chariots, and his entourage. He came with his ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of new clothes. And he stopped in front of Elisha's house and waited for the prophet to greet him.

But instead, the prophet sent him a message. And the message said "Go wash in the Jordan seven times and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean."

And Namaan was furious!

Here he was, a great military leader, feared and respected by everyone. He had travelled all the way from Aram, with a great treasure and a letter from the king. He expected a royal greeting. He expected pomp and circumstance befitting his position. He expected to be

greeted by the prophet with respect...and maybe even a little fear...and the prophet sends him a note. And to add insult to injury, the note tells him to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan river.

So Namaan went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are the rivers of Damascus not better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" And he turned and went away in a rage.

Namaan could have left that day without receiving a cure. He could have returned with his army to kill the prophet and defeat the king. But before things got out of hand, his servants approached him and said "Father, if the prophet had commanded you do something difficult, would you not have done it. Why not give this a try?"

And he did. And you can just imagine Namaan, standing on the bank of the river, surrounded by his men, totally offended by the prophet, insulted that this foreign holy man from a country he had defeated would dare to tell him to take a bath – but he did. He submerged himself once...twice...seven times...and as the story goes, his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy and he was clean.

Now it would be easy just to accept this reading as a story of healing, and indeed, it is included in a group of healing stories used to demonstrate that Elisha was indeed a prophet of God. But there is so much more to this story.

This is a story of a great man being healed by a great prophet...but the great God of Israel does all this in simple and unexpected ways.

The healing begins with a servant girl – a slave held captive by Namaan himself. The healing comes through a prophet in a country that Namaan has defeated in battle. The healing would not have taken place, except for the wisdom of more servants who were able to reason with the general. There was no pomp and splendour, no royal welcome, no exchange of gifts... Namaan asked and healing was given...all he really had to do was get over himself.

Maybe that's the point of the story.

Faith is simple. God doesn't ask for pomp and splendour. It can't be bought with silver and gold and fine clothes. It has little to do with our preconceptions and expectations. All we have to do is believe. And sometimes in order to be healed of our unbelief, all we have to do is get over ourselves. But that is easier for some than for others.

There is a story about basketball great Wilt Chamberlain that demonstrates just what can happen when attitude gets in the way of healing.

As great a basketball player as Wilt Chamberlain may have been, he had his own Achilles' heal. He couldn't sink a free-throw. In a podcast series entitled "Revisionist History" best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell examines Chamberlain's problem, its solution and what happened once the issue was healed.

Apparently, another basketball player by the name of Rick Barry used an underhand method of free-shooting, instead of the more common over-hand throw favoured by most of the players in the game. The underhand throw gave Barry an 89.3% accuracy rate throughout his career. So, in an attempt to improve his record, Chamberlain tried shooting underhand...and it worked...he sank 28 out of 32 free-throws, leading to a record-setting 100 point game.

Problem solved, right? Wrong. Chamberlain went back to using the overhand throw. Why? Pride alone. The underhand throw was referred to as “the granny shot” by the other players and Chamberlain admitted that he felt “like a sissy” when he used it. He was embarrassed, so he went back to shooting overhand and his percentages plunged once again. He never again broke a record for scoring.

Gladwell’s point is clearly stated: Why would a Hall of Famer reject a proven, simple solution to his most obvious flaw, when another Hall of Famer used the exact solution to historically great effect? And in turn, why have modern players largely followed in Chamberlain’s footsteps rather than Barry’s? He says:

“The Chamberlain/Barry dichotomy leads naturally into an exploration of high threshold versus low threshold personalities. In the simplest sense, a high threshold personality (like Chamberlain) is more likely to allow a crowd to dictate his behaviour, while a low threshold personality (like Barry) pursues the preferred course with less regard to social cost. By the end of the episode, Gladwell finds himself “admiring” the polarizing Barry’s willingness to shun hecklers and groupthink as he perfected the method of foul shooting that ultimately maximized his ability and value.”

Most often when we think about a healing we focus on the physical, but a healing can be emotional and spiritual. Wilt Chamberlain had a cure for his problem...but he was too embarrassed to use it, so he chose failure over success in order to save face...but did he... really?

Namaan lived at a time when leprosy could prevent you from going out in public and exclude you from worship. You would be branded as unclean. Some people even believed that it was a punishment from God for some sin or failing. The physical symptoms were difficult enough to deal with, but the disease also left its mark on a person’s emotional and spiritual well-being. Still, when Namaan was presented with the possibility of a cure he almost missed his chance, because arrogance and pride got in the way.

What is it that needs healing in our lives? And what is standing in our way?

For some it is preconceptions about God and faith. For others it might be expectations of what faith can do for us. For some, it is fear of ridicule for believing in something that open to such public criticism, and is seen by so many as just a fairytale. For others, letting go of habits or desires, or even unbelief, comes at too great a cost. Some of us don’t believe that we are worthy of God’s healing and grace, and some of us...just need to get over ourselves.

Faith is simple. God’s grace is free. The stories of Jesus never include pomp or splendour. They never focus on worldly power or esteem. They always come down to prayers spoken. Answers given. New life begun. And all it takes is a mustard seed of faith to get started. Amen