

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 1 of 10

### AT CROSS PURPOSES

Eastering is a verb denoting the practice of the deep hope of Easter centred on the cross. Stories of Eastering in our community: money in the Oxford Legacy Fund; excitement as Five Oaks gears up to welcome the foreign temporary farm workers; patient layering of the Light of transformation; pivoting to online camp or Activity Bags and gracious thanks from Camp Tanner, Operation Sharing, Five Oaks and Oxford's Refugee Support Committee.

There is no more important time to be church as climate warming and the COVID-19 pandemic overloads us in our multi-tasking world where individual salvation seems a priority.

We need stories to expand our imagination to include others' salvation. **There is money in the Legacy Fund to encourage networking between pastoral charges.** For example, sharing our stories and passion with each other we can bring to fruition programs whose time has come: guaranteed livable income and strong climate policy. But when we can't find the 'right' words, may we, like the honey bees (who have no language), dance our way forward. See **For Children of All Ages** about Honey Bees.

Happy Earth Day,

Marg Murray co-editor



What did the cow say to the calf?



It is pasture bedtime.



### FOOD FOR THE SOUL

#### The Peace of Christ – part 4

The first word from Jesus to the locked down disciples, after the resurrection, **according to John's gospel was "Peace"**. Then, showing his disciples his wounds, Jesus said "As the father has sent me so I send you." **With the one word, "Peace" Jesus erased the guilt.** There was no need to dwell on personal failures, or thoughts of "If only I had said this or done that." **That was the past. It was over.** It was "Christ has risen. **Christ has risen in us.** Our mission is to represent the risen Christ in the world."

That first statement of faith "Jesus is Lord" flew in the face of the political statement at the time, "Caesar is Lord." **To say, "Jesus is Lord," amounted to treason. Death squads were enlisted to stamp out this new movement.** These followers of "The Way" were tracked, traced, arrested, put in prison, crucified or stoned to death. Some were thrown into arenas with wild animals or armed gladiators to be killed.

As we know, **a Roman citizen by the name of Saul was a member of one of these death squads.** When a follower by the name of Stephen was killed by stoning **Saul was so touched by Stephen's courage and love that Saul was converted.** Paul, his new name, spent the rest of his life working for the cause, in and out of prison, until he was finally executed by the state.

Paul was without malice, though admitting they were being "killed all the day long." (Romans 8:22) Paul suggests that if they did feel like heaping burning coals on the heads of their persecutors, just be kind to them. "When your enemy is hungry, feed

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 2 of 10

him and when he is thirsty, give him a drink". (Romans 12:20-21) Paul was a strong believer that evil would be overcome by good. It was the only path to lasting peace. The persecutions lasted for two hundred years and the number of followers increased slowly. **By the year 300, an estimated 10% of the population (6 million) were followers of "the Way."**

Then a strange thing happened. Constantine, a follower of the official Roman Sun god, Sol Invictus, was about to fight a rival candidate for the position of Emperor. He had long admired the courage of Christians. **Before the battle he decided to paint crosses on his soldiers' shields.** When he won the battle, he was convinced that this new God was now his God.

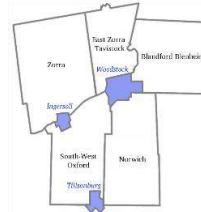
In the year 313 Constantine passed the Edict of Milan, giving freedom of worship throughout the Empire. He gave his palace in Rome to the bishop of Rome and built a cathedral. For the first time churches, with the support of the Empire, began to be built. **The church had won, or had it?** The Empire had finally embraced the church, but the church had just embraced the Empire. What was gained? What was lost? **What would be the future of this non-violent path to peace?**

To be continued. . .

Peace. Glen Wright. Co-editor



**Look for the 6 Honey Bees in our pages!**



## **COMINGS AND GOINGS AROUND OXFORD...**

### **CONGREGATIONS**

#### **SEEKING MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP:**

*Each community of faith has a unique journey of faith as they live out God's mission. We especially hold those seeking ministerial leadership in our hearts and prayers as they discern their journey.*

Avondale UC (Tillsonburg) with Otterville UC; Hickson UC; Norwich UC; Princeton-Etonia Pastoral Charge; Beachville (Sweaburg - West Oxford) Pastoral Charge; Foldens UC; Burgessville UC.



**T**hank you for your continued support.

We hope to be able to open for summer 2022. **Until then, keep watching our social media for some fun posts and activities over the summer. [Facebook page](#) and [website](#).** Keep safe, and continue to keep the camp spirit alive, **July 10 -BOOTLE DRIVE** details later.

Grrrruff & The Camp Tanner Board



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# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 3 of 10

### FOR CHILDREN of all ages

(FCoaa)

#### Honey Bees



The honey bee begins life when the Queen bee lays a tiny white egg in a six-sided bee-sized cell made of bees wax. In just three days the egg hatches into a tiny worm or larva. The larva turns into a pupa which looks **like a worm in a onesie**. How cool is that? The pupa becomes an adult bee. From egg to adult takes just three weeks. Wow! **How would you like to grow to be an adult in three weeks?**

Adult worker bees can be larva moms, who feed the larva; cleaners, to keep the hive clean; guards, who keep the hive safe; air conditioners, who keep the hive cool in summer; and pollen and nectar gatherers. Next comes flight school where they learn where to find flowers. From pollen and nectar from flowers bees make honey.

**Bees can't talk, so they dance.** Bees wiggle their bodies and stamp their feet to tell other bees where the flowers are. We have a dance that tells a story. Do you know what it is? The name starts with "b".

After flight school the bees go to collect pollen and nectar. ([Short CBC video](#))

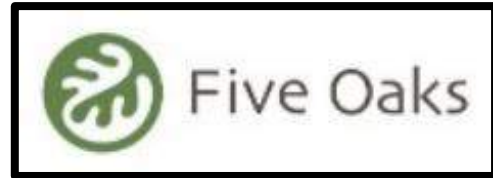
Bees need flowers to make honey, but the flowers need bees to make seeds and fruit.

**So, next time you eat an apple or crunch down on a dill pickle, thank a bee. Better than that, do a little dance.**

You can call it the "Honey Bee". If you think that is a silly name for a dance, ask your grandma if she ever danced the "Mashed Potato". Maybe she will show you how.

**Now isn't that awesome?** (ITA)

**Next month - Butterflies.** Email your butterfly drawing to [oxfconnections@execulink.com](mailto:oxfconnections@execulink.com) by May 7.



**Check out their [webpage](#) for current programs and possibilities**

**T**hank you so much to all those who have donated goods and financial gifts to help us in welcoming the foreign temporary farm workers here at Five Oaks for their quarantine stay. We are all a piece of the puzzle that helps support our region's food economy and security. We have now received about all the donations we require to make our guests comfortable.

**T**hank you St Paul's United in Paris, Knox United, Trinity United in Beamsville, Bethel Stone Church in Paris, Faith Lutheran Church Sewing Group in Brantford, St John's Anglican in Elora, and the many other organizations and individuals who banded together to help us with this initiative.



#### ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Sunday, May 30  
at 2:00 pm.  
Probably on-line.

#### **S**TILL NEEDED:

Contributions to Welcome Bags offered to each guest who arrives for their 14-day isolation full of toiletries, snacks etc.

##### **Full Size:**

Body wash	New socks
Shampoo	Work gloves
Deodorant	Lotion
Shaving cream	Sunscreen
Disposable razors	

If you would like to donate any of these items, please contact Five Oaks at 519-442-3212, [hospitality@fiveoaks.on.ca](mailto:hospitality@fiveoaks.on.ca)

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 4 of 10

### What use, what value, is one prayer, one hopeful act, one Christian? What use am I?

One grain of sand hugged by a shellfish in the ocean can become a pearl! Of course, **it takes time**; the oyster slowly layers that grain with the bodily substance that is also the lining of the shell. **Layer by layer a pearl is born.**

So, one of us, embraced by God's love, begins ever so slowly to reflect the Light, layer by layer, and becomes as precious as a pearl. If we try to hurry the process, we may become imitation pearls, imitation Christians, brittle and empty. Outside we may resemble the real thing, but the quality of our inner lives will show the difference.

**Instant holiness does not exist.** It takes time for April Showers to make spring flowers; it takes patience and openness to change for you or for me to begin to mirror the Light.

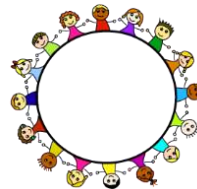
Look for peace; in your daily prayers try to quietly surrender to God who surrounds you and slowly transforms you. **Deliberately make room for silent prayer, meditation, prayerful kindness that is active prayer.**

**Allow God to lovingly transform your spirit into a 'pearl of great price.'**

Olga McKellar



### PRAYER CHAIN



Please contact Prayer Chain Leader [Olga McKellar](#) for on-going prayer concerns.

### Guaranteed Livable Income



**"The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized our interconnectedness to one another across this country.** As a church we seek to care for and uplift human dignity and spirit from birth through death." **Moderator Richard Bott**

**Lois Wilson**, former senator and the first female moderator of the United Church: "The federal government has been very good at supporting people in all sorts of ways through CERB [the Canada Emergency Response Benefit] ... but they're not permanent.... **They've got all the building blocks in place. Just put them all together and make this a permanent policy for across Canada and link it to the tax roll.**"

**Now is the time. Write your MP to support a Guaranteed Livable Income.**

### CONNECTIONS

has a website:

[oxfordunitedministries.ca](https://oxfordunitedministries.ca)

### PRAYER CYCLES

- **Oxford United Churches Dec. 2020**  
<https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-Prayer-Cycle-for-UCC>
- **Antler River Watershed**  
<https://www.prayercycles.ca/antlerriverwatershed>



# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 5 of 10

### OXFORD LEGACY FUND: Submit your requests!!

The Committee would like to be as fluid as possible in offering funding and will **accept requests at any time** (no set deadlines) for funding of up to \$1,000 for any one request with a total maximum funding per year of \$10,000 for these requests.

**The committee has established guidelines for applications for the work of Clusters/Networks.**

- To support the publication of Oxford Connections, the monthly newsletter produced by Marg Murray and Glen Wright - e.g. online site, licensing
- To support the Friends of Oxford gatherings - e.g. guest speakers' expenses
- To support projects/special events of Clusters/Networks (a minimum of 3 pastoral charges)

**Please submit requests - outlining the plans, costs etc. - to Lynne Dunlop [lynndunl@execulink.com](mailto:lynndunl@execulink.com)**

### **WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO DATE**

A committee of four - Lori Minler, Lloyd Bennett, Celia Orth and Lynne Dunlop (current chair) - was appointed by ARWRC in November 2019.

This committee approved funding of \$4,000 to Christina Crawford and \$2,000 to Nancy Vandenberghe (pro-rated for 1 semester) for 2019 studies as candidates for ministry.

The committee approved funding of \$1482 to Nancy Vandenberghe for 2020 studies as a candidate for ministry.

**Requests for Financial Support of Candidates for Ministry: please submit requests to Lynne Dunlop [lynndunl@execulink.com](mailto:lynndunl@execulink.com)**

### **THE HISTORY OF THIS FUND:**

One of the final decisions made by Oxford Presbytery in November 2018 was to **create a Legacy Fund** with half of the remaining financial assets as of the closing of presbyteries on Dec. 31, 2018. After all financial obligations were met, **this Fund received approximately \$55,000, held now in trust by ARWRC.**

(Note: the use of the word Oxford or the phrase Oxford County is understood to include the boundaries of the former Oxford Presbytery 2018.)

### **PURPOSE OF FUND**

1. to promote the work of clusters and networks that include Oxford United Church communities of faith.
2. to provide financial support to candidates for ministry who are connected to Oxford United Church communities of faith.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF FUND**

That up to one-half of the original fund be allocated for financial support for Candidates for Ministry who are currently connected to Oxford.

That at least one-half of the original fund be allocated for the work of clusters/networks linked with Oxford.

That Antler River Watershed Regional Council appoint a Committee comprised of 4 people from Oxford ideally: 2 ministry personnel and 2 lay reps to the Antler River Watershed Regional Council and representing both north of Hwy 401 and south of Hwy 401.

That this Committee's work would be in effect from Jan. 2019 to Dec. 2021 with an option in 2021 to request that the Regional Council extend the mandate of the committee by one year to Dec. 2022. **Any**

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 6 of 10

monies remaining at the end of the mandate of the Committee are to be turned over to the Regional Council as unrestricted funds.

Submit your requests from the Oxford Legacy Fund  
to Lynne Dunlop,  
lynndunl@execulink.com

### **GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE FUND**

1. Clusters/Networks (at least half of the original total of the fund)

**That grants be available to clusters/networks for proposals that would further the faithful work of clusters or networks that would include as part of their makeup Oxford communities of faith with a further requirement that these clusters/networks would include a minimum of 3 pastoral charges.**

2. Financial Support for Candidates for Ministry (up to half of the original total of the fund)

- That up to \$4000 per calendar year be available to each full-time student enrolled in a ministry pathway. That a pro-rated amount be available each calendar year for part-time students enrolled in a ministry pathway.



## **FOR THE LOVE OF CREATION**

**EARTH SUNDAY April 18**  
**Creation Care as Self Care** a contemplative gathering with music, prayer and meditation at 4:00 pm. Nourish your spirit in community. Register [here](#).

**EARTH DAY, April 22** the theme is Restore our Earth. Public witness day starts at 12:00 pm.

Parallel to the Biden Administration's global climate summit, **EARTHDAY.ORG** will have its second Earth Day Live digital event, right here. The global show begins at 12 PM Eastern Time.

Workshops, panel discussions, and special performances will focus on Restore Our Earth™ — we'll cover natural processes, emerging green technologies, and innovative thinking that can restore the world's ecosystems. Go to [here](#).

**A campaign until October 4, 2021 to restore our earth – not alone but together with others.** [Register as an organizer For the Love of Creation's faith-in-action campaign](#), to mobilize people of faith across Canada.

### **We each need to do our part to reduce Green House Gas emissions**

- see March CONNECTIONS
- convincingly support clean energy policies and increased climate ambition targets at all levels of government.
- Most importantly, we need to talk to each other about climate change. Canadian climate scientist, Katherine Hayhoe, says we should talk about our shared values (being a grandmother, a neighbour, a Christian) and connect the dots to climate in this [TED video](#).

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021 Page 7 of 10

### Our multi-tasking world

*"Woe to those who join house to house,  
they add field to field, till there is  
no place where they may dwell alone, in  
the midst of the land." Isaiah 5:8 King James*

My God

My blessed wholeness

My purely Alone One; my essence

Abide in my every moment to  
moment existence.

Awareness itself – the Alone One –  
enveloping the space and time

The incessant change and activity,  
like the Womb enveloping the  
unborn child.

The pure Presence of God of 'Being' in our  
pure dignity standing

alone in the midst of the land;  
in the midst of every activity of my  
life.

May your pure Divine Presence envelop  
me.

Let that be my life – both together in  
awareness – the envelope and the  
letter; the Alone One and the land;

Vertical and Horizontal –

the breadth and depth; the  
silent, non-changing depths of  
Mind,

along with the surface, changing,  
active levels of mind.

Alone One – You are that which brings  
dignity to existence,

Save me from adding house to  
house, field to field

Activity to activity,

Until life is so full of content,

That Your enveloping Presence  
recedes from conscious awareness –

Like a tree cut at its root.

If we are to become 'trees of  
righteousness planted beside streams of  
water'

Save us from severing ourselves  
from our very Source;

Save us from a multi-tasking life  
without the silent depths of 'essence.'

The Alone One – the Pure Presence of God

Enveloping our active life,

So in your Pure Presence, may

every 'now' be raised to sublime dignity

- A truly listening heart as a child  
tells you her story.

- A smile, a word of consolation

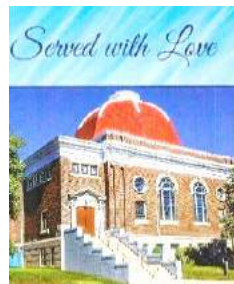
- The sweeping of a floor,

- The peeling of a potato.

Not just another job done.

In the busy-ness of our lives of adding  
house to house and field to field,  
may we always make space to be alone  
with 'Pure Essence.'

**John Schell of Eastwood UC. Prayer  
meditation on Isaiah 5:8** written as the  
church was discerning their future,  
February 2016



### St. Paul's United Church

88 Bidwell Street, Tillsonburg

**Saturday Community Kitchen  
meals continue from 11:30  
a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Hot meal will be provided.  
Served in containers to go from  
the parking lot

at the bottom of the ramp to St. Paul's church. No  
seats and no washrooms available. Two entrances to  
parking lot off Bidwell Street.

**Our email address is:**

**oxfconnections@execulink.com**

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021 Page 8 of 10

### Screen-free Wondercamp at Innerkip United Church



Wondercamp and Wondernight are 2 programs which Innerkip United church, near Woodstock, has run for several years, to reach out to young families in our community.

Neither program has been possible over the last year SO time to pivot!

At a time when children 4 to 12 are being encouraged to spend the bulk of their day in front of a screen it was decided to **put together a screen free Wondercamp activity bag for the Spring Break.**

In less than 24 hours the 50 spots were filled. Under the guidance of Office Administrator, Mel Bombini, who has a background in scout and guides, the bags had many great ideas.

**Each bag included activities to keep the 'campers' busy and get them outside and give back.**

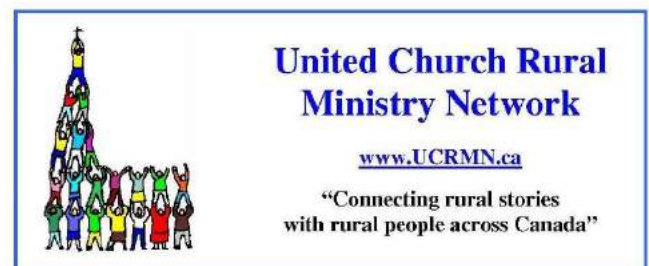
God eyes, a card to decorate and send to someone who needed encouragement, Patience Pet ( like the Chia Pet), bean bag making, kite kit, Sunflower seeds in a hand decorated envelope to be given to another person, making butterflies out of egg cartons and over 15 activities all together. The kits also included a rock and magnet to decorate and place around the outside of the church. **Our Music Director made a booklet of songs that the children would be**

**familiar with.** Each activity was accompanied by a **scripture verse and instructions, thanks to the guidance of Pastor Karen Willis.**

One of the most amazing aspects of the excellent teamwork required to organize and bring this community outreach to fruition is the fact all staff have been hired in the last year. **Except for Zoom calls staff have not met face to face.** Minister Karen Willis joined us at the end of November and is still getting to know the members of the church and Innerkip.

During these different times it is great to be **"The little church that makes a difference in the community and beyond."**

*Submitted by Sue Hilborn, Innerkip U.C.*



A reminder to check out this website <https://ucrmn.ca> recent workshop videos: **Ashes & Resurrection: How Covid days are Shaping us for Newness and Practical Technology for Rural Churches.** To subscribe to their eNews, email [editor@UCRMN.ca](mailto:editor@UCRMN.ca).





# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 9 of 10



Hotlinks are:

[Website](#)  
[Facebook Page](#)

'It has been a challenging year for Operation Sharing, particularly due to COVID-19' reported the President, Marilyn Schmiedl in their Spring newsletter 'Helping in Unity' (available here <https://tinyurl.com/3h4fnpz2>). Even though the Annual Meeting has been cancelled, the Annual Report will be available for our May CONNECTIONS. **Schmiedl writes a gracious thankyou:**

"...offer my thanks to our staff, volunteers, board members and all the countless other people involved in the organization for helping weather the storm....

**"A special thanks to the churches, businesses, organizations and individuals who continue to support Operation Sharing. The people of Oxford County have been a great support ...this year, there has been even more support for Operation Sharing," she said.**

### **Woodstock: Bullwinkle's Eatery and Hospitality Training Centre**

College Avenue UC. Takeout lunches available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (from noon to 1 pm).

### **Oxford County:**

**Food for Friends** Please support this program with 25 cents each time you shop at supporting grocery stores in Woodstock and Ingersoll.

**Two ways to donate:** webpage [here](#) or mail Treasurer of Operation Sharing, P.O. Box 20081, Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 8X8.



**A homeless shelter,** serving all of Oxford County at Old St.

Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock. Free of charge for those 16 and up.

## **OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)**

### **To the congregations of the United Churches of Oxford County**

The members of the Oxford United Refugee Support committee are pleased to inform you that our fundraising goal has



been met. We are grateful to St David's church for receiving the donations and issuing receipts. St David's and the OURS committee would like you to know that **fundraising for this cause is discontinued at this time.** Our work

continues as we await government approval of the sponsorship applications in progress

**T**hank you to all who contributed funds. We will keep you informed of our progress and pray that there will soon be good news.

*With Gratitude, Marjorie Martin,  
Chairperson of the OURS Committee*

## **STORY TELLERS OR POETS**

**Creation is all inclusive and interconnected:** you, me, the youngsters next door, the honey bees, the trees - all the biodiversity of our living earth.

As we care for each other we also must care for creation. **We need stories which expand our imagination.** Stories to help us move toward each other, to help us navigate our differences, to deepen our friendships and our capacity to disagree, to help us be truly alive.

**Please share your stories about you, about your community of faith, about caring for creation.**

**CONNECTIONS will publish stories or poems. It will help our imagination.**

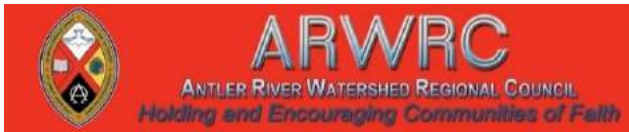
# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 3 Issue 4

April 14, 2021

Page 10 of 10



[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

Most recent newsletter March 29 2021 describes the following:

### Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Events

**Hon. Murray Sinclair**, Friday, May 28 at 1:30 pm (EDT) [Go to Registration form](#)

**Virtual Tour of former Mohawk**

**Institute Residential School.** Limited to 40., Tuesday, April 13 at 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm (EDT), Tuesday, April 20 at 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm (EDT) [Go to Registration form](#).

**UCC, Residential Schools and TRC 101**

Thursday, April 29 at 10:30 am - 12:00 pm (EDT), Wednesday, May 5 at 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm (EDT) [Go to Registration form](#)

**Kairos Virtual Blanket Exercise,**

Limited to 35 participants. Monday, May 3 at 9:30 am - 12:00 pm (EDT), Monday, May 3 at 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm (EDT)

[Go to Registration form](#).

**Regional Council Spring Meeting -**

**ONLINE** Thursday, June 10 to Saturday, June 12

**Thérèse M Samuel is the newly appointed Minister, Right Relations and Social Justice.** Go to her [message here](#):



**The Social and Ecological Justice Network of the Antler River Watershed Region connects people who are passionate about**

**social justice concerns.** Their website, <https://arwsej.ca>, is a valuable resource of the members' interest in Climate Justice/Crisis, Poverty, Boomer Spirituality, Middle East Justice, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, United Church Women, Right Relations and Mozambique. Also includes extensive resources for local Outreach projects and community groups.

## Worship Services in Oxford

Because of Covid, streaming services only are available at present. Check the following re specifics:

[College Ave UC](#)

[Dundas St. UC](#)

**Hebron UC** - [rsstock@execulink.com](mailto:rsstock@execulink.com)

**Innerkip UC**

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLByPBZsncJI4bIMphIVVbRuBZX86mcoj>

[Kintore/Brooksedale UC](#)

[Knox UC, Embro](#)

[Mt Elgin UC](#)

[Norwich UC](#)

[Peace UC, Plattsville](#) Also on Rogers TV channel 20

[St. David's UC, Woodstock](#)

[St. Paul's UC, Tillsonburg](#)

[Trinity UC, Ingersoll](#)

[Westminster UC, Thamesford](#)

**Willis UC, Drumbo** Sunday services by conference call. [drumbocharge@hotmail.com](mailto:drumbocharge@hotmail.com)

## CONNECTIONS – News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

**Next Publication: Wednesday,**  
May 12, 2021

**SUBMISSIONS DUE:**

Noon Friday May 7, 2021

**CO-EDITORS:**

Marg Murray and Glen Wright

**To add or remove names, email**

[oxfconnections@execulink.com](mailto:oxfconnections@execulink.com)

Submissions and feedback welcome.

**CONNECTIONS  
has a website:  
[oxfordunitedministries.ca](http://oxfordunitedministries.ca)**

