

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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### BEFRIENDING EACH OTHER AND THE EARTH WITH INTEGRITY

Small things linked together can make significant change. We are learning from our own history to examine our actions in light of God's love for all of us and for creation. Our stories this month challenge us to act with intentional integrity.

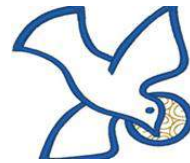
**OUR CONTEXT** (pg 2) of our Communities of Faith – welcome Janice Pow to Norwich UC as she holds the light of Christ in Norwich; save the date for Camp Tanner AGM; Trinity UC begins the process to bring an Iraqi family of 5; Operation Sharing requests our assistance.

**JESUS' WAY** (pg 6) contains the exciting return of the Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington to preach and teach 2 sessions on Ecotheology, history about the indigenous peoples and residential schools, the crisis in long term care homes, homelessness in Oxford with action possibilities which we can all take.

**GOD'S LOVE** (pg 8) for all is grounded in prayer for each other challenging us to befriend each other and the earth with integrity; helping us to laugh; and to listen, talk and learn from others as at Grandma's House at University of Guelph.



Marg Murray co-editor



### FOOD FOR THE SOUL

#### Events of hope

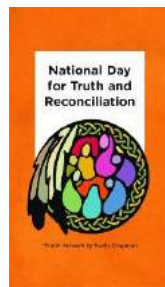
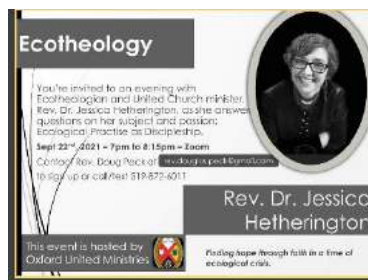
There were **two events in late September that were occasions for celebration**: one was the Rev. Doug Peck's interview with the Rev. Dr. Jessica Heatherington on Ecotheology, held on September 22 and seen by a number of you on zoom ([see video here](#)). The other was the First National day for Truth and Reconciliation September. 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Ecotheology is about caring for the earth.** At least it will enrich our lives; at best it will save our planet. The interview touched on our relationship with creation. I found it life giving and hopeful. The good news is there are more events with Professor Heatherington to come (see page 6).

The **Day for Truth and Reconciliation was a day of orange shirts and storytelling, a day of pain and hope.**

**We have our own stories in the United Church.** The Rev. Egerton Ryerson's passion was education. He promoted it, established countless schools in Ontario including Victoria University. **He has become infamous, however, for being one of the architects of the Residential School system.** He said of the Indigenous People, "We need to civilize them and Christianize them and get them to give up their old ways."

**Civility with Indigenous people was not exactly our strength. Europeans had come to North America with enough viruses to wipe out about 90% of the Indigenous population.** Europeans had taken their land, their livelihood, and their language. They had brought with them their racism that was a factor in the loss of life of approximately



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6000 children, and in our day, the 5000 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. That's very uncivil behaviour and it is ours.

Another passion of Ryerson's was to evangelize. **It took the church until 1966 to pass a motion to listen and learn from those of other denominations and religions because God could speak through others as well.** While evangelism was not forgotten, dialogue was now the approach. For the Indigenous people it was just a hundred years too late.

**Indigenous people had and have much to teach us.** Indigenous people believed that **you could not own the earth.** It belonged to the Creator. Owning a piece of the earth was like owning a piece of the sky. It couldn't be done. Indigenous people believed that they were part of creation. It gave them life. It was their mother earth. They had been good stewards of the earth for at least ten thousand years.

So, we are into October a month of thanksgiving. The two September events are still fresh in my mind. There are the gentle words of Jessica Heatherington about our relationship with creation and the words of Egerton Ryerson. "We need to civilize them, Christianize them, and get them to give up their old ways." **I hear these words again and realize that the "them" is not the Indigenous people, as Ryerson intended, but us. Whether we are speaking of climate change or our treatment of Indigenous people, the cartoon character Pogo was right after all, "We have met the enemy and he is us."**

With Peace, Hope, Truth and Reconciliation.

Glen Wright, Co-editor



*This 3-fold pattern of the theology of the cross (Our Context, Jesus' Way, God's Love) is adapted from work of Oxford native, the Rev. Dr. Douglas John Hall. Our recent federal election heard concerns of the economics of climate change and a just transition, child and health care and gun control even as the pandemic continued. We seek integrity between our personal and corporate actions as Christians.*

## OUR CONTEXT



### COMINGS AND GOINGS AROUND OXFORD

#### CONGREGATIONS SEEKING MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP:

*We hold in our hearts and prayers these communities of faith as they journey to live out God's mission.*

- **Avondale UC** (Tillsonburg) and Otterville UC continue to interview candidates.
- **Hickson UC** – no update.
- **Beachville (Sweaburg)** - West Oxford Pastoral Charge completed their profiles and are setting up a Search Team.
- **Foldens UC** to worship with Sweaburg – West Oxford.
- **Burgessville UC.** No update



**Facebook page and website.**

**The Annual General Meeting is Wednesday, November 24 at 7:30 pm. This will be held virtually. E-mail [camptanner@gmail.com](mailto:camptanner@gmail.com) for the Google Meet link.**

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### JANICE POW, DLM, NEW MINISTER AT NORWICH UC

A warm welcome from Oxford to Janice.



In late November 2017, I began my journey as a Designated Lay Minister Candidate at KTV United Church (Kelvin, Teeterville, Vanessa) in Horseshoe Falls Region. This past

spring, I celebrated my convocation at St. Andrews College through zoom. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, **my recognition service with the Horseshoe Falls Region was postponed till October.** I will admit that I am a bit startled how emotional I am feeling as with great anticipation the day of the service draws closer.

**I am excited for the opportunity to serve Norwich United Church in Antler River Watershed Region.** Even with KTV United Church and Norwich UC being in different regions, it is a natural fit for a sharing ministry. In Canada we measure distance by travel time and the churches are only fifteen minutes from each other. **Sunday mornings as I make the drive between the two churches, I haven't yet felt the earth move as I drive over the regional line on the map.**

I believe faith formation is a vital part of growth for any congregation and the community. **The purpose of Christian education and faith formation is not indoctrination but rather to empower people of all ages.** In part, the purpose of Christian education is to assist in understanding and to develop the opportunity to embrace our gifts and to grow into all God created us to be. I hope to share that Christianity is a rich faith, with room for doubt, questions, and the understanding that there are no easy answers.

**I believe we need to open our doors for the purpose of entering into the community, not waiting for the community to come to us.** It is when we listen with an open heart the community will share their needs on their terms. **It is imperative we respect the voices of others and hold them in God's love.**

At this point, I see my role as serving the community. Holding the light of Christ on the dark places.

To hold hands and pray,

to hold hands and weep,

to hold hands and laugh, cheer and share God's love.



**Current programs and possibilities are on their [webpage](#).**

A sacred place for peoples of all faiths as well as spiritual seekers to gather in community to live, work, learn, pray, play, heal and act for justice.

Thursdays until Nov 25, 2-4 pm.

**Seniors walk and talk** register [here](#). Free

**Meet Tanya Dyck Steinmann**, Five Oaks' new Settler Partner Program Coordinator.

**Join us – it will be fun to get out, meet old friends and make new friends!**

**Submit your requests from the Oxford Legacy Fund to Lynne Dunlop**  
[lynndunl@execulink.com](mailto:lynndunl@execulink.com)  
**Details [April Connections](#)**



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### OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)

OURS held their annual meeting on September 19, 2021 at St David's in Woodstock and welcomed guests Rev. Jeffrey Smith of St. David's UC and Sharon Fraser representing the Mission and Outreach committee of Knox UC in Embro. With regret, we accepted the resignation of Karen Gresty.

We welcome any interested person to contact us for information about how you and/or your church could contribute to the effort to bring refugees safely to Canada.

The situation with our sponsorships has not changed since our last report. **We continue to support St. David's UC with the co-sponsorships** of 6 Eritreans living in Ethiopia where the civil war continues. The **Temnewu family (4)**, await interviews by Canadian immigration officials based in Nairobi. Our national UCC has submitted the other 2 refugee's applications, the **Habte brothers**, to Ottawa. We hope to hear soon that their paperwork has been sent to Nairobi to have their interviews scheduled. There is also 1 refugee in Sudan, **Yemane**, who is also awaiting an interview.

**OURS is also supporting Trinity United in Ingersoll as the congregation applies to co-sponsor an Iraqi family of 5:** Wisam Al-Mohammedawi and his wife Nedi Al-Saadi, and children Anaam, Razan, and Shahad.

Once national UCC has assessed their applications in 2022, they will be sent to Ottawa. We do not expect this family to arrive until 2023.



### Some ways that you can help:

- Purchase GIFT CARDS from retail outlets for clothing, groceries, personal care items. Arrange pick up from any member of OURS or email [mlmartin696@gmail.com](mailto:mlmartin696@gmail.com). Perhaps your church office would collect them, and they could be all picked up at the same time. Gift Cards are not eligible for tax receipts.
- To make a tax-deductible donation, send a cheque made out to Trinity United Church with Trinity Refugee Sponsorship in the memo line. The address is Trinity United Church, 118 Church St. Ingersoll ON, N5C 2X6. Please include

*Submitted by Marj Martin,  
[mlmartin696@gmail.com](mailto:mlmartin696@gmail.com)*

*Chairperson of the OURS committee*

White Christianity suffers from a bad case of Disney Princess theology. As each individual reads Scripture, they see themselves as the Princess in every story. They are Esther, never Xerxes or Haman. They are Peter, never Judas. They are the woman anointing Jesus, never the Pharisee. They are the Jews escaping slavery, never Egypt.

For citizens of the most powerful country in the world, who enslaved both Native and Black people, to see itself as Israel not Egypt when studying Scripture, is a perfect example of Disney Princess Theology. And it means that as people in power, they have no lens for locating themselves rightly in Scripture or society- and it has made them blind and utterly ill-equipped to engage issues of power and injustice. It is some very weak Bible work

- Erna Kim Hackett

*liberated*  
**TOGETHER**

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Hotlinks are:  
[Website](#),  
[Facebook Page](#)

We are grateful to support the outreach programs of Operation Sharing.

**Food for Friends** 25 cents at checkout



**Taxable Items Cupboard.** Call Bonnie at 519-539-3361

### Still Needed

- deodorant shower gel/body wash
- toilet tissue, shampoo/conditioner
- shaving cream, razors
- dish soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste
- kleenex tissue, tampons, sanitary pads
- laundry soap, all purpose cleaner
- hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, diapers size 4 & up, adult Depends etc

Donations can be brought to the Operation Sharing Offices located at:

- **Woodstock at College Avenue UC**, 22 Wilson Street, Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday mornings, 9-12 noon.
- **Ingersoll at Trinity UC**, 118 Church Street, Ingersoll, Tuesday & Thursday mornings, 9-12 noon.

### Woodstock: Bullwinkle's Eatery & Hospitality Training Centre

**Extended Family Project Help for Students** email Eric Schmiedl at [ericschmiedl@yahoo.ca](mailto:ericschmiedl@yahoo.ca) or call 519-539-5926

### \$ DONATIONS \$\$

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

**The Inn of Oxford**, a temporary homeless shelter at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock, free for those 16 plus.



### Still Needed

**Monetary Donations** (tax receipts available)

**Gift Cards:** (tax receipts available with receipt) - Tim Horton's or McDonald's gift cards of \$5, Giant Tiger/Walmart/Grocery Prepaid Cards

**Clothing:** Winter (men & women) - jackets, hats, mitts/gloves, pocket warmer packs, etc.; shoes, jeans, pants, short dresses, skirts, t-shirts, shirts, hoodies; underwear for men and women, socks, pajama bottoms.

**Food:** Sugar, Ground Coffee; breakfast cereals, granola bars/fruit cups and snacks/puddings, juices/diet soda/soda

**Cleaning Supplies:** Disinfectant Wipes: Clorox/Lysol, XL Garbage bags/L white kitchen bags

**Flat and fixed sheets for single beds/cots.**

### Drop off times:

- Monday nights between 7 – 8 pm. Use the Inn entrance, ring the buzzer, staff will assist.
- Tuesday + Fridays between 1 – 3 pm. Use the Church Administration Building.

Other arrangements can be made by calling or texting Darryl Watson 519-537-0336.



*If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door, you will not find him in the chalice.*

FOLLOWING JESUS

John Chrysostom (349-407)

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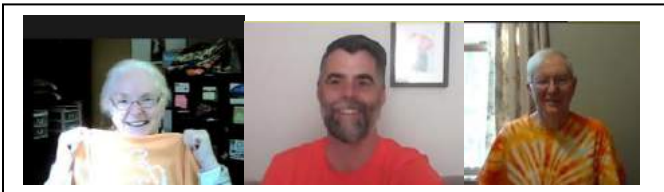
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*As we journey in the steps of Jesus' Way, there are stories about those on the fringe of power - the vulnerable, the dispossessed and the suffering. Rather than persist in our privilege gained from **power over**, we work with each other to make change on small things and link them together.*

### JESUS' WAY

#### National Truth and Reconciliation Day (Sept. 30) and Ecotheology



The Sept. 22 introduction ([see video here](#)) of the **Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington** on how we as Christians can respond to the ecological crisis has been well received. In our orange shirts, Doug Peck, Glen Wright and I outlined 2 follow-up sessions. We recalled that just as our understanding of residential schools and indigenous spirituality changed our behaviour to indigenous peoples, so too our understanding the ecological crisis changes our behaviour.

**Wed. Nov. 17, 7:00 pm**

"Reorienting ourselves as creatures of the earth"



**Wed. Dec. 15, 7:00 pm**

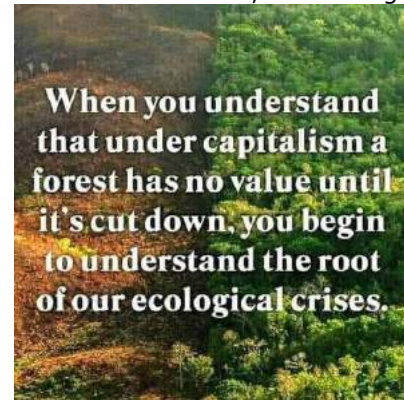
"The ongoing journey of being a new disciple"

In each of these 2 sessions, Rev. Jessica will preach a sermon which will be taped for later use in a worship service. (*Scripture, prayer, suggestion for hymns and benediction will also be available.*)

In addition, Rev Jessica will explain and discuss her process **to those present. To be part of this, contact Doug Peck to sign up. [rev.douglas.peck@gmail.com](mailto:rev.douglas.peck@gmail.com). Free**

We acknowledge and appreciate the support of the Oxford Legacy Fund for their support.

MM



#### Hiding in Plain Sight: Newspaper Coverage of Dr. Peter Bryce's 1907 Report on Residential Schools

<http://activehistory.ca/2021/09/hiding-in-plain-sight-newspaper-coverage-of-dr-peter-bryces-1907-report-on-residential-schools/>

#### SIX NATIONS SHARING CIRCLE (formerly Grandmother's Tea)

Participants in the September Circle talked about **our plans for September 30**, the first National Truth and Reconciliation Day.

**The next Sharing Circle is October 18, 1:30-3:30 pm. We are hopeful that Gloria Cook will be able to present a follow up to "[Our Journey as an Indigenous People](#)", which she presented in July. CONNECTIONS story is [here](#). Gloria is the Community Capacity Development Coordinator for Indigenous Ministries and Justice of UCC. But we are open to the spirit moving amongst us and the topic may change.**

For those interested, please contact Rhonda Johns at Nations Uniting [nations.uniting@gmail.com](mailto:nations.uniting@gmail.com) for Zoom details.



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### LONG TERM CARE – CRISIS



Concurrent with the opening of the new session of the Ontario legislature on Monday, October 4, the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) staged protests at Queen's Park and local offices of MPPs. (see coverage [here](#)). Your co-editor (CONNECTIONS) was among those protesting at Ernie Hardeman's office in Woodstock. The conditions of Long Term Care (LTC) homes have been well documented in the OHC's 2019 Report found here ["Situation Critical"](#). In 2020, the military's assistance confirmed the horrors. The promise in the Government's throne speech of 30,000 additional beds over 10 years isn't enough to address the [40,000 people on wait lists as of December 2020](#) with an average wait time of 144 days. Care is also a concern because this Government has NOT used present legislation to weed out bad operators. It is an improvement but there is a lot more to be done. **For-profit care facilities continue to put profit over care.** Any one needing extra care and having someone advocate for them takes time away from normal hours of care for everyone. MM

### HOMELESSNESS in OXFORD

([see here](#))

YES. Here in Oxford. During a 2020 survey there were 103 people experiencing homelessness in our community but there are [more experiencing homelessness](#). A committed group of community partners, [the Oxford Housing Action Collaborative](#) are working together to solve this.

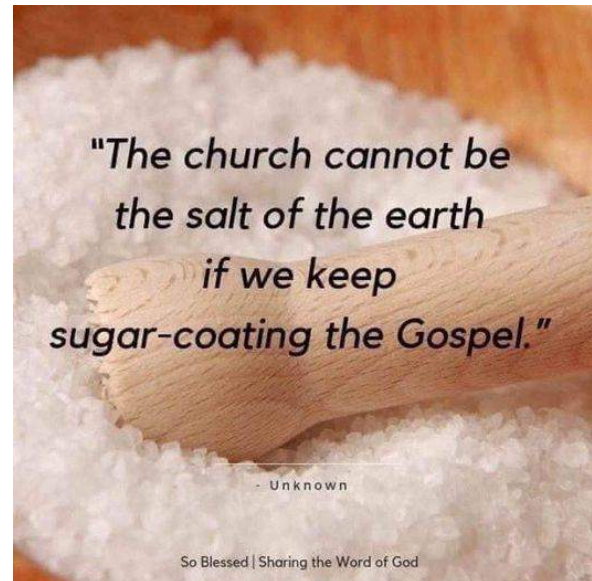
**What can you do?** Educate yourself. Become a voice for change.



**Share:** Find us on social media  
[#endhomelessnessoxford](#)

**Write** your MPP, MP and **join campaigns like:** [votehousing.ca](#).

**Donate time, money, or experience to local groups/charities.** MM



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**"Power over"** dramatically affects any relationship and thus our ability to be human. God as love is **power with** (rather than power over). God's unconditional love **for us**, and implanted somehow **within us**, helps us become more fully human and alive with the Spirit. We care for each other (both next door and across the world) with respect and compassion and experience a love for creation that we have so long ignored. We act with integrity.

### GOD'S LOVE

#### -BECOMING HUMAN

#### **PRAYER CYCLES**

We are invited to pray each week for a Community of Faith in Oxford and in the Antler River Watershed Region. Prayer is sharing our concerns, joys and work. We are not alone in our work as we support one another.

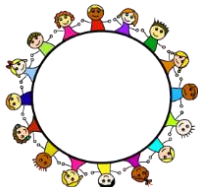
**For Oxford United Churches:** list is [here](#).

Oct. 17 **ARW Region: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Executive Min + staff**  
Oct. 24 Kintore + Brooksdale Doug Peck  
Oct. 31 Camp Tanner + Operation Sharing  
Nov. 7 College Ave (Wdsk) Lloyd Bennett  
Nov. 14 Innerkip Karen Willis

#### **For ARW Region:**

<https://www.prayercycles.ca/antlerriverwatershed>

Oct. 17 [London: Wesley-Knox](#)  
Oct. 24 [Thamesville](#)  
Oct. 31 [London: White Oaks](#)  
Nov 7 [Woodstock: Dundas Street](#)  
Nov 14 [London: Rowntree Memoria](#)



#### **PRAYER CHAIN**

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

#### **FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES**

We have talked about bees but not about elephants. Here is a true story about both. In Uganda, a country in Africa, food is scarce because they do not always have enough rain to grow crops. There was a problem with one very large garden that provided food for the community. Elephants who run wild, like our squirrels, would raid the garden. **Fences could not keep the elephants out.** The market gardener also raised bees both to pollinate the garden and to provide honey for the community. **Can you think of a way to keep the elephants out?**

Well, this is what they did. The owner surrounded the garden with beehives. Then he ran a fence wire through each beehive so when the elephants touched the wire, the bees got angry and would come out and sting the elephants who ran back into the jungle. After one or two attempts and a few stings, when the elephants come to the farm now and hear buzz, they just walk on by. Elephants are smart.



The garden was saved, the people did not go hungry, and neither did the elephants. And the bees were left alone to make honey. Now isn't that awesome?

Sometimes we all learn to work together.

GW



**To order books** call 1-888-668-0871, email [sales@grandriverbooks.com](mailto:sales@grandriverbooks.com). **Order books online** [here](#). Mail delivery \$5.00.



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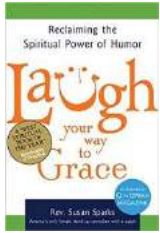
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### FYI

#### Interests, Informs or Inspires!

**READERS share** ...the fiction you are reading, the movies you are watching or the songs you are singing!



#### Laugh YOUR WAY TO GRACE – Susan Sparks

While Ruth Butt may be retired and living in London, the people and ministry in Oxford remains deep in her heart.

Ruth wants us to know that

Laugh Your Way to Grace is a fun book to read! The author, Rev. Susan Sparks was a stand up comic who answered the call to ministry. Of course, Ruth is also reading something on Quantum Theology. We await Ruth's book report on THAT ONE!

#### INDIGENOUS RESEARCH LAB – at the University of Guelph

##### Thoughts on how we can enhance conversations with Indigenous peoples.

For several years now, efforts have been made by Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women to settle disputes over territories, cultures and ways to live in harmony. Too often I find people from both perspectives pointing fingers at one another with results that apparently are not reaching reconciliation as was originally intended by the TRC.



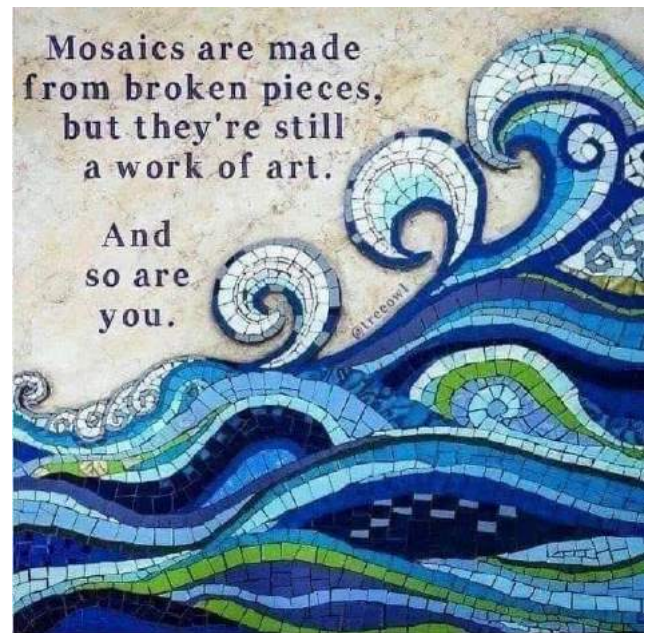
I have been encouraged when I read what is taking place on the campus of my Alma Mater, U of Guelph

([here](#)). What I hear is a serious attempt to have parties from both sides sitting down

and really listening to each other with the intent to learn how both sides can accept and utilize methods of living that have been useful in both camps.

To emphasize my point, I refer to a new development centering around the building of Nokom's (Grandma's) house (in the Arboretum) where people from all sides can listen talk and learn values for both sides to grow together for the good of all Canadians. The YouTube video on this topic is [here](#). (U of Guelph September News).

*Submitted by Maurice Francis (OAC 62)*



#### 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 in Climate Justice/Crisis, Poverty, Boomer Spirituality, Middle East Justice, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, United Church Women, Right Relations and Mozambique.

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[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

**Regional Council FALL Meeting - Thursday October 28 to Sunday October 31. Keep Calm and Rock On. Agenda and registration forms available [here](#). ALL EVENTS ARE ONLINE, ZOOM LINKS WILL BE SENT TO REGISTRANTS.** Registration closes Sunday, Oct 24 at 6:00 pm.

### KEEP STUFF OUT OF THE DUMP!

**Thanks to all who attended ReuseapalooZaha on Saturday, Sept 25 in Embro.**

Lots of good treasures found new homes.

Lots of people committed **to the work of avoiding waste** helped - old and middle and young environmentalist teens!

The event was organized by OPAL (Oxford People Against Landfills) Alliance led by Bryan Smith and his army of volunteers from Ingersoll district Nature Club, Transition to Less Waste, Woodstock Environmental Advisory Committee, Cycles of Life.

For anyone who missed this great free swap you can donate reusable goods to donation centres listed [here](#). These stores offer good prices on durable goods and clothing whether folk are pinching pennies, looking for vintage style or thinking of Halloween. As well, they offer members of the community jobs to build their skills, finances and sense of belonging. All good things!

### WORSHIP SERVICES IN OXFORD

Check with individual churches re specifics of in-person worship or availability of streaming services:

[College Ave UC](#)

[Dundas St. UC](#)

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

[Innerkip UC](#)

[Kintore/Brooksdale UC](#)

[Knox UC, Embro](#)

[Mt Elgin UC](#)

[Norwich UC](#)

[Peace UC, Plattsville](#)

[>](mailto:peaceunitedplattsville@gmail.com),

[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)

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**Next Publication: Wednesday, November 10, 2021**

**[Submissions welcome](#)**

**SUBMISSIONS DUE:**

Noon Friday November 5, 2021

**CO-EDITORS:**

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

Submissions and feedback welcome.

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

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website**