

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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PRACTICING LOVE

Practicing love makes deep friendships; treats others as we would like to be treated; it never goes out of style. Often at odds with government positions. It is an alternative culture. Our practice of love, the on-going work of Christmas are our stories this month.

OUR CONTEXT (pg 2) where one community of faith has called Rev. Jennifer Canning even as three others begin the process to call new personnel. As one minister retires two others are called to new ministries. We lament the passing of Rev. Stan Stanhope. We lift up opportunities to serve at Camp Tanner. We celebrate with our refugees their progress in coming to Canada as slow as it is. We welcome the opportunity to provide needs of Operation Sharing as they support the COLD WALK for housing the homeless.

IN CHRIST (pg. 9) offers opportunities to learn the practice of love: Racism as part of Truth and Reconciliation, love of Creation in Ecotheology and Discipleship (Feb 16), long term care crisis with Ontario Health Coalition (Jan 29-30).

A NEW CREATION (pg 11) – prayer cycles, qualities of the amazing loon and letting the Light of the World shine in our hearts.

Marg Murray co-editor



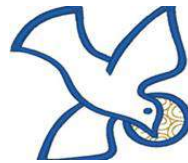
Ecotheology and Discipleship

- Ecotheologian & United Church minister, Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington is back!
- **Understanding Discipleship.** Rev. Jessica will preach, teach and answer our questions!

contact Lynne Dunlop at
lynndunl@execulink.com

February 16th, 2022 – 7pm, to 8:15pm – Zoom

Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington



FOOD FOR THE SOUL

The Language of Love

Just before Advent, in the name of downsizing I decided to cull our record collection. What music will we keep for future listening and what goes? In the process, I came across "The Greatest Hits of Jim Croce", (pronounced "cro-chay" in case there are those who do not remember.) I decided I needed to play it again, in order to decide its fate.

The record begins with his song "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown." **The lyrics continue with "baddest man in the whole downtown. . . meaner than a junk yard dog."** In contrast, Croce sings his ballad, **"I tried to say I love you, but the words just came out wrong, so I'm saying that I love you in a song."**

There have always been Leroy Brown adversaries that are "meaner than junk yard dogs" and in the midst, attempts to say "I love you" that go beyond the spoken word.

Thirteen centuries before Jesus, in the face of bad, bad Pharaoh, the Hebrews packed up essentials for their escape from slavery. **Miriam packed a tambourine, just in case they made it to the other side; just in case there was another side.** So when they reached safety, Miriam grabbed her tambourine and led the people in a song about freedom. (Exodus 15: 21) God's words "I love you" became liberation from bad, bad Pharaoh. The response was a song.

Advent ends with what has been called "the song of Mary." **It's a song of justice, about a time when the poor will no longer go hungry.** (Luke 1:53) These are words of love sung in the face

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of bad, bad Herod. **God found a way to say "I love you," in a song about justice and the birth of a baby.**

So, under the long shadow of bad, bad Omicron, and in the face of the bad, bad climate crises, we, in defiance, celebrate Christmas. **We become aware of acts of love that go beyond words.**

A 15-year-old grade ten student in London was so ashamed of the few cans of food his class brought for the food drive that he went to the grocery store the next morning and with his own hard-earned money, bought enough food to fill his back pack and took it to school, then he did it again.

A 9-year-old girl said to me, "I am no fan of shots in the arm, but if it will keep someone else from getting sick, I will do it."

The Rev. Jessica Heatherington continues to give us new strategies for addressing the climate crises.

It's **"The work of Christmas"** which is the name of a poem written by black preacher Wilber Howard and adapted by Jim Strathdee in "I am the Light of the World." It is a song about Jesus' birth, a song about justice, a song about the work ahead. **The music has begun. Do you hear it? It's time to grab a tambourine.**

Blessings for the journey.

PS. Oh, by the way, Croce's "Greatest Hits" made the cut.

Happy New Year!

Glen Wright co-editor



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

Our newsletter is arbitrarily separated into Our Context, In Christ and A New Creation. As faithful thinking human parts of Creation, we seek to make better connections between our personal and collective lives in our faith journey.

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.*

- **Avondale UC** (Tillsonburg) and Otterville UC in Search mode.
- **College Ave. UC** – work through steps of Search Mode.
- **Hickson UC** has LLWL.
- **Beachville Pastoral Charge (Sweaburg UC + West Oxford UC)** are in Search Mode, accepting applications.
- **Foldens UC** has a Shared Ministry Agreement with Beachville PC.
- **Burgessville UC** has LLWL.
- **Kintore and Brooksdale UC** work through the steps of Search Mode.

PEACE UC, PLATTSVILLE welcomes Rev Jennifer Canning, February 1. Welcome to Oxford, Jennifer!

LLOYD BENNETT DLM retired from **College Ave UC**, December 2021.

REV SHERPHERD MUNIKWA is leaving **Dundas St. UC** for the Staff Position of Minister for Justice, Mission and Outreach for Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Waters/First Dawn Eastern Regions and begins his new position March 1. **Congratulations Sherpherd!**

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CONDOLENCES

THE REV. STAN STANHOPE (1941-2021)



We were deeply saddened when we heard of the death (Dec. 7) of the Rev. Stan Stanhope (obituary is [here](#)).

We got to know Stan not just at the regular meetings of Oxford Presbytery but during more than a decade of monthly retirees' breakfasts.

Stan would come early and be sitting there chatting with whoever else showed up early. Often that would have been the late Rev. Kent Garrett.

Stan was a devoted husband, father and grandfather to their beloved Conner. He was dedicated to the church at all levels. As the Rev. Maurice Francis said, "He was keen on church policy and finances. He took good care of us who appreciated our church pension." Maurice and Ruth added, "He was very interested in the Francis family because we had a cottage on Jack's Lake, near Golden Valley, an area where Norma had a close connection."

The Rev. Jane Van Patter spoke of Stan as being kind, respectful, encouraging, caring, compassionate, gracious, a gentle spirit and friend.

The Rev. Jeff Smith his current minister at St. David's said, "Stan had a passion and enthusiasm for ministry. He was filled with love. Each time I visited Stan I was ministered to. I always came away encouraged, uplifted and cared for."

Folks posted on Oxford United Ministries Facebook page noting memories and qualities: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa wrote "Such a dedicated minister!"; Sue Hilborn: "Had many wonderful conversations with Stan, when he would visit our farm. Always interested and interesting. A kind gentle man."; Carol

Ferguson "Very sorry about Stan's passing. One of the first folks to welcome me to Oxford Presbytery many years ago."; Tanya Cameron "We could always count on Stan to be the first to register for each years' annual meeting – he was a dedicated and invested minister. He would always register in person and take the time to indulge us in good conversation. He will be missed."

At our monthly breakfasts, Stan was always attentive to what was going on. He was one who did not need to talk but was not shy about contributing to the variety of topics that were part of that fellowship.

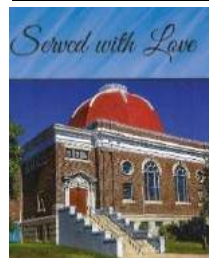
Stan had a keen interest in early Biblical manuscripts and translations. He read books on "Q", the unknown gospel author. CONNECTIONS published his work in [May 2020](#) and [August 2020](#).

In so many ways we will miss Stan, a faithful servant of God and of the church, our colleague, our companion, our friend.

GW



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.

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DESPITE THE PANDEMIC,
Canada's 100 highest-paid CEOs earned an average of:
\$10.9M
While the average worker earned:
\$57,024
Canada's CEOs have already made the average workers' pay
BY 11:54AM ON JAN 4TH.

Find out more about extreme wealth inequality at policyalternatives.ca/paradise



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

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

Save your EMPTY BOTTLES – there will be another Bottle Drive in the spring.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED!



**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.



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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.

Sister Water and the Sultan

Dates: February 10th, 17th, 24th, and March 3, 2022

Times: 7:30-9:00pm

This is an online event that will be conducted over Zoom.

Registration closes at 11pm on February 9th.

How do we live lovingly with each other - especially as we are divided by culture, nationality, religion and more? How do we live responsibly and lovingly with the natural world?

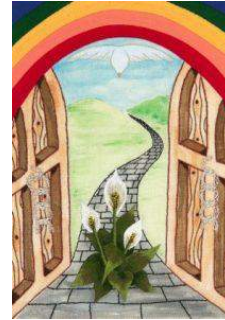
Francis of Assisi lived by the words of the anonymous poem often attributed to him: "Lord make me an instrument of thy peace, where there is hatred let me sow love." Francis was a medieval friar, deacon and preacher who is known, not only for his love of nature and the environment but also how he engaged deeply in the political and social issues of his day – including a powerful encounter with the Muslim Sultan of Egypt. Enjoy the awakening earth on this guided retreat with leader Len Desroches.

The rhythm of each session will be as follows: sharing/connecting; silence; presentation; group reflections, questions, discussion; closing silence.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action.

Friday, March 4, 2022 at 2:00 pm
(line will be open earlier for chatting)



VIRTUALLY gather with other folk from Oxford and area to view the excellent video prepared by the Women's Interchurch Council of Canada with the host country England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Get involved. A 4-part series of informed prayer together. Videos of panel conversations with WDP followed by prayer. Watch Part 1 and 2 WDP Pray NOW [here](#).

"I Know the Plans I Have for You" Bible Study - Jeremiah 29:1-14

Last year, 50 of us gathered from 17 congregations to worship and chat using the material from WICC.

Be in contact with Marg Murray murrayschell@gmail.com with ideas and to help organize. Thanks.
Zoom details will be available in February CONNECTIONS.

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OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE(OURS)

Wishing everyone a New Year of healing and promise, we also want to express our gratitude to those who support our sponsorship efforts in prayer, interest, and with your donations.

Family of Sara Temnewu (*Ethopia*)

The Rev. Tracy Crick-Butler of Trinity UC asked us to think about **the best gift we received during this year's Christmas**



season. For me it was an email from **Selemawit Ghebrehiwet**, the daughter of Sara Temnewu living as a refugee in Addis Ababa, and one of a family of four that is being co-sponsored by St

David's. She wrote **"May God bless you with eternal love and longing, with all the blessings and more, with all the things you need and much more."** She closed with **"Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!! Long life and prosperity."**

As reported previously, **this family has been living in fear as the Ethiopian civil war crept closer to them, yet Selemawit was able to reach out and bestow blessings on us.** Epiphany is the time in the church year when we are asked to think about what we can do in response to Christ being born and to put our thoughts into action. Selemawit's message reminds us that in our position of grace we can do just that.

There has been a de-escalation in the Ethiopian civil war recently. The Tigrayan forces that had been approaching Addis Ababa have retreated to their own region which could be a decisive opening for peace as well as an increase in humanitarian aid to that region. We hope that this may make conditions favourable for our sponsored refugees to get their final approval to come to Canada.

Maqssoud Mohammad Yar

(*Afghanistan*)

We are happy to report that Maqssoud Mohammad Yar, Embro's sponsored refugee, **safely crossed the border from Afghanistan to Pakistan and is now in Islamabad awaiting an appointment with the UN office to become registered as a refugee.** His sister Hanna, a Woodstock resident and co-sponsor, tells us that **he is still in danger as some Afghans in the same area as he is, have been deported back to Afghanistan for no apparent reason.** Some of these are held and beaten, sometimes killed, or they sometimes just disappear. Knox United has sent an email to the UN in Islamabad letting them know that Maqssoud has a sponsor in the hope that it will shorten his wait time for an appointment.

Other Refugees

The situation with our other sponsored refugees has not changed since the last update.

Funds

Funds are in place for all but two of our sponsored refugees.

Trinity United Ingersoll is accepting donations for the Al-Mohammedawi family of five, living as refugees from Iraq, in Turkey.

Cheques can be mailed to: Trinity United Church, 118 Church St., Ingersoll, ON, N5C 2X6, Please put "refugee sponsorship" in the memo line. Tax receipts will be issued by the Treasurer at Trinity.

There will be more information coming about how you can help support **Knox United for Embro's** sponsorship.

*Submitted by Marjorie Martin
Chairperson of the OURS Committee*

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

It is cold! Operation Sharing continues to help the disadvantaged especially when it IS COLD. More details in their [Website](#), [Facebook](#).

Support **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.

SIX NATIONS SHARING CIRCLE (formerly Grandmother's Tea)

Due to illness in the family of leader Rhonda Johns this virtual sharing circle is on temporary pause.

We offer our prayers for strength and healing for Rhonda's mother.

Knowing Rhonda and others from Six Nations is a blessing inspiring us to act on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There is much to do



Woodstock COLD WALK aims for \$100,000

They're back and they're looking for more.

This is the second year for the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) Woodstock fundraiser and Scott McKague, Woodstock event director, is optimistic the event can raise \$100,000. Similar fundraisers are being held across Canada and **the local one is in support of Operation Sharing's The Inn homeless shelter, which runs daily starting at 7:30 p.m. at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock.**

"I do feel pretty confident it (the \$100,000) is doable," McKague said, adding in the first year more than \$82,000 was raised. **The event this year is being held Feb. 26 with teams gathering at the Inn at 4 p.m.**

The CNOY fundraiser went ahead as a virtual event in 2021 due to COVID-19. The aim this time around is to do it as an actual mass walk with two and five-kilometer routes.

The event is designed to raise funds and awareness surrounding homelessness.

"People are becoming more aware of the homeless situation," McKague said.

There are a number of volunteers already on board, including some from Operation Sharing. And Operation Sharing's Bullwinkle's Eatery is supplying food for the local event.

Cambridge-based Logikor is the lead corporate sponsor and has already contributed \$5,000 to the cause.

CNOY began in 2011 and McKague walked in the Kitchener Coldest Night for several years before helming the Woodstock walk.

For more information, look up [cnoy.org](#) or call McKague at 519-221-5836 (cell).

*Submitted by Eric Schmiedl
Print Media Director Operation Sharing*

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On our faith journey, we hear the stories of those who are: different, on the other side of power, whose voices have been silenced or forgotten (both humans and the rest of God's creatures). 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 both individually and with each other, we take action on small things and connect them together collectively to make systemic changes.

In Christ

RIGHT RELATIONS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

A step forward

Having learned more about our mutual history, we are pleased that our federal government has agreed to reparation payments of \$20 billion to an estimated 200,000 children and their families with an additional \$20 Billion to fix ongoing discrimination in the child welfare system. For a short summary read this transcript from the CBC's Current on Jan 5 22 [here](#):

Still taking requests in 2022!

**Submit your requests from
the Oxford Legacy Fund
to Lynne Dunlop**

lynndunl@execulink.com

**see details pages 5-6 in
April Connections**



YOU ARE INVITED by Horseshow Falls RC
AND ARWRC President Jane Van Patter encourages us to join her in taking this course! (As do your editors!)

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is having an ONLINE Sunday Evenings Discussion Group focusing on **Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation** as a part of an Anti-Racism series. The ZOOM discussions are twice a month on Sunday evenings from 7-8:30pm, starting on Sunday January 16th. For more information or to register for the event please follow the link below ...

Explore the topic through music, a podcast, a documentary, a Hollywood film, a Canadian film, and three books.

You can order your books through the Hamilton Resource Centre (call 905-318-5289). Contact Deborah Laforet for more information: deborah@stpaulsoakville.com.

[Register here](#), where you will find the media we are exploring and the dates of each Zoom conversation. We look forward to having you join us.

LEARN MORE & REGISTER

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ECOTHEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP

As our collective behaviour changes, our planet heals. **We live in God's world. God is present.** Oxford United Ministries welcomes back ecotheologian and UCC minister, Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington to preach and teach for 2 more sessions in the series **Ecotheology and Discipleship.**



Critical thinking is important. In each of the following 2 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. In total, there will be **4 worship services for use later.**

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

To join us for any of the following, please register with Lynne Dunlop at lynndunl@execulink.com.

Wed. Feb 16, 7:00 – 8:15 pm
Session 3 "Understanding Discipleship"

Wed. March 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.

The Jan. 19 session with Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington was rescheduled.

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

MM

LONG TERM CARE – CRISIS

Yes. We do need more long term care beds. No. **They should NOT be in facilities operating for profit.** Yes. All homes should be inspected, and new licenses should not be issued to those who have poor records. No. This is not in the new legislation Bill 37, rushed through before the holidays. This is evidence collected by the Ontario Health Coalition. Read [here](#) the Jan. 4 2022 OP-ED by [Dr. Nancy Olivieri](#) a physician and a professor at the University of Toronto, [Michael Hurley](#) president of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions and a member of CUPE's National Executive Board, [Vivian Stamatopoulos](#) a professor at Ontario Tech University and a leading advocate for long-term-care residents and **Natalie Mehra** executive director of the [Ontario Health Coalition](#).

We can do better.

To assist us with knowledge and strategies around medical and long-term 'care', the Ontario Health Coalition is planning a virtual two-day event, Saturday, Jan 29, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm (training event) and Annual Meeting Sunday Jan. 30, 10:00 am - 2:00pm. See the flyer [here](#). Local social justice advocate and organizer extraordinaire, Bryan Smith (also [Chair of the Oxford Coalition for Social Justice](#) and a Board Member of the [Social Planning Council Oxford](#)) highly recommends this event. To register, simply follow [this link](#), before Jan 24. We look forward to seeing you there!

Democracy – use it or lose it

2022 is election year for the Province of Ontario and Municipalities. A critically important opportunity to raise issues with candidates about the services and policies that impact our daily life. The Social Planning Council provides these fact sheets about social justice issues in Oxford (<http://spcoxford.ca/fact-sheets>).

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*Being called beyond our comfort levels, we commit 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). Fully human and alive with the Spirit, we care respectfully for each other (locally and globally) and for creation that we have so long ignored. We act with integrity.*

A NEW CREATION

PRAYER CYCLES



We are invited to pray for each other and our mission in the world - a Community of Faith in Oxford and in the Antler River Watershed Region. We support each other as we share our concerns, joys and work. We are not alone.

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

Jan 16 Trinity (Ings'I), Tracy Crick-Butler
Jan 23 Westminster (Thamesford), Mark Marshall
Jan 30 Hickson – Doug Peck PCS
Feb 6 Hebron – Nancy Vandenberghe, SDLM
Feb 13 Norwich – Janice Pow, DLM
Feb 20 Princeton – Etonia, Jane Baxter SM
Feb 27 Foldens – Lynne Dunlop PCS

For ARW Region:

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

Jan 16 [Ridgetown: Erie Street](#)
Jan 23 [Ruthven](#)
Jan 30 [Riverside](#)
Feb 6 [South Buxton](#)
Feb 13 [Corunna](#)
Feb 20 [Union](#)
Feb 27 [Mount Elgin](#)

As we hopefully enter this last stage of COVID, we include again this prayer of our Moderator Richard Bott:

A PRAYER DURING TIMES OF COVID

In this time of COVID, we pray: when we aren't sure, God, help us to be calm;...to discern;...to love.

FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES A Remarkable Bird

What bird has legs and feet but cannot walk? What bird loves to swim but if she decided to fly into a back yard pool, she could not fly out. **This bird needs about a third of a kilometer of water for take off.** You will have to go north to see one. By now you will have guessed the bird's name. It is the Loon, of course.



The Loon's feet are made for swimming and not for walking. They are so far back on the body that the loon can push herself up on to the nest, which is on land at the water's edge, but she cannot stand up.

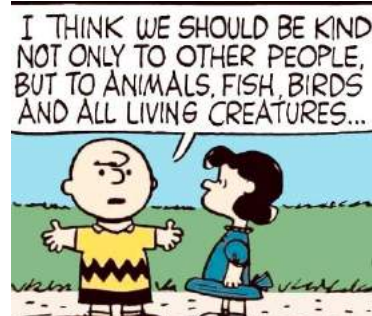
Loons lay just one or two eggs. If you are in a canoe and are trying to get a photograph of the baby Loon, called a loonlet, it will be impossible. The Loon will keep her body between you and her baby. The attempt will just lead to anxiety for both you and the Loon and that's not what canoe trips are about.

The Loon has eyes that change colour. In the cooler weather their eyes appear to be grey. When it is warm with bright sun, their eyes turn a reddish brown. They have built in sunglasses.

Loons spend the winter on costal waters in Florida. The parents leave about two months before their grownup offspring. Not to worry though. Loons come with GPS set to take them to Florida and in the Spring, back to the lake that they left.

Now isn't that just amazing?

GW



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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!

WHERE THE LIGHT SHINES

My Mother had a Quaker background from which she carried the habit of giving the house a top to bottom cleaning at year end so that we would start the new year CLEAN. Since we heated the house with a wood and coal furnace that meant thoroughly brushing down walls and ceilings, disturbing spiders in shadowed corners and cleaning the inside of all the windows to maximize the growing sunlight inside as the year turned. Curtains were washed, ironed and rehung; mats were shaken outside on the snow; Christmas decorations were carefully packed away for another year. The energy Mother found was amazing; we all got tired out helping her efforts.

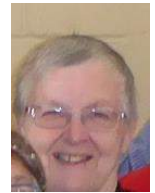
In Luke's Gospel Jesus tells the story of a man who cleaned his house to rid himself of an evil spirit. That spirit could not find a new home to occupy so eventually returned to its old home, finding it clean and tidy. It invited 7 friends, each one worse than he was, to come to live there with him.

Did that mean that Jesus was telling us not to break one evil habit in case 7 worse ones replaced it? Or, did it mean that we ought never to concentrate on the negatives? If we ONLY remove the evil and do not fill up the empty space with goodness, we have created a vacuum into which even greater evil can come.

Little children, before they can be disciplined, must learn the difference between good and evil; non-activity is not

the same as goodness. We all need to learn to actively perform good, not just to stop doing evil. Unkind thoughts must be replaced by positive ones; good habits need to be planted where bad ones used to grow. If the grass on the lawn grows thick and lush there will be no room for weeds. If the house is kept tidy and dusted, there will be no room for spiders and their webs.

As the year turns and the light strengthens, we need to clean our homes; we also need to let the Light of the World shine into our hearts to fill them with love and hope, peace and joy. Chase away the evil and fill the empty spaces in your heart with positive thoughts and good deeds for 2022.



Olga McKellar

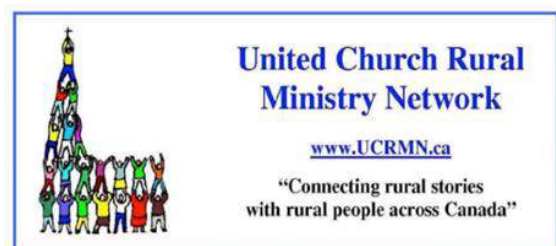
Possibly COMING next month – How can we use our church buildings to better serve our communities?

UNITED PROPERTY RESOURCE CORPORATION [UPRC](#)

Building Inclusive & Sustainable Communities Across Canada

Our church buildings are a valuable asset. This [video](#) suggests some options. MM

[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.



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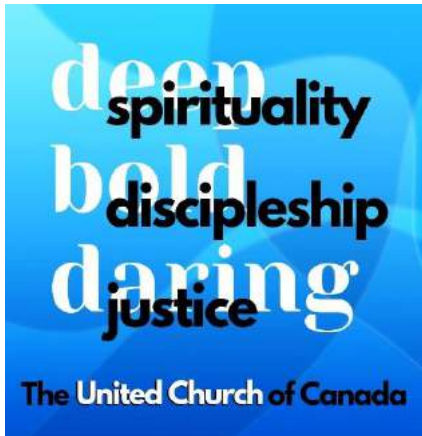
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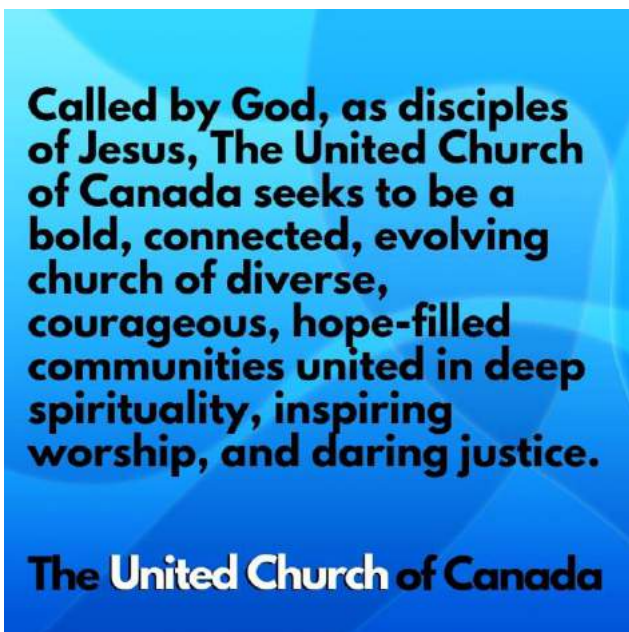
[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

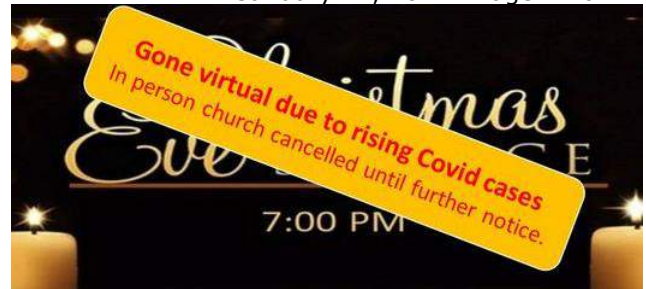
Most recent newsletter, December 20, 2021 contains information on COVID, Music Ministry, Anti-Racism and an invitation to join Horseshow Falls Regional Council in their series on Racial Justice focusing on Indigenous justice and reconciliation. The letter can be found [here](#).



New VISION STATEMENT



New MSSION STATEMENT



WORSHIP SERVICES IN OXFORD

Check with individual churches re specifics of streaming or conference call services. Churches in blue have websites:

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 service available by conference call. drumbocharge@hotmail.com

CONNECTIONS – News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Next Publication: Wed. Feb. 9, 2022

Submissions welcome.

Due by Noon Friday February 4, 2022

CO-EDITORS: Marg Murray + Glen Wright

To add or remove names, email

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