

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 6

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LOVE - USING THE GIFT of the SPIRIT -

We got it. Use it "To see thee more clearly, To love thee more dearly, To follow thee more nearly"¹⁾ as we celebrate Indigenous Heritage Month, Happy Pride Month, Father's Day, the end of school and working together for a better greener, more equal Ontario where no one is left behind.

No CONNECTIONS published in July. The Summer August CONNECTIONS will be first Wednesday (instead of 2nd).

OUR CONTEXT (pg 2) congregations seeking new ministerial leadership; Spring ENews of the United Church Rural Ministry Network; Camp Tanner open and needs some summer staff and volunteer kitchen help; Maya Landell at Doug Peck's Covenanting; AGM of Operation Sharing June 23; Oxford Children's Water Festival; Bisrat, one of our refugees comes June 9!

IN CHRIST (pg 5) reflection on Food Security and Faith; consider "Why would we as a Church want to recognize Traditional Territory?"; Grandmothers Tea at Five Oaks on June 29.

A NEW CREATION (pg 7) our prayer cycles; short reports on Palestine-Israel and General Council 44; weekend with Ecotheologian Jessica Hetherington Sept 30-Oct2; energy savings for our church buildings; volcanoes and TWO FANTISIC FATHERS from nature; urgent need for hosts for Ukraine refugees.

¹⁾ Day by Day - Godspell

Marg Murray co-editor



FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Glen Wright, co-editor



The Spirit after Pentecost

"How many times must a cannon ball fly before they're forever banned? Yes'n How many tears must one man shed, before he can hear people cry?" The answer is "blowin in the wind."

You are likely to recognize these lyrics from Bob Dylan's folk song, "Blowin in the Wind" written in 1962.

Sixty years later we are asking the same questions. I am not sure what Dylan meant by "blowin in the wind" but within the Christian Faith it is a reminder of the story of the Pentecost experience where a strong wind blew, accompanied by tongues of fire to set those early followers on a trajectory that would change the world.

If that energizing Spirit was the spirit of Christ and the people gathered were instantly change from grieving fearful followers into spirit-filled leaders of the faith, this might fit into the category of miracle.

Over this Easter and Pentecost season we were bombarded with bad news. We watched the news intently when Mariupol, Ukraine, was being attacked. We hoped for a miracle, some instant last-minute turn around that would save the city and the people inside the fortified factory. Instead, we have 200 found dead and the loss of the city to Russia.

Our hearts were broken when we heard of the violent deaths in Buffalo and Texas. Dylan's plaintive questions about banned cannons and tears that lead to change, hit home.

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In the gospel of Mark (8:12) Jesus attempts in vain to get his disciples to think about the cross and its implications. Some Pharisees come to him and ask for a miracle. The text says that Jesus "groans" when he hears the question. (8:12) It is the wrong question. Jesus's question was, **"Can you deny yourself and take up the cross?"** That was the question the early church would have to answer after Pentecost. The cross was the consequence of saying that "Jesus and not Caesar is Lord."

How many deaths would it take to convince Rome that there was an alternative to empire building? How many deaths and sanctions will it take before Mr. Putin realizes the truth in what his mother probably told him at age three—that you can't take other people's stuff.

When our hearts are broken, when we hear the news of violent deaths of school children or deaths of people that have been racialized, it's the Spirit inviting us to join her in seeking a solution. It is not just about stricter gun control. Surely it is also about putting more energy into identifying and addressing the psychological, emotional, sociological and spiritual deficits that underlie such violence. By now we should have enough data. That work is a labour of love.

And speaking of love, in the midst of a world that seems to be coming apart, we are aware of a spirit of generosity that matches the tragedy of war. A dozen or so countries have opened their borders and millions of people have opened their hearts and their homes to welcome refugees. That too is the work of the Spirit. That too is "Blowin in the wind" It is enough to give us the courage and the hope to carry on.

Blessings. *Glen*

*The sections of **Our Context, In Christ and A New Creation** invite us to think about what is going on now in **our community and the world**. And how **In Christ**, we dare to face challenges and be changed in our faith and life journey in order to become **A New Creation**.*

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 cycles [here](#) on page 9) as we live out God's mission.*

Congregations In Search Mode – Accepting Applications:

- **Avondale UC** (Tillsonburg) and Otterville UC
- **Beachville Pastoral Charge** (Sweaburg UC + West Oxford UC)

Congregations Working Through Steps of Search Mode:

- **College Ave. UC**
- **Kintore and Brooksdale UC**
- **Foldens UC** has a Shared Ministry Agreement with Beachville PC.
- **Burgessville UC** has LLWLs.

THE OXFORD LEGACY FUND

still taking requests in 2022!

Submit your requests

to Lynne Dunlop

lynndunl@execulink.com

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UNITED CHURCH RURAL MINISTRY NETWORK

"Connecting Rural Stories
with rural people across
Canada"

www.UCRMN.ca

This grassroots initiative for Rural Ministry across Canada in the United Church offers workshops, has an ENews and more.

Their recent Summer ENews highlights [an event in New Brunswick, June 16-18 with Dr. Marvin Lee Anderson](#), a Reflection on Racism by a pastor to a historic black church in Collingwood, and a reflection on Our Mother, the Earth.



[webpage](#)
Current
Programs and
Possibilities.

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.



[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

**Regional Council SPRING Meeting is
Friday June 8 to Sunday June 11.**

**Registration is now closed. Let us
keep those attending in prayer.**

**Stay informed on our Region's news!
Subscribe to the ARWRC newsletter
[here](#)**



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

Registration for campers is OPEN!

July 10-15 is intermediate camp

July 17-22 is junior camp

July 24-29 is intermediate camp

July 31-August 5 is junior camp

August 7-12 is senior camp

August 14-19 is junior camp

Reminder:

Junior Camp - ages 7-10

Intermediate Camp - ages 10-13

Senior Camp - ages 12-15

Registrar: Kate Wintermute (Tondue)

Phone: 226-927-3353

Email: camptannerinc@gmail.com

Still Looking For Staff & Volunteers for Summer 2022

Staff – Lifeguards, Counselors, Craft Leaders,
Assistant Director, Cleaner, Kitchen Support

Volunteer – Cooking, Camp Set-Up, Assisting
with Camper Arrival (head check and carrying
luggage), Cleaning & Odd Jobs

Willing to look for creative solutions to work around
other obligations. Message us if you are interested
and we will chat about hours.

If interested message us on Facebook for more details or e-
mail camptannercoordinator@outlook.com

Many Members – One Body



1 Corinthians 12:12-25 If you
are wondering what part of the
church body you are, listen to
this [message of](#)

Rev Maya Landell (Islington UC)
preaching at the Covenanting Service
(May 29) of Rev Doug Peck (Lambeth UC)

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JUNE 23, at

6:30 ZOOM Link available later on [webpage](#), phone 519-539-3361

Food For Friends As food costs increase, we are **blessed to be able to give a Dollar at the till** for others to make nutritious choices as they shop with dignity.



The new [website](#) describes **The Inn** (Oxford's Emergency Shelter). **The Meeting Place, Bullwinkle's Eatery and Hospitality.** Items needed:

- Deodorant
- Shower gel/body wash + bars of soap
- Toilet tissue, kleenex tissue, paper towels
- Shampoo/conditioner (adult, baby + kid)
- Hair brushes + combs
- Shaving cream + razors
- Dish soap, laundry soap, dryer sheets
- All purpose household cleaner
- Toothbrushes/toothpaste, kid's toothbrushes, toothpaste
- Tampons/sanitary pads, diapers + wipes

\$ DONATIONS\$

Donations can be made on their website or mail Treasurer of Operation Sharing, P.O. Box 20081, Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 8X8.

GRAND RIVER BOOKSTORE

To order call 1-888-6680871; email sales@grandriverbooks.com; online <https://www.grandriverbooks.ca/>
Mail delivery \$5.00.

Oxford Coalition for Social Justice

Supports **Oxford Children's Water Festival**. Free Family Event on Saturday, June 11, 2022, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm at Pittock Conservation Area. Rain or Shine.



www.childrenswaterfestival.ca

OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)



Bisrat Berhe Yemane is almost here! He arrives Thursday, June 9 to live with his cousins Habte and Abrhazion Zekarias in London

who are co-sponsoring him with St. David's UC. We can hardly image how difficult this long wait has been for him to come here. At 16, Bisrat applied with his his mother (Freweini Ghebrehiwet) and he is now 22! (You may recall that Freweini withdrew her application due to administrative complications.) This picture of Bisrat is at least 2 years old. In August, we look forward to an interview with him with a picture of him being welcomed here in Canada!

Sponsorship donations from the following churches would be appreciated. **Write "Refugee Sponsorship" in the memo line.** **Knox UC**, PO Box 59, Embro ON N0J 1J0; and **Westminster UC**, 115 George St. Thamesford, ON N0M 2M0

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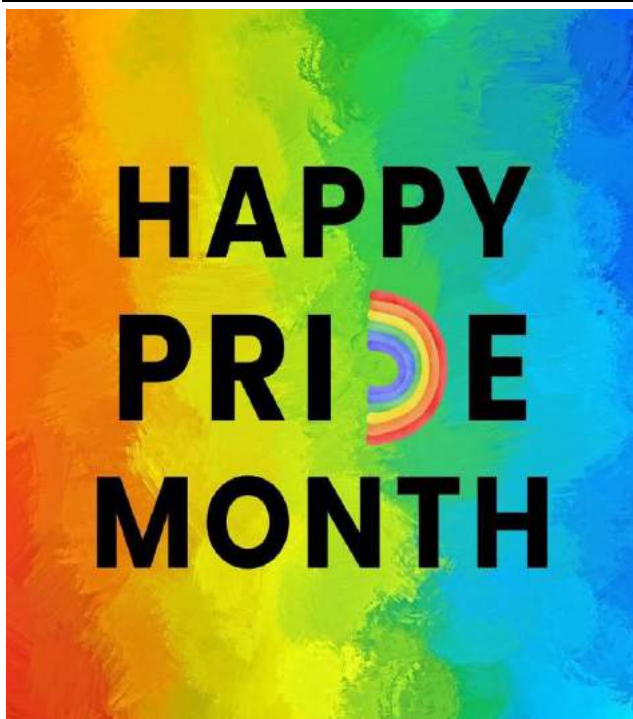
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July 15-17th at Five Oaks

It is with a heavy heart that we bring you news of the end of Skylight Festival. Since 2015, the Skylight Festival has brought much hope as a creative place for our widely diverse communities to connect on arts, faith peace and justice. But Covid dealt the Festival a difficult blow in 2020, and reduced funding and registration forced the Management Team to cancel this year's event and to decide not to continue. We are grateful for the good laughs/tears, the passionate words of justice and connections with new and old friends. **There will be a 6 month space for the possibility of others continuing the work of Skylight before donating remaining funds.**



Pentecost fortifies us to reflect critically on how our choices are re-shaping our world and the need for systemic changes.

In Christ

Food Security and Faith

'What's for dinner?' Rarely do we hear the question 'Is there going to be any'? **Our faith includes food for all**, a safe, reliable and affordable food supply chain. And the producers in agriculture and fisheries should earn a dignified livelihood – ensuring an ecological balance. Not just in Oxford County but across Canada and the globe.

Drought stricken [Somalia](#) is on the brink of famine - 1/2 of the 12.3 Million people face acute food insecurity. But weather and war are only part of the problem.

Global food security is precarious. **Food has become a natural resource or mere commodity to be bought and sold for profit.** It is no longer considered a source of life, i.e. [sacred](#). (Reference is UCC Mandate, Fall 2019, page 15).

Recently, ARWRC participated with other Regions in a [Round Table discussion with the Open Food Network Canada](#). Use the link above to look at the Global Food System Bottlenecks graphic on page 4. Imagine if you can that at the top of the bottle are only 6 Agri-inputs feeding 570 million farmers, who deal with only 4 agricultural commodity traders, and food is processed by only 10 food processors and manufacturers selling to only 5 Retailers, to supply 7.2 billion consumers! (Source Greenpeace 2015)

Alternatives include the Open Food Network, community gardens, Food Grains Bank, regenerative farming AND yes MORE IDEAS TO COME! MM

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The Mississauga Indians of New Credit were the original owners of land west from Rouge River (east of Toronto) north of the headwaters of the Thames River here in northern Oxford County, and south east to Long Point¹). As trade and settlements grew, refugees from the American Revolution sought safe places, treaties were made between Mississauga people and the Crown to make land available for settlement. The Between the Lakes Treaty, No. 3 (1792) [about 3 million acres in all was signed for £1,180 in goods](#), roads to be built and rivers navigated! The intent was for Indigenous and settler populations to co-exist in the region 'forever'. You are encouraged to use the hotlink of this map of the

Municipal Boundaries Related to the
Between the Lakes Treaty, No. 3 (1792)

to locate your congregation. Next issue
some more of our history. MM

- 1) <http://mncfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Map-Land-Cessions-and-Rouge-Tract-Claim.jpg>



Nations Uniting
Sharing Centre

Sharing Centre A safe place to
Listen, to Learn, to Heal and to Grow.

Topics have included Residential School Stories, Traditional cultures, and documentaries. Sometimes just plain conversations with others, what's happening in our communities? Ideas to consider...

DATE of Next Sharing Circle still to be determined for those particularly interested in learning more about acknowledging land on the Haldimand Tract. Please be in touch with Rhonda Johns <nations.uniting@gmail.com> to get possible dates and times. Usually @ **1:30 pm - 3:30 pm**

GRANDMOTHERS TEA

June 29, 2022, noon till 2:00 pm

@ Five Oaks

Potluck, laughter and fun



Next Dates for Grandmothers Tea:

July 27 – Burgessville UC

August 31 - Nations Uniting

September – needed: a church to gather

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A NEW CREATION

*Our deep love for creation and humanity sends us out into the world. God goes with us **to reconcile the world.** Fully human and alive with the Spirit, we treat others and nature as subjects (not objects).*

PRAYER CYCLES



Each week, we pray for each other and our mission in the world. We are not alone sharing with and supporting each other.

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

June 9-11 **ARW Regional Meeting**

June 12 Lori Minler Mt Elgin

June 19 Karlene Brown-Palmer, Karen Hodges, Pat Cook, Maurice Francis, Bonnie Pilkey St Paul's (T'burg)

June 26 Judy Campbell, PCS, Avondale (T'burg)

July 3, Lynne Dunlop, PCS, Otterville

July 10, Lori Minler, Newark

July 17, Lori Minler, PCS, Curries-Oxford Centre

July 24, [Licensed Lay Worship Leaders](#)

July 31, Tracy Crick-Butler, Judy Campbell, Trinity Ingersoll

Aug 7, Mark Marshall, Gerald Hamoen, Thamesford

Aug 14, Hickson – vacant

Aug 21 Nancy Vandenberghe (SDLM), Jane Van Patter PCS, Hebron

Aug 28, Janice Pow, Norwich

Sept 4, Jane Baxter, Princeton Etonia

For ARW Region:

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

Jun 12 [Melbourne](#)

Jun 19 [Avon-Putnam](#)

Jun 26 [St. Paul's Sarnia](#)

Jul 3 [Malahide-Richmond](#)

Jul 10 [Wilkesport](#)

Jul 17 [Moraviantown](#)

Jul 24 [Hickson](#)

Jul 31 [Belmont, Harrietsville-Mossley](#)

Aug 7 [St. Luke's: Sarnia](#)

Aug 14 [Oxford Centre](#)

Aug 21 [Bedford: Windsor](#)

Aug 28 [Ravenswood](#)

PALESTINE – ISRAEL

Attending the UNJPPI (United Network for Peace in Palestine and Israel) Conference in London in early May has inspired me to include a monthly column with resources. I particularly found [the virtual interview with Gabor Maté](#), a Jewish Psychiatrist in Vancouver compelling. He shared his own journey from being a Zionist who started questioning the media and financing of Israel because of his growing concern for Palestinian human rights to helping found **Jews for A Just Peace**. He encouraged us not to be intimidated by the powerful Zionist lobby. You can listen to the hot link above.

A Canadian produced documentary caught my attention. [MY TREE](#) (you can watch it on GEM). A Canadian man searches for the tree that was planted in his name in Israel many years earlier. **When he discovers that it stands on the remains of an Arab village, he is forced to question his own culpability.** The documentary is sensitive, thought provoking and points out the role of **green washing**. The 'branding' of Israel as a place that needed to be greened was an incredible genius of marketing which **denied not only the existing biodiversity of the land but also the Palestinians who were native to the land for 4 millennia.** **Fast growing Jerusalem pine trees** were sponsored, sold and planted to paint the landscape 'green' within 5 years. **Oak trees**, better suited to the climate and soil, would use the 5 years to grow roots before growing up green. The pine trees are a fire hazard with their shallow roots. 40 Israeli soldiers died in 2010 in a forest fire when they travelled through a fire to rescue prisoners only to find they had already been evacuated. The soldiers, on their return through the worsening fire, all died. Israel continues to plant inappropriate trees and illegally colonize the West Bank.

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GENERAL COUNCIL 44



Who Do You Say I Am?
General Council 44

We join the commissioners
in their prayer during this
unique General Council:

We name ...

**with prayers of love and
blessing today.**

**Holy God, reveal yourself and
your words as we pray for ...**

Come, Holy Spirit. (listen for God)

Jesus is here... A thanksgiving...

Pray for someone else...

Pray for yourself...

June 1, I gathered with others across Canada and with General Council [representatives from](#) SABEEL, Jerusalem; World Methodist Council, Germany; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; and United Church of Christ, USA; representing churches/organizations at General Council (pretty neat this zoom, thing!) for **"Daring Justice – Courageous Conversations Across Divides"**.

The witness of **Omar Haramy from SABEEL** impressed me as he reported the fear in the eyes of the 3000-armed policemen facing the confident eyes of the oppressed victims. We should remember that there is more than the 'worldly power of guns and money'; there is the power of the kingdom of God! When we speak to the powerful, we must be firm in our demand for justice. When we speak to the oppressed, we must remind them that they are human too.

Karen George Thompson (UCC) lifted up the importance of language, protecting each other's backs, and continuing to

speak truth. Our silence sustains the status quo. Some memorable quips 'JUSTICE IS LONG HAUL,' 'Don't judge only what people do. Look also at who are they?', As Jesus saw peoples' real identity and responded in love, so for us. MM



JESSICA HETHERINGTON,
Ecotheologian



The Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington returns **Friday night September 30- to Sunday, October 2** to speak

and teach us more about how we can respond faithfully to the ecological crisis.

The event will be hybrid – both in person and virtual. Details to follow.

Check out Rev. Jessica's new webpage <https://jessicahetherington.ca/>.

Faithful Footsteps UCC program



There are grants, tools and inspiring help for congregations to reduce their carbon footprint. Start with controlling air

leakages as described in their [blog](#). Or apply for a Faithful Footprints Grant to install energy efficient heating and cooling system.

Many of their projects are described on their [Facebook page](#). All have used Climate Energy Science. You save energy and money! As well as stimulating the economy. Faithful Footsteps is a partnership of Faith and the Common Good and the UCC.

Faith and the Common Good has excellent resources on their [website](#) on ENERGY STAR Action Workbook for Congregations, DIY Walkthrough Audit, Financing Options for Greening Your Sacred Space, Native Plant Garden Guide, A Guide to Developing A Green Team plus more!

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VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS

- Olga McKellar

Early in June, my daughter took one of her teenaged girls to Iceland on a short holiday. They learned many interesting things. For example, did you know that in 1783 the Laki Volcano erupted, one of the most violent eruptions in recent history. 10,000 people were killed and the resulting acid rain from the eruption resulted in acid rain that made major climatic changes worldwide.

We all have learned how acid rain harms our environment because of the deadly chemicals it contains. Scientists carefully monitor them to ensure our society is not being poisoned.

Largely because of our mass media these days, the presence of the dark side of humanity seems out of proportion compared with the bright side. Some people react to this with aggression; others hide from it behind triple-locked doors and iron barred windows. All these reactions are signs of another poisonous pollution: fear. Fear of global war, of terrorism, of the spread of crime, of drugs and violence. To be cautious in our troubled world is to live wisely, but to be a prisoner of fear is never to truly live.

That is certainly NOT to be a follower of Jesus.

'Fear not' was one of Jesus' insistent commands. Only when we free ourselves from panic can we actually change our world for the better. Don't feed your mind with the 'acid rain' of fearful thoughts; to do so is to attract dark, negative energies to yourself. Each new day gives us an opportunity to follow Jesus' teaching to 'fear not'. Instead, focus on Jesus and on God. Seek out good deeds to do, peaceful



thoughts to contemplate, loving kindness to share. Free yourself from the spiritual 'acid rain' of fear and anger. Only then are we helping to create the Kingdom of Peace.

Olga

FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

Fantastic Fathers

Because it is the Father's Day month I am writing about Fantastic Fathers in Nature. You may remember "Marvelous Mothers" in last month's story.

Because I could not decide which of the fathers was the most fantastic, I will tell you about both.



The first is Brazil's Rhea, a flightless bird larger than an Emu but smaller than an Ostrich.

As a father he builds the nest and encourages females to come and lay eggs at the side of the nest. He moves the eggs into the nest and sits on them until they hatch. There could be as many as 80 eggs.

When they hatch it is his job to look after the baby Rheas until maturity. WOW!



The other fantastic father is the Sea Horse.

The Sea Horse has a pouch, like a kangaroo. The female Sea Horse deposits her eggs in the pouch where they hatch. Then he gives birth. These tiny baby Sea Horses – (do they call them colts?) do not need looking after since they have all that they need to start life on their own.

Now isn't that awesome? Which of these fathers gets the Father of the Year Award? I can't decide. Can you?

GW

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Oxford County of Ontario Helps Ukraine



June 1 is Children's Day in Ukraine and some other countries. Families go to the park, get free rides and snacks. Some went to the Frozen Cow in Thamesford! AND yes, it is something that Canada should celebrate as well!

HOSTS URGENTLY NEEDED:

Recent post on [Facebook page](#):



**If you are even slightly thinking of
hosting
PLEASE DO.**

**We are turning people away daily.
Contact an administrator.**



The Administrators are noted on the Facebook page. Not on Facebook? Email oxfordhelpsukraine@gmail.com.

David/Karen Murray

Still Needed: Tea Kettles. Please call Irene Tiegs (519-536-5554).

In [May](#) page 11, we included a request for donations to the Main Street Warehouse. At present the warehouse cannot accept anymore donations. They appreciate the generosity.

**CONFLICT MAY DIVIDE
US. COMPASSION
UNITES US**

WORSHIP SERVICES IN OXFORD

Check with individual churches re specifics of in-person worship, streaming or conference call services. Churches in blue have websites. Check for Facebook Pages.

Avondale UC, T'burg

avondaleuc@gmail.com

Burgessville UC, 10:30 am

College Ave UC

Dundas St. UC

Hebron UC - rsstock@execulink.com

Innerkip UC

Kintore/Brooksdale UC

Knox UC, Embro

Mt Elgin UC

Norwich UC

Peace UC, Plattsville

peaceplattsecretary@outlook.com

St. David's UC, Woodstock

St. Paul's UC, Tillsonburg

Trinity UC, Ingersoll

Westminster UC, Thamesford

Willis UC, Drumbo open for in person service and conference call.

drumbocharge@hotmail.com

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**Submissions welcome and due by
Noon Friday July 29, 2022**

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<https://www.facebook.com/OxfordUCMinistries/>