

Bells Corners United Church SPRING REPORT 2022



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HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

April 10 – Palm Sunday

Online & Onsite at 10:00 am with live streaming

April 14 – Maundy Thursday

Onsite in Shalom Room, with Zoom connection – 6:00 pm

April 15 – Good Friday Service

Onsite at 10:00 am with live streaming.

April 17 – Easter Sunday with Communion

Onsite at 10:00 am with live streaming

Please support the work and ministry of BCUC with additional donations where possible. Look for donation envelopes, at Church, or send to Treasurer@bcuc.org



HYMN-SING IS BACK!

Celebrate an occasion, remember a loved one or any other reason to hear your favourite Hymn during Sunday Worship up to June 5th. Send your name, hymn request and dedication to office@bcuc.org or call 613-820-8103. Payments (minimum \$30) can be made by e-transfer, cheque or cash.

Easter in Times of Pandemic and War



REV. KIM VIDAL

Dear friends,

As I write this message, we are still in the season of Lent. We began our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday and now we're moving towards two more Sundays in Lent, followed by Palm Sunday, Holy Week and then Easter Sunday. The past two years of the COVID pandemic curtailed the opportunity for us to gather in the church building during Lent and Easter, but this year I am optimistic that we will be together for an onsite Easter service.

But amidst the anticipation of a joyful celebration, we cannot ignore the fact that the COVID pandemic is still in full swing, the economic recession is still severe, and add to that, the atrocities of war in Ukraine instigated by a Russian tyrant. How could we possibly celebrate the joyful alleluias at Easter when the world is in the midst of grief? In this time of pandemic and war, two forces may be at play: fear and hope. We may feel unstable, upset and anxious when terrible things confront us. Fear sets in that might potentially overwhelm us and leave us forever grieving. It is important that we keep our Easter faith alive and acknowledge that moments of fear will not last forever. It is equally important that we embrace hope, and that, through our actions, we respond with hope rather than with fear.

A few days from now, we will celebrate our hope in the risen Christ as Easter people. We acknowledge that Christ forever lives in our hearts and we become Christ for others and the world. Luke, as our resurrection storyteller, invites us to imagine ourselves as the women who prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body. They encountered death and tragedy but they did not give up. They lit a flame of hope in their hearts and went to anoint death with fragrant spices of life and hope. This was an act of unconditional love. The women did not stop loving Jesus and their act of witnessing gives us the hope that we seek in this time of pandemic and war.

The celebration of Easter is glorious and especially powerful. It will be a faith-filled worship service with joyful hymns, prayers from the heart, and words of reflection from the Gospel writer Luke that offers comfort and strength and an invitation to partake in God's table of grace. It is wonderful to experience the gift of Easter with family and friends, young and old, bursting with high spirits. Of course, we need to acknowledge the dressing up of the

sanctuary and the chancel with banners and the beautiful potted white lilies! Personally, I will always cherish the moments of resurrection joy and am so grateful for being part of this vibrant congregation.

After Easter, post-resurrection narratives meet us in our journey: eating breakfast together on the beach, walking down a road with a stranger and sharing a meal, the doubting of Thomas and Peter's repentance, to name a few. It's a joyful time in the life of the church as we acknowledge the mystery of love and the abundant grace that is tangible and life-giving.

And finally, I turn to the wisdom of our post-resurrection BCUC community as we offer our gifts of gratitude and a profound sense of the power of love to carry the torch of hope in this time of pandemic and war. The good news of Easter continues to invade my spirit. I hope it invades yours too!

I close my message with this poem entitled 'The Path' from Buildingfaith.org

The Path

*God bless the path on which you go
God bless the earth beneath your feet
God bless your destination.
God be a smooth way before you
A guiding star above you
A keen eye behind you
This day, this night, and forever.
God be with you whatever you pass
Jesus be with you whatever you climb
Spirit be with you wherever you stay.
God be with you at each stop and each sea
At each lying down and each rising up
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows.
Each step of the journey you take.*



Christ is Risen! Risen indeed! Alleluia! Easter blessings and joy,

Rev. Kim



PASTORAL & SPIRITUAL CARE

" The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares."

- Henri Nouwen

If you or a loved one is feeling distressed and alone, the Pastoral and Spiritual Care Team is there for you. Our ministers and a group of trained volunteers continue to offer a ministry of presence and compassionate listening. Whenever there is a need, please do not hesitate to contact the church office. Your request will be kept confidential.

Coming out of our two year long cocoon



REV. LORRIE

As I write this, the sun is shining in my window and the snow is melting in my yard. Could spring be here at last? I love the sense of hope and newness this time of year brings – and this year, it seems to hold the promise that we are really ready to come out of our long two-year cocoon, ready to face a bright new world!

Some of you know that I am fascinated by butterflies. When I taught school, one of my favourite times of year was when I would bring caterpillars into the classroom and we would watch the miracle of metamorphosis take place right before our eyes. For the first couple of weeks those busy little critters seemed to do nothing but eat and I would scour the field near my home each morning to provide them with fresh stalks of milkweed, clean the cages and move each one carefully from old leaves to new. It was also a busy and sometimes tiring time! It was amazing to watch them grow bigger and fatter as the days went by – but suddenly everything changed. One by one, those caterpillars would choose a branch and secure themselves with a little knot of silk. They would let go suddenly and hang upside down in the shape of a “J”. That’s when I would call the children over to watch a miracle happen! We called it the “pupa dance” as the caterpillar started to wiggle and squirm. The yellow, black, and white skin would split and they would wriggle right out of it! Underneath, the caterpillar had disappeared and we saw a bright green chrysalis, trimmed in gold! Not another movement... no more munching on leaves... just a silent jewel hanging from the branch. Nothing happened at all for about two weeks! But then, the green started to fade away and we could see black and orange colours through the clear covering, until one day, that covering split open and a very wrinkled and wet butterfly emerged. It looked so frail! Its wings were small and crumpled and its body looked way too big for them. It was a bit scary, really. The children would wonder if it was sick or if it might die. They would worry that we had done something wrong. But soon the body would start to pulse and pump up those wings with the fluid from its body. Within just a few hours we would see a big, beautiful monarch butterfly!

These past two years have been much like that for us, I think. Before the pandemic struck, we were all busy with our lives. We had our daily and weekly routines and, much like those hungry caterpillars who never seemed to stop munching and moving, we carried on with the business of living without much stopping to rest or to notice the world around us. The beginning of the shutdowns put us into our own little chrysalis, cut off from the busy-ness and from each other. This quiet, alone time gave us opportunities to be creative – to learn new things, to read, to cook

new recipes, to find new ways to reach out to those we missed and cared about. We discovered the world of “Zoom” and other amazing technologies. We caught up on the movies and television series that we had been too busy to enjoy. We watched the world outside our windows and on our televisions and computers. At first it seemed strange and stressful... then it became routine to order groceries online, to wear a mask if you had to venture out, to watch for signs and symptoms in ourselves and others. But after two long years, the beauty of this quiet time has faded and we are restless once again, wanting more than anything to get out, to get back into the world we knew.



I’m feeling a bit like that newly emerged butterfly these days – a little ruffled, not quite ready to leave the safety of that chrysalis and just fly into the world. I need some time to get my bearings again. I still need to cling to some of the things that made me feel safe – masks, sanitizers, and distancing – but I am excited to see if the world has changed while we’ve been apart. Will we just jump back into the cycle of busy-ness again? Have we learned to look around us more, to appreciate the wonder of creation and the wonder of each other a bit more? I will take the time I need to feel comfortable again and I hope you will too. But, I am excited about the possibilities ahead!

Those beautiful butterflies that my children and I released into the sunshine were probably very hungry after their ordeal – but they weren’t going to be satisfied with milkweed leaves anymore! They flew off in search of bright flowers and sweet nectar.

What are you hungry for as we come back into this beautiful world? I hope you find sweet blessings in the beauty around you!

Happy Easter!

Rev. Lorrie



BCUC ON YOUTUBE

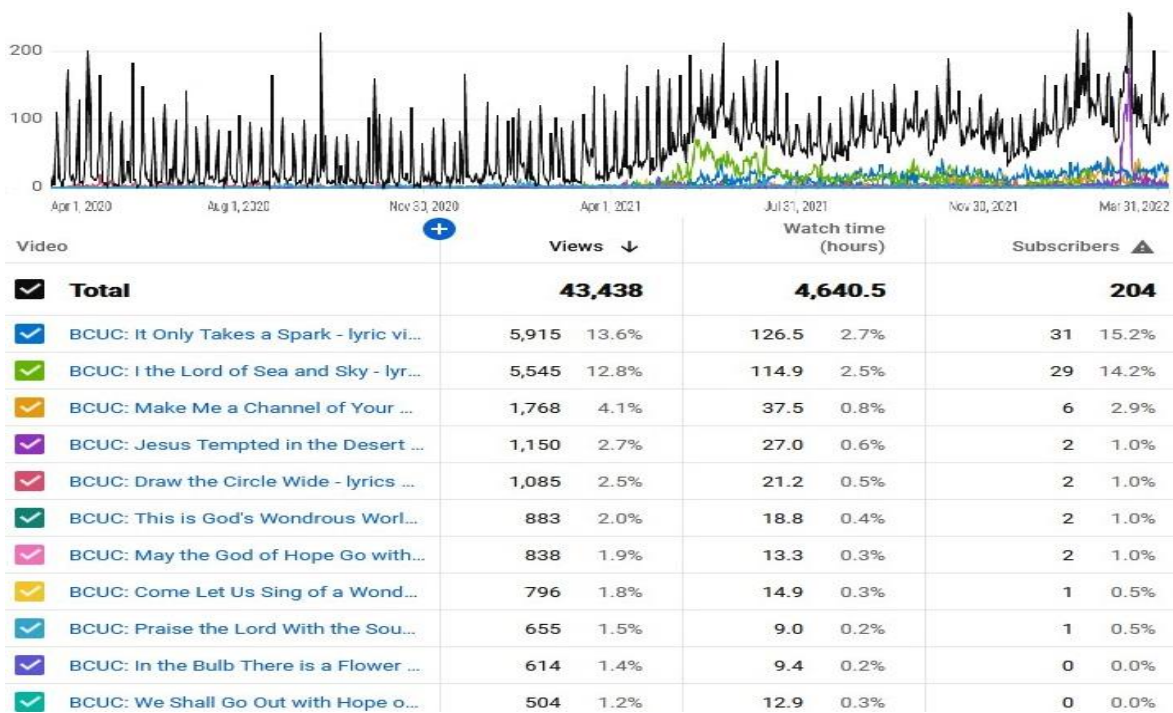


Our YouTube Channel was started 2 years ago on Apr 1 2020 (no joke 😊)

The channel became very active on a daily basis instead of just weekends in mid 2021 as our hymn videos were discovered and shared around the world! - “**It Only Takes a Spark**” recently overtook “I the Lord of Sea and Sky” for top spot with both over 5,500 views.

- “**Jesus Tempted in the Desert**”, the purple spike, is leaping into 4th place with over 900 views in the first weeks of Lent 2022!
- “**Draw the Circle Wide**”, our classic Erin action video a long time leader, is still hanging onto 5th place in the 1000 club.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL DAILY TOTALS APRIL 1, 2020 – MARCH 31, 2022



* Note that a view/click is counted by YouTube regardless if the video was watched in whole or in part which will explain why “watch time” above isn’t a direct multiplication of views by length of video.

We have had requests lately from across North America and the UK for permission to use our music in their services! We have 200 plus subscribers which is interesting since it is not necessary to “subscribe” to see our videos but it does indicate folks who wish to be notified the moment we upload new material.

One more graphic to show how busy the channel has been in 2022 averaging over 100 views per day between January 1st – March 31st. It is expected that this will drop as churches reopen and make their own music once again, but who knows?

YOUTUBE CHANNEL STATISTICS ON MAR 31, 2022

Your channel got 10,559 views in the last 90 days



(The squares at the bottom indicate the dates we uploaded a Sunday service which usually coincides with a spike)

Worship and Christian Education

TRANSITIONING WORSHIP AND CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS BACK TO STANDARD



After two years of lockdowns and closings, we are happy to be able to start getting things back to normal for Sunday mornings at BCUC! In March, the Government of Ontario lifted all COVID-related public health restrictions that have affected Worship services at BCUC

since 2020. Because pandemic restrictions and closings have been the norm since 2020, it will take a bit of time to bring Sunday mornings back to the sort of normal that we had pre-pandemic, but we are actively working to make the transition over the coming weeks.

As of this writing, BCUC, like other places of worship in the province, is free to use up to 100% of the normal capacity of our sanctuary and other rooms in the church building and is no longer required to actively screen those who enter the building, though we have posted signs at all exterior doors asking people not to enter the building if they have symptoms or are at high risk of transmitting COVID. For now, we also are still required to maintain a COVID safety plan that sets out what we are doing to minimize the risk that COVID transmission could occur in our building, and we are permitted (though not required) to make decisions as an organization to keep some restrictions such as facemasks and distancing as part of our plan as we move forward.

The Worship/Christian Education Committee and the BCUC Church Board have agreed that keeping facemasks on inside the church building and asking people to respect distancing measures will be an important part of protecting our congregation for at least the next few weeks. We will also encourage the use of hand sanitizer and ask individuals who plan to come into the building to self-screen using an on-line screening tool or the screening posters that now appear at each entry door to the church. Offering plates will not be passed during worship services but will be available on the table in the narthex for those who wish to drop in their financial offerings. Communion elements will not be passed in the pews but will be set out using disposable cups individually on the narthex table for each person to pick up and carry theirs into and out of the sanctuary. Hand sanitizer will be available and its use encouraged.

On Sunday mornings, we need a period of transition to get everything back to normal. During the pandemic, we have been projecting as part of our onsite service certain parts of the pre-recorded online YouTube video service, especially for music, children's time, scripture reading and some prayers and parts of the service that are lay-led by people who are not yet worshipping onsite. We hope to have increased onsite attendance again as time goes on and are beginning to add in more in-person lay leadership to our onsite services. Congregational singing and responses to prayer invitation are now encouraged once more (but still with masks on faces). Abe has begun rehearsing the Senior Choir again on Thursdays, and within the month we hope once again to have some live choir singing and less dependence on pre-recorded music. We are also experimenting with livestreaming and recording the livestream as a YouTube video. Once the wrinkles are ironed out of the livestreaming process, we plan to stop producing

the pre-recorded YouTube services each week and instead offer the livestream and a recorded version of it so that those who cannot attend the onsite service for whatever reason will have the option of viewing the worship service from home.

Children are of course always welcome at our BCUC worship services. Children over 2 years of age are required to be masked for now. To avoid germ sharing, we have removed the crayons, colouring pages and books for children from the narthex table for now, so parents are encouraged to bring a book or toy from home for young children who may get restless in the pews. The Nursery will be open for parents to take babies and small children to at need. However, for the next few weeks we will not have separate Sunday school programs for the children. It will take a few weeks for us to put in place a Sunday school teaching team and curriculum for Sunday school. We are planning for a special kick-off Family Picnic in late spring to make an exciting return to Sunday school activities for the children.

Finally, Sunday morning coffee/tea/juice hour has not yet returned to BCUC, but as the weather warms up and the virus (hopefully) continues to recede, we will soon once again be able to linger in the Main Hall, or possibly outdoors on the labyrinth, to chat and enjoy refreshments after the Sunday morning service. Looking forward to seeing you there! - Sue Morrison

The Seekers Group



SPRING GATHERING FOR SEEKERS

“Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented their Stories of the Savior – by Bart Ehrman”

After a year of hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Seekers Group is re-grouping in late spring this year for a study on Bart Ehrman’s book, ‘Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented their Stories of the Savior’. The book was published by HarperCollins in 2016 and is available in Amazon, Indigo and other bookstores. Participants are responsible for buying a copy of the book.

Amazon.com has this interesting summary of the book and the author:

“Throughout much of human history, our most important stories were passed down orally—including the stories about Jesus before they became written down in the Gospels. In this fascinating and deeply researched work, leading Bible scholar Bart D. Ehrman investigates the role oral history has played in the New Testament—how the telling of these stories not only spread Jesus’ message but helped shape it.

A master explainer of Christian history, texts, and traditions, Ehrman draws on a range of disciplines, including psychology and anthropology, to examine the role of memory in the creation of the Gospels. Explaining how oral tradition evolves based on the latest scientific

research, he demonstrates how the act of telling and retelling impacts the story, the storyteller, and the listener—crucial insights that challenge our typical historical understanding of the silent period between when Jesus lived and died and when his stories began to be written down.

As he did in his previous books on religious scholarship, debates on New Testament authorship, and the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, Ehrman combines his deep knowledge and meticulous scholarship in a compelling and eye-opening narrative that will change the way we read and think about these sacred texts.”

The group will meet onsite in the Main Hall for 5-6 consecutive Mondays at 2-4 pm commencing April 25th. If you are interested in joining the study group, please let Rev. Kim or the office know. Hope to see you there!

SUBMITTED BY: REV. KIM VIDAL

BCUC Spring Garage Sale 2022



SATURDAY MAY 7TH, FROM 9AM - 1PM



The plan is to open our doors to the community and celebrate spring with a return to our annual garage sale. We hope to offer the usual sales areas as in the past. These will include Plants, Baking, Books/CD's/DVD's/Movies/LP's/Puzzles, Linens, Women's & Children's Clothing, White Elephant, seasonal sporting goods, Children's Books & Toys plus household & garden furniture. There might even be spring rolls, thanks to Rev. Kim...

All this will depend on our gradual return to opening safely. We will proceed with caution. If you would like to be responsible for a sales area or help, please contact Bob & Ellen Boynton, 613-828-3820 or eboynton@rogers.com

Watch for details in coming weeks. We look forward to holding this community event which we have all missed over the past two years.

Refuge N.O.W. - March 2022



BRIDGET MCNEILL

Sadly, because of the war in Ukraine, and the sight of women and children leaving the country, who can be unaware of the desperate situations that impel people to leave their countries, and of the struggle to reach a safe destination.

Bells Corners United Church began sponsoring refugees when Project 4000 was created in 1979 by Marion Dewar, who was mayor of Ottawa at that time. The goal was to bring to Ottawa 4000 people who were fleeing the war in Vietnam in overloaded boats. BCUC sponsored a Vietnamese family in about 1980.

In the following years, the Government opened Canada's doors to refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and BCUC sponsored a family from Laos.

Then, in 1989, 32 years ago, Refuge N.O.W. was formed, and started sponsoring refugees. There are five churches involved: BCUC, Christ Church Anglican, St. Stephen's Anglican, Julian of Norwich and Knox United Church.

The cost of a sponsorship undertaken by Refuge N.O.W. is usually split between the Federal Government and Refuge N.O.W. Everything else connected with the sponsorship is Refuge N.O.W.'s responsibility: welcoming the family at the airport, finding housing and furnishing it; linking the family up with health services, government services and schools, and providing clothing, among other things. In general, the goal is for the new family to feel cared for as they adapt to a new and strange environment.

Refuge N.O.W. could not do any of these things without the support of our congregations.

Members of BCUC have an excellent record of responding to needs such as clothing, furniture, and other miscellaneous items, and the church has been generous in providing the necessary financial support.

Over the years you have helped families from: Cambodia, El Salvador, Albania, Iran, Somalia, Kosovo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Burma, Iraq, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

Thank you!

Ottawa West End Community Chaplaincy (OWECC)



DEPARTURE OF PART TIME CHAPLAIN

The Rev. Steve Zink, our part time chaplain for the past six years, is leaving us to become the full time minister at McPhail Baptist Church. It is with very mixed emotions that the Board and members of the neighbourhoods are bidding him farewell. Steve has become a trusted chaplain and a friend to many individuals including youth. We wish him well but will certainly miss him.

However, OWECC will not be without a chaplain. In fact, starting in April, two well qualified individuals will be serving OWECC for a few hours each week. Our own Rev. Lorrie Lowes and the Rev. Deacon Tamara Connors from Christ Church Bells Corners will be our new co-chaplains. We welcome them and look forward to new possibilities once the neighbourhoods are open for programs, study groups and pastoral care.

Many things have changed since OWECC's inception in 1984 but the heart of our mission remains the same.

“We seek to live an inclusive expression of community throughout the multicultural, multifaith neighbourhoods of West Ottawa. We serve by providing a ‘ministry of presence’ that accompanies people who live daily with the challenges of poverty, isolation, mental and physical health barriers, addictions and underemployment. We provide a compassionate outreach attentive to the needs and hopes of individuals and neighbourhood communities. Working together with people we desire to explore possibilities for empowering hope and more abundant living.”

I would like to take this opportunity to thank BCUC for their very generous support over the years in terms of finance and volunteer help. Right now, we are looking for Board members as we have recently lost four members due to ill health. Volunteers are always welcome. If anyone would like more information, please contact me at 613-270-4078 or better still come to our Annual General Meeting which will take place here at BCUC on April 24th at 2:00 p.m.

Peggy Aitchison
Chair of OWECC Board

The Fasting Experience



ANGELA STARCHUK

Fasting is defined as “abstaining from all or some kinds of food or drink”. Although our ancient ancestors may have fasted out of necessity, the practise takes a deep and personal meaning during modern times of food surplus and availability. It may be surprising to learn that when you see me, there is a good chance that I am mid-way through a fast, since this is a regular habit I have embraced for several years now. Although I am **not** an expert in history, nutrition, or religion, I will endeavour to share some information about this experience, some personal lessons and tips, and ultimately how it may enable a closer experience with God.

The ties of fasting to religious observances run deep: For example, fasting is mentioned over 70 times in scriptures, and the Islamic month of Ramadan requires absolute abstinence from dawn until sunset. The season of Lent is one of the most well-known Biblical references to fasting, when Jesus went 40 days in the desert without food before being tempted. Although it is unlikely Satan will make an appearance during your own fasting, it is a worthwhile endeavour just to experience how you deal with acute discomfort and temptation. Jesus felt this very human hunger as well and set the example for us to follow. The act of fasting therefore develops self-discipline, while every bodily protest or tempting thought is an excellent reminder to pray and rejoice!

Fasting - of all types - has scientifically proven health benefits. A simple internet search reveals a plethora of peer-reviewed studies demonstrating that fasting: 1. Decreases insulin resistance (promotes blood sugar control), 2. Aids in weight loss (limits calorie intake), and 3. Promotes overall health via improving sleep quality (energy is diverted towards cellular repair rather than digesting), among many. I have experienced these benefits personally, which factor into continued regular fasting as part of my health routine. That said, although the anxiety associated with the prospect of fasting is often self-induced (the body is capable of many amazing things), I recommend that everyone with medical

conditions always consult with a doctor before undergoing a strict fast, and/or implementing a long-term fasting regime.

So, ready to try? There are many different types of fasts, and ways to tailor the experience for individual needs and limitations. The two main variables include the timing and what is 'allowed' during the fast. For example, Intermittent Fasting (IF) involves reducing the time window during which calories are consumed. The most common IF schedule divides a 24-hour period between 18 hours designated 'no food', and 6 hours for eating one's daily caloric requirements. IF is a great way to ease into fasting, as it usually practically involves skipping one meal per day. If/once IF is easy, consider trying a full 24h fast, as I did. Regardless of length, if done properly, consuming enough slow digesting nutrients (e.g., a large high-protein, high-fat, and low-carb meal) results in the feeling of hunger being delayed until soon before the fast is ending. A common side-effect of fasting is a feeling of heightened focus and concentration after the hunger signals deplete. This state can be leveraged during the period of the day where productivity is already at its maximum.

In terms of what is 'allowed', it is generally accepted that most benefits are obtained so long as one does not consume anything that would otherwise cause an increase in blood sugar. Absolute fasting would not permit anything to enter the mouth, however I personally drink lots of water, as well as a cup of black tea/coffee (no milk or tea that contains sweeteners) as an appetite-suppressant. Sugar-free fibre supplements (e.g., Metamucil) are also a great way to trick the body into feeling full, although it does contribute a few calories. One tip to making a successful fast is to leverage your time asleep. I highly recommend starting a fast before noon; this way, one spends their hungriest hours sleeping, as well as combining the benefits of less distraction and improved healing.

The first tastes of food and drink after fasting are exquisite. For that reason, if one wishes to try fasting, consider specifically planning an opportunity where Communion will break the fast. For me, this is a perfect example where science and religion are complementary. Not only are there health benefits, but the fasting journey invites one to deny themselves while deepening their relationship with God. I find the experience of healthy hunger before eating at Christ's table heightens its spiritual meaning and satisfaction. Fasting truly gives new meaning to the Bread and Cup **of Life!**

For all of these aforementioned reasons, I highly recommend everyone try fasting at least once, if able. I would love to encourage your journey and hear about your own experiences.

****Please note that "Fasting" is not suggested or recommended for certain medical conditions and you are advised to consult your physician before starting a Fast. This information is not intended to be medical advice****

Property Management



ROSS BROWN

Since our last newsletter, much has happened in and around our building. During the shut-down, the nursery school operated sporadically and our regular renters were unable to operate due to the restrictions so there was a significant loss of rental income but this was partially offset with lower cleaning and utility costs. Many renters are now starting to return but unfortunately, the Monday Friendship Club has decided to cease operations.

Property Management activities can be divided into planned and unplanned events. For planned events, the most notable is the construction of the portico under the supervision of Rory Gardner, Ron Chuchryk and Bob Wright. It was completed in record time given the general shortage of labour and materials. In order to complete the renovation of the entrance, Property Management had the grading improved and the asphalt in front of the door replaced with interlocking stones. The same contractor repaired the north doorsteps which were slowly sinking. In addition, the original Formica countertop in the Ladies Washroom was showing water damage and its age so with the financial assistance of the UCW, the countertop, sinks and taps were replaced.

Thanks to the efforts of Larry Ryan and Jeff Stoate, the burned out lights in the Sanctuary were replaced. After the problem with the furnace that heats the CE Wing and the lack of responsibility shown by the manufacturer and original installer, we contracted to have the heat exchanger replaced and the furnace has operated without problem during the last winter.

As a result of the shutdown and gradual reopening, we now have a much better idea of the cleaning services that we require. Rather than having the cleaners coming five nights a week, they are now only coming two nights for longer periods [Monday and Thursday] and this has resulted in a significant reduction in the costs and the services we receive now more closely match our needs.

During the construction on Moodie Drive, we were able to come to an agreement with the contractor that was mutually beneficial. In return for letting them use part of our parking lot, they agreed to patch a few of our potholes with their excess asphalt. There is, however, much more that needs to be done.

In the unplanned events category, we discovered that our main sewer line was blocked. Mr. Rooter was able to clear the blockage but further work may be needed to prevent a recurrence.

As a result of the unfortunate incident where a lady was struck by a car in the middle of the night at the corner of Moodie Drive and Old Richmond Road, we were contacted by the police about any information we might be able to supply. A review of our video camera records provided the police with some information that they said was useful.

The snowplow operator for the neighbouring condo has damaged our fence near Moodie Drive and this will be fixed as soon as the weather permits.

Two Years in the Life of BCUC in Pandemic Times



ELLEN BOYNTON

Mid March 2020 onsite worship services were stopped and so began the move to online worship being provided on the BCUC website via YouTube, thanks to our tech savvy team of Kim, Lorrie, Abe and Connie Davidson. Over the next several months work was done to enable a safe return to onsite services. By September, with our summer student Victoria's Ogden's work, supported by Ross Brown and a sub committee, a plan was put in place for a limited number of people who registered ahead of time to safely return to church for Sunday worship. A seating plan was made, pews were numbered, out of bounds pews roped off and people were ushered to assigned pews. Names and telephone numbers of attendees were carefully recorded for contact tracing and people were asked questions about their health as they arrived. This continued until December 24 when rising numbers forced closure until February 2021. Services onsite resumed again only until April 4 when the next shutdown was required. This time we opened July 11 and lasted six months until December 12 when Omicron variant forced

closure. Mid February 2022 onsite services returned and by then no pre-registration, ropes were gone, numbers had been removed from pews, no seating plan was needed, worshippers chose a pew marked with green tape for distancing and there was no more contact tracing listing. People were to check for symptoms before attending, masking was imperative and social distancing maintained but we chose to not require proof of vaccination. Bells Corners Cooperative Nursery School was able to safely hold classes from September on and have continued with strict rules of operation as they have been able. Through this time Sue Morrison chaired a Worship Commission whose mandate was to provide a monthly report to the Church Board with recommendations for the following month.

Of course, there have been changes to our regular activities. Friendship Club did not meet for the two years and have now decided to close, sadly for community seniors who have for 50 years enjoyed a Monday lunch, fellowship and entertainment. Another long time renter, Roman Nasirov, who held martial arts classes in the gym, retired and is no longer with us. But we have Tai Chi and Strive, another martial arts group who are onsite several times each week. The Ottawa Carleton Choristers has been rehearsing in the Sanctuary on a weekly basis for much of the time since last fall and have held a couple small concerts as well. Two violin teachers hold weekly classes and recitals and other music teachers rent the Sanctuary for recitals on a regular basis. Brownies and Scouts use the building each week as well as AA on Mondays. And monthly we welcome Eastern Star, CFUW and two sessions of Victoria's Quilts. On a weekly basis, over these past several months, a Muslim friend, Izzy and his family and friends enjoy using the Main Hall and gym for a social time on Saturday evenings.

This is all in addition to our own activities which have been at a minimum, but we hope to see resuming as soon as possible. This gives you some idea of the past two years and a current update.

May it be worthy of documenting because it has been a unique time in our history and will hopefully not be repeated!



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