

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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### BEYOND COMFORT LEVELS

Often, we accept for ourselves a comfortable reality which contributes to discomfort for others. This month our stories encourage us to move forward in faith beyond our comfort levels.

**OUR CONTEXT** (pg 2) of our Communities of Faith and beyond - new candidate for ministry from Norwich UC, new worship experience for worship in Embro, new volunteer involvement needed at Camp Tanner, Burgessville UC open for the Spirit to move in, UCW examines inclusivity, Five Oaks gets a makeover, long time Chaplain retires from Operation Sharing, our housing system is for the rich, refugees are stuck waiting and in need of prayer, needs of Operation Sharing, what does Reconciliation mean.

**IN CHRIST** (pg 10) offers opportunities to study Right Relations, ecotheology and discipleship (December 15), and the long term care crisis.

**A NEW CREATION** (pg 11) -new connections with the chickadees, the Metis, the ants, and 'Gifts with Vision' to celebrate Christmas.

*Marg Murray co-editor*



### FOOD FOR THE SOUL

#### Another "Plan B" Christmas

It looks like another plan B Christmas. For the second year in a row Christmas will come with some restrictions. We know the drill. Advent and Christmas worship will require masks and distancing along with proof of vaccinations.

Christmas dinners will see family groups at separate tables. Covid 19 is stubborn but in spite of its variant expressions it has met its match.

Added to that is the evidence of the climate crises. First there was the extreme heat in BC which brought on more than the usual number of forest fires. Extremes in rainfall without the trees to hold back the water caused land slides and flooding. Unusually heavy rain in Channel-Port aux Basques, NL washed out sections of the TransCanada highway isolating most of the province.

As we enter churches in this Advent-Christmas season, either in person or virtually, we will be calmed by the familiar carols, candles and Christmas trees that warm our hearts and enliven our spirits. Sometimes familiarity with these narratives leads us to gloss over the harsh reality in these stories.

The church's lectionary suggests that in Advent we hear at least one story of John the Baptist who lived in the desert. He not only lived beyond his comfort zone but came calling people to love beyond theirs.

Those reassuring predictions and promises from Isaiah, that are part of the Christmas story were written from exile. Isaiah was a refugee in Babylon. In Jesus's birth narratives, a cow stable in Bethlehem was the last place that Mary

### Ecotheology and Discipleship


Join us for **another** evening with Ecotheologian & United Church minister, Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington. **Being a new disciple in an ecological crisis.** Once again, Rev. Jessica will preach a sermon (recorded for future use), describe her process, and answer our questions.

Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – 7pm, to 8:15pm – Zoom  
Please contact Lynne Duniop at  
lynnduni@execulink.com

Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington

The event is hosted by Oxford United Ministries and funded by Oxford Legacy Fund.

Finding hope through faith in a time of ecological crisis.



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wanted to be to give birth. Did she have a few silent or not so silent choice words for King Herod? How she must have longed for the competence and reassurance of the much-loved midwife in Nazareth.

Then, if we go with Matthew's version instead of Luke's, which we usually do, Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus leave Bethlehem and spend the next few years as refugees in Egypt, waiting for old Herod to die. This was not exactly their first choice.

**The gospels themselves were written as "Plan B."** What those early followers of Jesus really longed for and expected was Jesus's return. When that did not happen the way that was expected, there was a need to write down the stories for the next generation.

**So, if we find ourselves in a plan B Christmas, we are in good company.**

And in spite of this abundance of second-best circumstances, then and now, plans pushed to the curb, **the light of God's love shone and still shines in the darkness;** a light that shines in and through us, not just to enable us to feel good, but **to call us to assist God in helping the hurting world around us feel and be better. That is the good news!**

Blessings, for Advent-Christmas and beyond.

Glen Wright (co-editor)



*We've separated our newsletter after the Apostle Paul into Our Context, In Christ and A New Creation. There is an arbitrary separation which is hopefully helpful in deepening our discipleship. as we answer our call to the response of the climate crisis and Covid pandemic. As thinking human parts of Creation, we can make connections between our personal and collective lives in our faith journey. We can do better.*

## OUR CONTEXT



### COMINGS AND GOINGS AROUND OXFORD

#### CONGREGATIONS SEEKING MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP:

*We hold in our hearts and prayers **all** our communities of faith (see prayer cycle page 7) as we live out God's mission - in particular:*

- **Avondale UC** (Tillsonburg) and Otterville UC interview candidates.
- **Hickson UC** - no update
- **Beachville (Sweaburg)** - West Oxford Pastoral Charge are setting up a Search Team.
- **Foldens UC** to worship with Sweaburg - West Oxford.
- **Burgessville UC.** no update
- **Kintore and Brooksdale UC** -are working through the steps before setting up a search team.

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#### FORMER OXFORD PRESBYTERY MEMBER ON THE MOVE



**Kathleen Welch of Norwich UC** is a candidate for Ministry in the Designated Lay Ministry Program.

**Congratulations Kathleen!**



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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### A NEW KIND OF NEST

The congregations of Knox United Church and Knox Presbyterian Church of Embro, are joining to worship together for the rest of the year.



It all started with a single email from Rev. Susan Cole, minister at Knox United, to Rev.

Tom Godfrey, minister at Knox Presbyterian.



Rev. Susan was concerned that the Embro ecumenical fair worship service had been cancelled for the second year in a row. She

thought it would be nice to offer some sort of substitute—in the form of a joint outdoor worship service for the two congregations, and the community.

So the service happened: the joint service was well attended, and so, the two ministers led another joint worship service the following Sunday. The ministers found that they enjoyed planning and leading together, and the congregations found that they enjoyed the leadership of both ministers, and the fellowship of worshipping together.

Over the next month, the joint worship services continued, and the ministers discovered that there was a name for what the congregations were doing: it is called “nesting”. “Nesting” is the term to describe how congregations of different denominations sometimes worship together for the benefit of all.

Over the last nineteen months, the church, like many other organizations,

has found that many of its traditions and practices have been challenged by the pandemic. So to call a collaboration a “nest”, is actually to take a hopeful step of faith, to better care for, and nurture one-another, in faith.

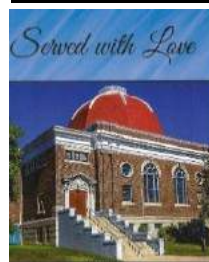
The nesting joint congregation would like to invite anyone of any faith background, and of no faith background at all, to join them as they gather together for the next while to explore faith together.

Until the end of the year, the joint congregation will be meeting at the building of Knox United Church, 116 Kincardine St. Embro. They worship at 10:30 am on Sundays. Covid-safety protocols are followed.

Anyone who would like to be part of this new kind of nest is welcome to join them.

If you would like further information, you may contact the church at Knox United Church Office: [knoxembro@gmail.com](mailto:knoxembro@gmail.com) 519-475-4060

### St Paul's UC, Tillsonburg



88 Bidwell Street

**Community Kitchen**

**Hot Take-out Lunch**

**Every Saturday** from

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Serving from ramp  
entrance.



**United Church Rural  
Ministry Network**

[www.UCRMN.ca](http://www.UCRMN.ca)

“Connecting rural stories  
with rural people across Canada”

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[Facebook page](#) and  
[website](#)

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Camp Tanner was held virtually on **November 24, 2021**, via Google Meet. Due to COVID -19, no camps ran in the summer of 2021, but **programming was offered online via Facebook**. This online platform was also used in 2020 but online engagement in camp type activities has waned. While we could not hold our annual dinner auction again this year, **our inaugural Bottle Drive in August was a huge success, raising over \$2300!** We will be holding another one in the spring so please hold on to your empties for us. The owners (Kinsmen) of the Camp Tanner property have been generous in deferring our rent from the last two summers when camp was unable to run. **The site is in great shape** and we are currently in negotiations for extending our contract another 4-5 years. **We plan to run camp in 2022** and, with the assistance of the Health Unit, make it a safe and fun experience for both campers and staff. We don't know what the health unit guidelines will look like by then, but **we have budgeted for fewer campers and staff to attend**. To accommodate this as well as the increase in provincial minimum wages we have had to increase our camper registration fees. At \$400 per week, they are still among the lowest in the country for residential summer camp fees. Lastly, we regret 3 Board members leaving this year, from key positions including Treasurer and Secretary.

**We are all looking forward to having campers returning to Camp Tanner in summer 2022!**

### CAMP TANNER WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT!

**Interested in volunteering with a great organization?**

**Being part of the Board?**

There are many ways to volunteer with Camp Tanner!

### BE PART OF A COMMITTEE!

Setting up/taking down camp in May and in the summer, cooking (July/Aug), bottle drives (Spring/Fall), fundraising events etc. See [here](#)

### BE ON THE BOARD

#### Board of Director Needs:

- **Treasurer:** maintain our bank account, pay bills, oversee payroll, manage registration fees (mostly via PayPal), attend and present financial statements at our monthly Board meetings, prepare an annual budget (with the assistance of the Finance Committee) and invest funds as required. The Treasurer sits on the Executive.
- **Recording Secretary:** attend all Board meetings and take minutes. The Secretary sits on the Executive.
- **General Board Members:** attend Board meetings, participate in committee work as interested and able. Board members are elected for 3-year terms.
- Relevant bylaws are [here](#).

**Please reach out to our Chairman, Graham Anderson, if you are interested or have any questions: [granderson00@gmail.com](mailto:granderson00@gmail.com).**



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### From BURGESSVILLE UC

We at Burgessville meet on Sundays at 10:30 with LLWLs and the quarterly communion from ministers, with SW Regional Health regulations for Covid each step of the way (all 2021). I regularly forward the CONNECTIONS to our congregation.



Our picture (July, 2021) shows the joy we feel being able to meet again.

**History:** Formerly part of a Methodist circuit in 1872, Burgessville Pastoral Charge was established in 1925 with a membership of some 275 and an average Sunday attendance of about 150. In 2021 Burgessville United Church has a membership of 20 with an average Sunday attendance of 8. Back in 1925 the energy level in Burgessville United Church was high while expectations were even higher; now the energy level is measured while the expectations are realistic.

While we know that Burgessville United Church will not become a Mega Church, or a Super Power in the wider community, we also know that our faith will only deepen as we continue to celebrate the gifts that God has given to each one of us. Simply put, even though we know that we are a small church family, we also know that we will continue to celebrate our uniqueness with renewed hopefulness and courage ... no matter the reality before us. As we continue to remind ourselves, while yesterday is already a dream and tomorrow is only a vision, it's today that really matters.

And today, as we worship together in our lower church hall, with the guidance and care of a number of committed lay worship leaders, including periodic clergy support, we are moving forward as witnesses to the heritage of the past and as a holding space for those who would come and join us. There is freedom of movement in Burgessville United Church; and we are not chained to duties we haven't chosen. We are simply here giving space to the Holy Spirit to move among us ... where we are and where we need to be. A cherished gift, indeed!

*Submitted by Celia Orth*

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### Tri-Regional Fall Gathering

– Antler River Waterways, Horseshoe Falls & Western Ontario Waterways

### A STEP TOWARD "AFFIRMING"



Almost 70 women from 3 regions met on Nov. 6, 2021, by Zoom, to explore the topic, "Another Step Toward Affirming".

National UCW President, Nancy Risto, brought greetings from NUCW saying that our theme is **"We stand with God in hope, we must continue in hope."**



Rev Michiko Bown-Kai of Cambridge UC led us in opening worship. Thea Sheridan-Jonah, a member of St. Paul's UC in Oakville said, we must ask the question, "Why become affirming?" She spoke about **how being an Affirming Community of Faith was different from being a Welcoming Community**. We must reach out beyond our church walls to our community organizations. For people who feel like they are outside the church, the church door is closed to them.

We must intentionally seek out people who need welcoming into our church community life.

**Affirming churches say, "Welcome, no matter who you are."**

**Inclusive churches say, "We decide who comes into our church."**

This welcome will probably be even more important after the many months of Covid restrictions.

Thea talked about how **affirming shifts the power structure from, "We welcome you" to "This is our community and if you come, you will change us."**

Thea is a young university student in her first year in British Columbia.

What a dynamic speaker, very knowledgeable about how the younger people feel about the church today.

Rev. Michiko noted that for many people, being part of an affirming congregation can literally be a life-and-death issue.

Rev Michiko closed by saying "Don't forget to worship, to pray. Let the spirit transform you with joy."

*Submitted by Sandra Stock*



**See Current Programs and Possibilities 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.

**Dining Room and Kitchen at Five Oaks get upgrades.**

**Read how in the article from Brantford Expositor [here](#).**



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### STEPHEN GIULIANO RETIRES FROM OPERATION SHARING

When Stephen Giuliano came to Woodstock from London to work as a Chaplain with Hostess Manager Bonnie Rhea at Operation Sharing, he said that he would change and expand the program. It was a promise kept.



The Food Bank that was operating would change to "Food For Friends" a food card program that would begin in Woodstock and later in Ingersoll then spread to a number of communities beyond Oxford.

There was a need for an overnight facility for the homeless, so the "Inn Out of the Cold" was begun in Old St. Paul's Anglican Church. That service is now open year-round, and the name changed to "The Inn".

The meal program became Bullwinkle's Eatery at the Moose Lodge, which is now back at College Ave. United.

There is the Extended Family Project. There were programs for those addicted to drugs, courses on the prevention of poverty which were extended to theological students at Huron College in London. There were the Thanksgiving Day dinners and the Christmas Parties on Christmas Day with Steve and so many volunteers giving up most or all of their Christmas day with their own families to be with the Operation Sharing family.

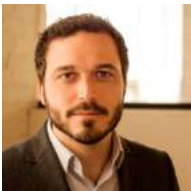
These were just some of the many facets of Steve's ministry. For 26 years Operation Sharing and those who were involved in any way got to know Steve's dedication and love. What a gift!

So a huge THANK YOU Steve! While you are taking a well-deserved retirement from your very fine work as Chaplain and Director of Operation Sharing, new opportunities to serve will not be far off. We expect that you will, as always, be open to the guidance of The Spirit.

So go with God's blessing and our gratitude and love.

GW

### ISARC (Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition) HOUSING: THE KEY TO HEALTH



On November 24 the Keynote speaker, Ricardo Tranjan, Senior Policy Analyst at Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives told us authoritatively that there is no housing crisis in Canada. Housing has a stable environment in which 2/3 of the people own a house and 1/3 rent from land developers or land lords. This system is complex and unregulated. Further, [rental is not a phase](#) since not all Canadians can afford houses. Federal government offers first home buyers deals but it will not significantly increase home ownership. AND COVID didn't change

anything. It is true, that at first the government did what needed to be done but reverted to a timid response with the removal of the CERB. Tranjan strongly recommends a national policy on social rental housing developed with non-profit landlords. Discussions about affordable housing get lost because there is no reliable definition of what it means. Most of the speculation in Canada is from local speculators not foreign speculation. MM

### UNITED PROPERTY RESOURCE CORPORATION UPRC

Building Inclusive & Sustainable

Communities Across Canada

Our church buildings are a valuable asset. [Can we use them better to serve our communities?](#) This [video](#) suggests some options. MM



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### OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE(OURS)

At our most recent meeting held in early November, we welcomed two new members to our committee: Judy Campbell representing Trinity, Ingersoll and Sharon Fraser representing Knox, Embro. We are grateful for their commitment to better the plight of refugees who are being sponsored by three Oxford United Churches.

Our most recent sponsorship, if successful, will bring an Afghanistan citizen to live with his sister in Woodstock. Knox United in Embro is the sponsoring church and we are committed to assist them, as needed, with the process. Thank you to the congregation of Knox for agreeing to help **Maqssoud Mohammed Yar** become a permanent resident of



Canada. **Maqssoud is afraid for his life since his clothing store was ordered closed by the Taliban and has been in hiding since that time. At the time of this writing, we know that he is attempting to cross into Pakistan with a valid visa.** If successful, he will then make an appointment with the UN in Pakistan to attain Refugee status, at which time, the application process to come to Canada can begin.

**The intensification of the Ethiopian Civil War has created great fear in cousins Kidane and Mussie Habte as well as Sarah Temnewu and her family who are living in Addis Ababa.**

**(pictures in September [CONNECTIONS](#)),**

These six Eritreans are being sponsored by St David's United. Sara and her family's applications have been approved in Ottawa and forwarded to Nairobi to IRCC officials there for final processing. A letter was sent to IRCC from Glen Wright of our committee expressing our deep concern for the well being of the Temnewu family; a response was received that

explained the delay was related to Covid. However, there was no assurance that these refugees could be fast tracked because of the civil war.

**Bisrat Yemane**, also being sponsored by St David's and living in Khartoum, is very close to finalizing the process; we hope he will soon be on a plane to Canada

**The AL-Mohammedawi family (pictures in October [CONNECTIONS](#)), in Turkey, are safe.** This family of five is being sponsored by Trinity United in Ingersoll. Their application is at the refugee office of the United Church of Canada and will be assessed for submission to the IRCC in Ottawa sometime in 2022.

Please consider helping in the effort to settle these refugees in the safety of Canada. **We encourage you to help us by donating gift cards from retail outlets that can be used to help settle them on their arrival.** Contact me at [mlmartin696@gmail.com](mailto:mlmartin696@gmail.com) to arrange pick up or to get more information. Trinity United Church, Ingersoll, would appreciate monetary, tax-deductible donations to help them prepare for settlement of their sponsored family. You can mail your cheque to Trinity United Church, 118 Church St, Ingersoll ON N5C2X6. Please put Trinity Refugee Sponsorship in the memo line.

More information is forthcoming about ways to assist Knox United, Embro, with their pending sponsorship.

*Submitted by Marj Martin,  
Chairperson of the OURS committee*

**HOPE has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.**

*St Augustine of Hippo*



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Hotlinks are:

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

### Operation

**Sharing** continues to help the disadvantaged not just at Christmas but through out the year. More details in their [Fall newsletter](#), [Website](#), [Facebook](#).

**Food for Friends with 25 cents** at the participating grocery store checkouts. Details of the need to fill the Operation Sharing's **Taxable Items Cupboard** can be found on page 5 of [October CONNECTIONS](#) or call Bonnie at 519-529-3361 with questions. Homelessness is a harsh reality anytime but especially in winter. [The Inn of Oxford](#) offers temporary shelter and needs supplies, gift cards, clothing. Details also found on page 5 of [October CONNECTIONS](#) or reach Darryl Watson at 519-537-0336.

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

#### \$ 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.

### CHRISTMAS PLACE

Operation Sharing, The Children's Aid Society and Power of HOPE have combined efforts to bring an enhanced Christmas Place this Holiday season.

**Families in need. Pre-register to receive gift packs for children up to 18 years old. Registration forms are [here](#).**

Money or gift cards (preferably Walmart or Giant Tiger) please bring to College Avenue United Church, parking lot entrance.

## SIX NATIONS SHARING CIRCLE

### (formerly Grandmother's Tea)

Although it is a virtual sharing circle, people share what is happening in their lives or about work that they are doing re the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Gloria Cook was unable to be with us due to the urgent needs in her own community. People acknowledged their confusion about 'reconciliation'. Rhonda Johns noted we need to listen to others, to what they are asking, just like we do in our own families.

Some ideas (see next page) about writing territorial land acknowledgements were shared including expanding the topic to include artists and story tellers etc.

We are hopeful that Gloria Cook can join us in January to share with us the wisdom of the Medicine Wheel wrt Reconciliation.

For those interested in attending, the next Sharing Circle is Monday, January 10, 2022, 1:30-3:30 pm. Please contact Rhonda Johns at [nations.uniting@gmail.com](mailto:nations.uniting@gmail.com) for Zoom details.

**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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*On our journey with Jesus, we hear the stories of those who are: different, on the outside of power, suffering and whose voices have been silenced or forgotten (both humans and the rest of God's creatures). We wonder what has happened, why it is happening. We reflect critically about the privilege gained from power over and the need to have a sustainable future for the planet. Even though it is beyond our comfort level, yet we, both individually and with each other, take action on small things and connect them together collectively to make systemic changes.*

### In Christ

#### RIGHT RELATIONS

##### TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

How are YOU living into Right Relations? What specific actions are you taking in the journey of truth and reconciliation? And your community of faith?

**'Acknowledgment of Territory Statements are just a beginning in the work toward Right Relations.'** We commend to you this [short paper](#) written by Rev Matthew Stevens.

Other resources for writing Territorial Land acknowledgement can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/3h7autsu> or on the ARWRC website

#### ECOTHEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP

We know that our collective behaviour must change to allow our planet to heal.

**Where is God in all of this? What do our scriptures say?** Oxford United Ministries is pleased to welcome back ecotheologian and UCC minister, Rev Dr Jessica Hetherington, to preach and teach the series **Ecotheology and Discipleship**.



Critical thinking is needed during this ecological crisis. In each of the following 3 opportunities **Rev Jessica's sermon, worship elements of scripture, prayers and hymns will be publicly available**. The opportunity to discuss with her will be taped but only available to those who attend. **There are 3 worship services for use later.**

In practicing our discipleship, we find hope; we are transformed.

To join us for any of the following, please **contact Lynne Dunlop at [lynndunl@execulink.com](mailto:lynndunl@execulink.com)**.

**Wed. Dec. 15, 7:00 – 8:15 pm**  
**Session 2 "Being a new disciple: who is my neighbour?"**



**January 19, 7:00 – 8:15 pm**  
Session 3 "Understanding discipleship"

**February 16, 7:00 -8:15 pm**  
Session 4 "Being Church in the world: Collective Discipleship"

**All sessions are free.**

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

If you missed the previous opportunities, you can [see videos and worship elements here](#).

MM

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### LONG TERM CARE – CRISIS

Long term care homes exist to care for people who need daily care for extended periods of time. I urge you to think about that statement. Do we want For Profit corporations running these homes? When your own family member needs at least 4 hours of care a day, do you want other residents to be ignored so that the average care provides a profit for the shareholders?

**What about quality of life? What about duration of life?** The current crisis in Long Term Care has only been made worse by the pandemic where we've learned that the profit motive has sadly **not** produced quality care. Yet, our present government of Ontario is in the process of renewing 30-year contracts and bed expansions to For Profit firms. Seriously we need to stop the expansion of private health care and Long Term Care Homes. Interestingly enough polling shows that 85% of people are opposed to increased privatization of Long Term Care facilities. But we assume it won't happen. We need to tell our elected representatives: MPP Hardeman at [hardeman@execulink.com](mailto:hardeman@execulink.com), copying Christine Elliott at [elliott@ontario.ca](mailto:elliott@ontario.ca) and Doug Ford, the Premier at [doug.fordco@pc.ola.ca](mailto:doug.fordco@pc.ola.ca). You can also include [this Nov 30 video of for them to watch](#).

Concerns about increasing privatization of health care in Ontario are addressed in [this video](#) of the HEALTH CARE PRIVATIZATION EMERGENCY SUMMIT LIVESTREAM of November 17. See [Ontario Health Coalition](#) for updates.

### POSTER FOUND IN A CHURCH IN FRANCE

"When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear 'the call of God'. However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to **talk** to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him. If you want to **see** Him, send him a text while driving."

*Being called beyond our comfort levels, we commit ourselves to use our power with others, with creation to effect change. We are a new creation in God as love. Our work is **power with** (rather than power over). We are more fully human and alive with the Spirit as 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.*

## A NEW CREATION

### PRAYER CYCLES



*We are invited to pray for the wider church: a Community of Faith in Oxford and in the Antler River Watershed Region. Prayer is sharing our concerns, joys and work. Supporting each other, we are not alone in our ministries.*

**For Oxford United Churches:** list is [here](#). Pastoral Charge Supervisors are noted for congregations with a vacancy.

Dec. 12 St Paul's, Karlene Brown-Palmer  
Dec. 19 Avondale (T'burg), Judy Campbell PCS  
Dec. 26 Otterville – Lynne Dunlop, PCS  
Jan. 2 Curries/Oxford Centre–Lori Minler, PCS  
Jan 9 Licensed Lay Worship leaders LLWL  
<https://tinyurl.com/LLWL-Oxford>  
Jan 16 Trinity (Ingersoll), Tracy Crick-Butler  
Jan 23 Westminster (Thamesford), Mark Marshall  
Jan 30 Hickson – Doug Peck PCS

### For ARW Region:

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

Dec 19 [Newark](#)  
Dec 26 [Windsor: Westminster](#)  
Jan 2 [St. Clair](#)  
Jan 9 [Hebron](#)  
Jan 16 [Ridgetown: Erie Street](#)  
Jan 23 [Ruthven](#)  
Jan 30 [Riverside](#)



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### FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

#### CHICKADEES

The Chickadees are back at the bird feeder. You know these little grey birds by their black cap and black mask. **They fit**



**right into the Covid 19 crowd,** because of the mask plus they never spend more than three seconds

at the feeder. They just grab and go. They are strictly take-out birds.

When they fly back to the tree they put the seed in their beak, bang the seed on the branch until the seed shell cracks open. Or the seed is stored for a rainy day.

The mom makes the nest out of moss lined with animal hair. After the eggs hatch it takes just two weeks for baby birds to grow all their feathers. By the end of week three they are able to fly and look for seeds or insects or insect larva on their own. That would be like you growing up in two weeks and at the end of week three, Mom tosses you the car keys and says, "It's your turn to get groceries."

Their "Chickadee dee dee" song is actually a warning. Dee is for danger. The more dangerous the predator the more "dees". You might get two "dees" but a hawk or an owl could get from 10 to 20.

Now isn't that totally awesome?

Happy bird watching.

GW



#### FYI

##### Interests, Informs or Inspires!

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

### Métis Nation of Ontario

We joined over 70 others from the Zorra Caledonian Society on November 22, at the Embro Community Centre to hear **Kathleen Anderson, President of the Thames Bluewater Métis Council, Métis Nation of Ontario.** Kathleen made a knowledgeable and



fascinating presentation on her Métis heritage and culture beginning with the very early history of our country when European voyageurs from the Hudson Bay Company and The Northwest Company hunted the beaver around the Red River Valley in Manitoba. These Voyageurs married Indian women. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 set out the Crown policy of Land Settlement. We learned of the mistreatment of the Métis which has not been in our history books. Métis must complete a rigorous genealogy tracing their roots. We learned of their pride in their unique culture and their passion for learning (as Murray Sinclair says 'education is what got us into this mess and education will get us out') and how they are constantly merging even as they constantly honour their culture. This is only a small portion of what Kathleen shared with us, but I am keen to learn more of her culture and to draw the comparisons to my own Scottish heritage.

*A descendent of a Highland crewmember of the Hudson Bay Supply ships who, after many trips to this bountiful country, persuaded his youngest son to emigrate here 1829, at the age of 50, with his family!*

MM

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### THE HOLIDAY SEASON

After 2 years of Covid we are all impatient for 'the holiday season': impatient to reclaim traditions, rituals, social events; to pick up and decorate a tree, to address cards, wrap gifts, plan parties. **Are we, however, impatient to re-establish Christmas in our lives and in our hearts?**

Listening to news and watching current affairs, I wonder. I wonder about the alarming mud slides and floods in B.C., about the gales and blizzards in the Maritimes, the food shortages in the Near East. **How should I be focusing my prayers, my time, my energy?**

The Hopi people tell a creation story that helps me. Apparently, God became displeased with people who forgot to thank him or praise him. God decided to destroy all who had forgotten to be faithful and begin again. He used rain and fire to do this but those who had remained faithful were spared. They were invited to live with the ants deep under the earth. For a very long time the faithful lived underground with the ants. As the food stores melted away, the ant hosts pulled in their belts tightly and gave their food to the people.



They were entertaining. The ants got skinnier and skinnier.

When the earth was again cool enough for life to exist, the Hopi emerged, thanking the ants for their hospitality. However, the ants never regained their waist lines. Hopi people remember the hospitality of the ants; they avoid stepping on an ant or killing one; they respect and remember the hospitality the ants once showed to them.

As we live this holiday season as Christians, we need to be aware of those we entertain, those in our world who need

hospitality, food, shelter as well as a gift under our tree. We won't see many ants but if we do, don't reach for the 'Raid'. Put the ant next to the holly and the mistletoe. Let the ant remind us to be truly hospitable and kind as we continue to sing praise to God and show God our gratitude. *Olga McKellar*



[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

Their most recent newsletter, November 4, 2021 contains the highlights of the Antler River Watershed Regional Fall meeting including a pdf of the reports to the Region from the Executive and Commissions and can be found [here](#).

**Live footage of the HOLY SPIRIT getting us through.  
@Unvirtuous Abbey**



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### More Than Books and Bursaries



GWV21-40

Regular price \$50.00

It takes more than books and bursaries to keep a girl in school. **United Church Women (UCW)** are working with **United Church global partner Women for Change in Zambia** to create opportunities and support for **Zambian girls to stay in school**. Women for Change works with girls, their parents, and entire communities to show how giving girls the opportunity to stay in school benefits everyone.

**Your Gift of \$50 will empower young women to stay in school by providing school fees and supplies.**

**GIFTS WITH VISION** is a United Church Gift Catalogue with opportunities to support Healing and Reconciliation, Leadership, Counter Racism, Wellness and Safe Places, Education, Address Poverty and Hunger, The Future and Mission and Service.

### **WORSHIP SERVICES IN OXFORD**

Check with individual churches re specifics of in-person worship (masks, sign in, social distancing) or availability of streaming services. Churches in blue have websites:

**Avondale UC, Tillsonburg**

[avondaleuc@gmail.com](mailto:avondaleuc@gmail.com)

**Burgessville UC, 10:30 am**

**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**

[peaceplattsecretary@outlook.com](mailto:peaceplattsecretary@outlook.com)

**St. David's UC**, Woodstock

**St. Paul's UC**, Tillsonburg

**Trinity UC, Ingersoll**

**Westminster UC**, Thamesford

**Willis UC, Drumbo**

[drumbocharge@hotmail.com](mailto:drumbocharge@hotmail.com) also Sunday services by conference call.

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

**Next Publication: Wednesday,**

January 12, 2022

**Submissions welcome.**

**Due by Noon Friday January 7, 2021**

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Submissions and feedback welcome.

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