

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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### Summer - a break from routine

The global pandemic has brought great challenges to our lives, including the life of the church. A silver lining for Knox



United Church in Embro, was the decision to worship outside on the church lawn in the summer of 2021, as soon as the weather permitted. Sitting in the shade of the maple trees and visiting with each other before and after worship has been

life giving. There was some concern about rain dates. Would we be able/allowed to go inside if it was raining? Could we still mask and social distance in the church basement where the same relaxed feel could be experienced? Luckily, we never had to figure that out because from July to October every Sunday we had great weather days for outside worship. **We encouraged people to bring lawn chairs, water bottles, snacks, sunhat or umbrellas, whatever people needed to be comfortable.**

Summer is a great time to shake things up and break from routine. When



you worship outside, people are already feeling comfortable with the idea of not coming to church in suits and ties, so changing the liturgy is also a good idea, especially during the sermon or reflection time. I reminded my congregants that **worship is also a verb and invited them to participate.**

Have you ever wondered what people were thinking when you delivered a sermon? Outdoor summer services are a great time to ask! "So Pete, what do you think about that?" The first thing to do is start by asking easy, comfortable to answer questions so people are more apt to volunteer answers. We have an outdoor sound system with a speaker and cordless mic. **We pass the mic around and invite people to share.** If covid is a concern, disinfectant wipes are handy for cleaning off the mic. Start slow. Last summer I asked, "What was the most significant way the pandemic has changed your life?" **Communal lament is**

## Discipleship for Earth Healing



A dynamic weekend of spiritual exploration and ecological commitment with the Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington, Ecotheologian



#### WHEN & WHERE

- Friday, Sept 30 to Sunday, Oct 2 at Trinity United Church, 118 Church St, Ingersoll ON

To register, contact Lynne Dunlop at [lvnndun@execulink.co](mailto:lvnndun@execulink.co)

- **Friday 7:00 p.m.: Keynote talk**
- **Saturday: Workshops**
- **Sunday : Worship 10:30 a.m.**

In person (limited) or streamed, no cost.  
For more info go to

[jessicahetherington.ca/events](https://jessicahetherington.ca/events)

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### cathartic and joys are better when shared.

This season we launched our outdoor services with a **Food Truck Gratitude Festival** for the whole community as a way of thanking everyone for their support over the last few years. Church



committees and groups set up displays about what we do as a church in the community and beyond. People also toured the church building. We set out lawn games for children and adults to play. Think Sunday school picnic with sack races and ice cream! Don't be afraid to think outside the box, get out of the church and into the community. A community covered pavilion, it's a great place to host summer worship.



Need a few ideas to get started? For Camping Sunday set up tents for kids to play in. Celebrate Christmas in July and act out the Christmas Story with live animals! Host the Olympic Games and quiz people on their Bible knowledge so they can advance in the "race." Teach some Ecotheology under the clear blue summer skies and have fun worshipping in the great outdoors! Submitted by Rev Susan Cole of Knox UC, Embro.

### Editorial...

The layout has changed but your stories of worshipping together and meeting the needs of others are here. The index below may help you find your favourite column. For now, we are limiting the number of pages to 8. Please give us feedback

As General Council 44 rises, we are grateful to be '[a bold, connected evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship and daring justice.](#)'

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**Oxford welcomes Janine Lunn who has been appointed to Beachville PC (Sweaburg + West Oxford) and Foldens UC as Student Minister** starting September.



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### Oxford Coalition for Social Justice

The Coalition supports social and ecological justice projects in Oxford showing solidarity with others.

**Reuse-A-PalooZaha**

**A FREE GREAT SWAP MEET**  
**EMBRO COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**SAT AUG 13th**  
**8:30 - 12:00PM**

**A great way to meet neighbours, declutter, stop the dump, reuse, recycle, rethink, repurpose, renew, reduce, redirect, remove. Join in with donations, with great collecting and family volunteering**

**Hosted by the Township of Zorra**  
**"Bring home someone else's treasure"**  
**The best thing ever. It is Free!**

All volunteers get thanks, gratitude and a gift of anything they want.

**BE THERE**

### FRET? NOT YET!

One of the most interesting gifts my husband ever gave me was my own copy of 'The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology'. It is truly a gift that keeps on giving. It traces the background of English words from their first appearances in spoken or written usage and explains how secondary meanings developed and are now used.

When I am doing chores, I often sing or hum without noticing what I am singing and often an attendant grandkid will interrupt me and ask what I am singing.

The other day I happened to be singing "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid...Fret not yourself..." My granddaughter broke in to ask, "What is fret?" My pet dictionary came to her aid with three meanings: gnaw from the Old English, 13<sup>th</sup>.C; adorned with carved or embossed work from the Old French, 17<sup>th</sup>.C; or, a bar of wood used to regulate the pitch in some stringed musical instruments, origin unknown, 16<sup>th</sup>.C.

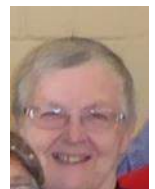
In the Psalms, David warns us not to fret. Was he worrying because the Fat Cats of his day, those who had power and money, lived off the fat of the land as, indeed, they do today? They always seemed to get away with their iniquity then as they do today.

We were reminded to avoid being fretted by the state of their world as we are. Fretting, he said, is useless and harmful. Hmm! Does fret link to friction? Friction indicates the lack of oil and maybe fretting suggests the absence of the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit. So many Christians lose much of their spirituality while they are fighting, even fighting for a good cause.

We try hard to wipe out works of iniquity by legislation, by elected governments, by prayer, only to be reminded that the only way to go is to follow Jesus, take the Way of Light, Life, and Love. Fretfulness is never God's way.

Fret not over the problems of this world; follow the Way of peace, joy, and love.

Olga McKellar



### THE OXFORD LEGACY FUND

still taking requests in 2022!

Submit your requests

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

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The Annual General Meeting of Operation Sharing was held on June 23, 2022. **The**

**2019 Annual Report of Operation Sharing can be found [here](#).**

The Summer newsletter, HELPING IN UNITY, is available [here](#).

Check out their new [website](#) for supplies and personal care items for **The Inn** (Oxford's Emergency Shelter). **The Meeting Place, Bullwinkle's Eatery and Hospitality**

**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.

**Donations** can be made

on their [website](#) or mail Treasurer of Operation Sharing, P.O. Box 20081, Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 8X8



### **Oxford County of Ontario Helps Ukraine**

With the backing of County Councillors, the County of Oxford has rallied to support families who have moved here. We continue with a volunteer who helps with food security issues; the warehouse (Irene Tieges) which offers free shopping for clothes and household goods; and a new committee for housing needs.

Check out posts on [Facebook page](#) for donations of furniture, job opportunities. Looking to have another potluck for hosts and families. June gathering at home of Cheryl and Rev Mark Marshall was successful! **Thank you to Bethany Lutheran Church, Woodstock for issuing receipts for money donations!** There is a support group for host families to share information.

Email [oxfordhelpsukraine@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordhelpsukraine@gmail.com).  
David/Karen Murray

### **Oxford PRAYER CYCLE**



*As we share with and support each other in prayer for our mission in the world.*

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

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

Sept 11, Lynne Dunlop PCS, Foldens

Sept 18, Janine Lunn SM, Mary Anne Silverthorne PCS, Sweaburg + West Oxford,

Sept 25, Ken Jackson, RS, Drumbo

Oct 2, Margaret Trapnell RS, + Liz Lemon VAM, Dundas St

Oct 9, Michael Shewburg, Richwood

Oct 16, Jennifer Canning, Peace (Plattsville)

### **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](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** open for in person service and conference call.

[drumbocharge@hotmail.com](mailto:drumbocharge@hotmail.com)

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### For Children of all ages.

In an Eagle's nest not far from Nanaimo, BC, the following was recorded. by a webcam. (watch it [here](#))



An Eagle flies to her nest with food in her talons for her two eaglets. She opens her talons and

drops a fledging baby hawk which she has apparently plucked out of its nest. But amazingly, the baby hawk is not hurt and when dropped into the nest, does what she or he has always done when seeing and hearing the flapping on wings. The baby hawk stands tall and opens its mouth for food. The mother eagle, surprised at what has just happened, pauses, then flies off to get more food for her two eaglets plus this new baby hawk.

**What was supposed to be food had suddenly become family.**

Now isn't that just awesome?

It reminds me of the line in the hymn, "He will bear you up on eagle's wings." In this case instead of the next line of "And hold you in the palm of his hand." It could be **"And hold you in the safety of her talons, then feed and nurture you as a beloved child of her family."** GW

### Sunday September 25. St



David's Refugee Sponsorship Committee invites you to meet **Bisrat Yemane** at **St David's United Church** during their **10:30 service**. This will be followed by a Baked Potato Lunch. Details to follow.



### OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)

**St David's Church congregation** reports with joy the arrival, on July 9<sup>th</sup>, of Bisrat Yemane, their sponsored Eritrean man who has been living as a refugee in Khartoum, Sudan.

He was met at Pearson by his co-sponsor and cousin Habte Zekarius and brought to London to live with Habte and his wife Abrhazion. Members of St David's refugee sponsorship committee made a welcoming visit with a gift basket. Bisrat starts ESL



classes in September and is happy to have work in an Aylmer shampoo factory. He rides with other immigrants from

London, some of whom are Eritrean and speak Bisrat's language, Tigrinya.

Regrettably, there has been no progress on the 6 Eritreans (St David's UC) and an Iraqi family of 5 (Trinity UC, Ingersoll).

**Maqssoud**, the Afghan man (Knox UC, Embro) who escaped to Pakistan, relates that **no at risk Afghans are being processed by the UNHCR in Pakistan. He has been told that there has been no specific decision on Afghan refugees in Pakistan.** He says that thousands of Afghan refugees in Islamabad are protesting with the motto "KILL US! Afghan refugees in Islamabad."

**The Hamoudi family**, Syrian refugees in Lebanon, (Westminster UC, Thamesford) are preparing their forms.

Sponsorship donations to 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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### CLOSE TO OXFORD

#### GRANDMOTHERS TEA

August 31, Nations Uniting, Caledonia

noon till 2:00 pm

Potluck, laughter and fun

#### GRAND RIVER BOOKSTORE

To order call 1-888-6680871; email [sales@grandriverbooks.com](mailto:sales@grandriverbooks.com); online <https://www.grandriverbooks.ca/>

Mail delivery \$5.00.

### CAMP BIMINI'S 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

Storytelling Journey

Campfire & Vespers

BBQ Dinner & Bimini Dessert

Bimini Merchandise Available

Memorabilia on Display

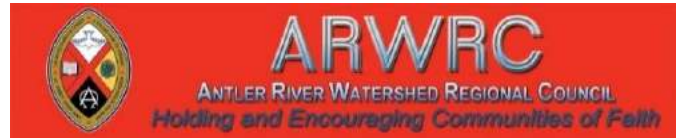
**SUNDAY, August 28 3-7 pm**

**4-5 pm:** hear memories and stories from campers, staff and board members

**6 pm:** Bring a lawn chair for campfire and vespers

BBQ is a goodwill donation to support Camp Bimini improvements

Questions? Email <[campbimini@cyg.net](mailto:campbimini@cyg.net)>



[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

Be informed on our Region's news, subscribe to the newsletter [here](#)

### ARW Region: PRAYER CYCLES

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

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

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

Aug 14 [Oxford Centre](#)

Aug 21 [Bedford: Windsor](#)

Aug 28 [Ravenswood](#)

### GENERAL COUNCIL 44



Commissioners to GC44 prayerfully considered many complex issues. Grateful for the work completed, we pray for the ongoing work to be done by the General Secretary and General Council Executive until **General Council reconvenes next year!**

Read the highlights of GC44 news [here](#). Our new moderator will be installed August 27. To watch online [here](#). Read her story in Broadview Magazine [here](#).

### Faithful Footsteps UCC program

The United Church of Canada has committed the whole church to the **aspirational goal of an 80% decrease in**



**carbon emissions by 2030.** The picture is the United Church in Wawa which used grants from Faithful Footsteps to install these solar panels. Check out resources on their [website](#).



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### GLOBAL FOOD FOR THE SOUL

#### The Good Samaritan Story Revisited

As I write, the temperature in London England is 40 degrees Celsius. Wildfires are burning across France, Spain, Portugal and Greece due to the record temperatures. With such a spike in the temperature it is difficult to deny that we are in a climate crisis. It is not that we were not warned.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, poet William Blake wrote a four verse poem, later call "Jerusalem" in which he mentioned the "clouded hills" and "these dark Satanic mills". It was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, or for him the Industrial Revulsion, and he did not like what he saw. In the last two verses of the poem Blake commits himself to "building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land". This Jerusalem was a community of love and justice, God's Kingdom on earth.

A century later composer Edward Elgar put the poem to music. Jerusalem became a popular hymn. King George V said he liked it better than "God Save the King". Elgar's version of Jerusalem became a popular selection of church soloists. More recently, it was covered wonderfully by British singer, song writer and social activist, Billy Bragg.

So, what does this have to do with the Good Samaritan story? Just this. Somewhere on the 200 year journey from William Blake to Billy Bragg, mother earth fell among thieves. She is being beat up, her resources stolen. Even Blake's "green and pleasant land" is turning brown.

We are the thieves. We are the religious folks that Jesus mentioned who passed by on the other side. We are also the victims, not just because of rising temperatures etc. In a world where in practice nature has been there to serve us, it is easy to become alienated from that which gives us life.

The good news is that we are also Good Samaritans. That is the role that is the most difficult. In that role we need help; in that role we need each other. Jesus knew that when he chose disciples, followers and companions in building that alternate community he called the Kingdom of God.

Because being a "Good Samaritan" is often a lonely and discouraging task, we have planned a weekend, Sept. 30-Oct 2 at Trinity United, Ingersoll with The Rev. Dr. Jessica Heatherington, eco-theologian. We hope you can be part of that. It will be life-giving. Building the Kingdom of God, or "Jerusalem" as William Blake called it, is now nothing less than helping to heal the planet.

In a recent TV clip, a reporter noticed a grade one teacher and her class engaged in a recycling project. The reporter asked one of the students why he was doing this. He said, "To save the earth. If we didn't have the earth, where would we live?" Exactly!

Blessings. *Glen Wright co-editor*



#### FARMER WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, in English and French, farmers needing immediate support can call 1-866-267-6255 to speak to a mental health professional.