

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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HOW WE LOVE

We show our love by the words we use, the actions we take, the music we sing, or the silence we keep. All have their place in connecting us to the Christ spirit within, with each other and with nature. We make a real difference when we are being loving, kind and helpful to ourselves, to each other and to creation.

Read our stories this month with intention to be inspired.

OUR CONTEXT (p 2) of congregations in various stages of search mode; parting words from ministers leaving Oxford, the plans for virtual World Day of Prayer March 4, the impressive work ongoing in preparation for Camp Tanner, as well as Operation Sharing, the support for the Inn of Oxford from the Woodstock COLD WALK!

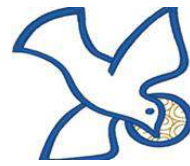
IN CHRIST (pg 9) lifts up stories of Black History month, Ecotheology and Discipleship with Rev Dr. Jessica Hetherington on February 16, racism in the church, long term care crisis, provincial election.

A NEW CREATION (pg 12) prayer cycles, the Cardinal, Mother Nature, Heart Month and General Council news.

We are grateful to Darlene Cowing-Chesney—for her pictures of the birds and roses.



Marg Murray co-editor



FOOD FOR THE SOUL

The Language of Love - Part Two

One of the key words in the language of love is neighbourliness. I can't remember a time in our history when we were **more aware of our need for a greater measure of neighbourliness.**

February is Black History month; a time to recall "Black History", to be reminded of the shameful practice of slavery and the residual racism that won't quite go away. We take pride in the fact that with Britain, slavery in Canada was abolished here before it was abolished south of the border, but it was practiced in Canada for 200 years.

We have a commendable Black History in Oxford thanks to the early Quakers who settled in the Norwich area. They established a welcoming safe haven for escaping slaves from the US. The community lasted from 1830 to 1880.

Many of us have visited the African Methodist Episcopal Cemetery just north of Otterville. **We commend those who maintain it and have improved it over the years.** After it was abandoned, however, the grave stones were taken by farmers for foundation fill when they were barn building. The graves have since been marked by small concrete markers. **Would the stealing of tombstones have been done in other cemeteries in Oxford?** Not likely.

Violence against Jews and Muslims has been increasing in Canada. The murder of the Muslim family in London and the six Muslims killed and 19 injured in a Montreal Mosque 5 years ago are examples.

Ecotheology and Discipleship

- YES! Ecotheologian & United Church minister, Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington IS BACK!
- Join us for our 3rd session, **Understanding Discipleship**. Rev. Jessica will preach (recorded for future use) and teach!

February 16th, 2022 – 7:00 to 8:15pm – Zoom

To register, please contact Lynne Dunlop at lyndunlop@execulink.com

See the free Ecotheology and Discipleship preaching series at <https://lc.churchwebcanada.ca/oxford-united-ministries>

Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington

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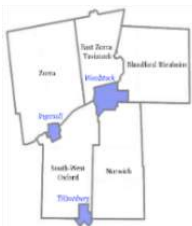
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Yet another grave site at a former residential school has been discovered in British Columbia. **It is another reminder of the cultural genocide that was practiced. To be neighbourly would have started with negotiating land agreements** and sharing ideas about values. Europeans would have learned much about the care of the earth from Indigenous People. They were also more advanced than the Europeans in gender equality and democratic governance.

At the heart of our faith is Jesus, who said that one must love one's neighbour as much as one loved one's self. When asked "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus tells the story of the "Good Samaritan." In other words, all people are made in the image of God. Or, **"In Christ," as St. Paul would so brilliantly summarize, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ."** (Galatians 3:28.)

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 cycles on page 11) as we live out God's mission.*

If we were to be asked 'Who is your neighbour?' we could make a list of those who have been and are neglected, ignored, shunned, taken advantage of.

"The Environment" is not likely to be at the top of the list. That is the suggestion in the second sermon by the Rev. Dr. Jessica Heatherington. We have not been kind to "Mother Nature". To be more neighbourly toward the environment is not an option. It is matter of life or death.

So where is the good news? We have become more aware of moral deficits and more committed to being good neighbours. We still have the future to build a community and an environment in which we can move from death to life.

Will our efforts be enough? Time will tell.

We are in this together and that gives us hope.

Blessings for the journey.

Glen Wright co-editor



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.

PEACE UC, PLATTSVILLE and Oxford welcomes Rev Jennifer Canning who started February 1. We look forward to hearing from Jennifer in our March CONNECTIONS issue.

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MOVING ON –

TO THE EAST COAST!

Rev Dr Sherpherd Munikwa – Dundas Street United Church



Hi friends,

it has been nearly two years since you welcomed me in Oxford County United Churches. These two years 2020 & 2021 have been years of their own kind.

They brought a lot of down times and not enough laughter, humor and fellowship. They were years of face masks, hand sanitizer, social and physical distancing and stay-home. It has been moments full of uncertainties. In addition to the Covid-19 global pandemic, with its phases, waves and variants, climate change has taken its toll. The world is experiencing times of intense heat, forest fires, droughts and more rain causing devastating floods which destroys people, animals and the environment in some parts of the world and in our vicinity as well.

Despite all these disasters and catastrophes, this far the Lord has taken us. Hallelujah! It has been a journey of spiritual training, resilience and growth as Apostle Paul puts it that, ***"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."***

Friends! For me this has been a time of spiritual **renewal**, **enthusiasm**,

creativity, **fruitfulness**, **endurance**, and **strength** on my journey of faith. So, friends let us join together, as we reflect, pray, sing and praise the Lord as we soldier ahead through these difficult, challenging and uncertain days. Let us remain together apart, we are spiritually connected by the love of Jesus Christ our Lord, the source of our Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in the weariness, tiredness, overwhelmingness, hopeless and helpless world.

Friends, this far the Lord has taken us. I was hoping to have more time with you, knowing each other better. I was offered another position in the United Church of ours. I couldn't let this opportunity go because it's an area for which I have much passion and it rekindles, fires and rejuvenates my spirit and physical being. It's somewhere to start again and strategize, somewhere my gifts and skills can have wider impact on the United Church of Canada Beginning March 1, 2022, I will be serving as **Minister for Justice, Mission & Outreach** for the Region of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters (Gaspé coast of Quebec, New Brunswick, PEI), the Region 15 (Nova Scotia and Bermuda) and the Region of First Dawn Eastern Edge (Newfoundland and Labrador). It has been a great privilege to know and to work with you friends. Let's remember who we are and whose we are. We belong to God. It's not about what is around us, it's about who is with us, our Lord Jesus Christ the Emmanuel. **Hallelujah Praise God! Amen!**



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

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

LOOKING FORWARD TO SUMMER!

We're **HIRING!**

Check out the various job descriptions:

<http://www.camptanner.ca/staff.html>

Job Applications Due Sunday **March 6.**

Save your **EMPTY BOTTLES!** The bottle drive is Friday April 22 with time and location TBD!

CONGRATULATIONS on the addition of **2 new Board Members.**



There are other ways to volunteer with Camp Tanner!

Setting up/taking down camp in May and in the summer, cooking (July/Aug), bottle drives (Spring/Fall), fundraising events etc. See [here](#) and email granderson00@gmail.com



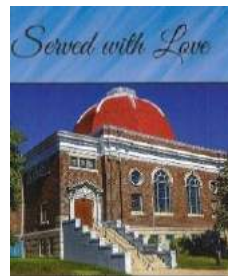
See Current Programs and Possibilities

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.

GOT AN IDEA FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT? You could [PITCH A PROGRAM](#) to run at Five Oaks with help from staff. Check out the webpage for details.

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.

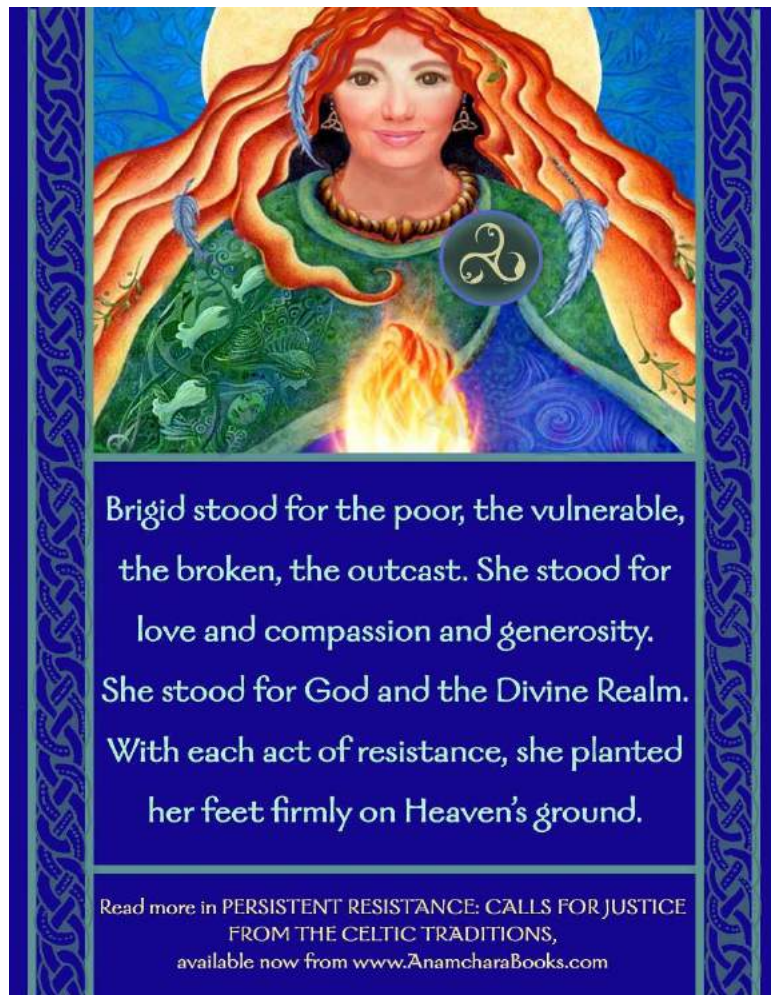
Serving from ramp entrance.



United Church Rural Ministry Network

www.UCRMN.ca

"Connecting rural stories with rural people across Canada"



Brigid stood for the poor, the vulnerable, the broken, the outcast. She stood for love and compassion and generosity. She stood for God and the Divine Realm. With each act of resistance, she planted her feet firmly on Heaven's ground.

Read more in **PERSISTENT RESISTANCE: CALLS FOR JUSTICE FROM THE CELTIC TRADITIONS**, available now from www.AnamcharaBooks.com

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MOVING ON – TO LAMBETH! REV. DOUGLAS PECK



Doug is proudly pictured with the quilt makers of his stole. Left to right: Brenda Sims, Doug Peck, Florence Steele, and Louise Murrel who presented the stole about 5 years ago.

In July 2009, I was sent to Chalmers UC in Kintore and St. Andrew's UC in Brooksdale. My first job as a minister. Until being settled, it never quite felt real. Seeing the churches and meeting the congregation was what made it feel real. While I was a student at Queens' University, and I'd imagine being a minister, I never thought I'd actually become a rural minister. After growing up in the suburbs and living and working in downtown Toronto and Ottawa, city settings were all I was used to. I anticipated being the square peg in the round hole, and I think it showed. So, when my warm welcome included expressions that I'd heard my whole life and the pies I begged for every holiday

growing up, I felt embraced by familiarity I hadn't expected. My grandmother grew up on the farm in Ailsa Craig, not too far away, and this was the cooking she raised me with. In Kintore and Brooksdale, dinner tasted like home. Since then, these communities have become home in many more ways. Friendships seem so close within the congregations. When growing up in the GTA, it seemed normal to me to watch grownups lose touch...not in Kintore and Brooksdale! There are too many opportunities to enjoy one another's company and too many close ties for these relationships to ever unravel. Where else have I witnessed two kids become fast friends and play in the shadows of their best friend grandparents? Strong roots, many say. People may move away, but always return and fit right back in. This is especially helpful and healing during times of grief. Like right now, as I anticipate my departure this month. This gives me hope that next time I'm back - which I will be, because how could I stay away? - I'll be welcomed right back into the fold.

I've also been appreciative of the spirit of support from neighbouring churches. It's been a privilege to get to meet so many other Oxford people who have so often supported our suppers, supported our families through joy and through grief, supported our community events. Rural churches are not always large, but the depth of these relationships and strong roots, reflect the best of the human experience. People are meant to be in relationship. From the time we are born to the time we die. Church is a place to nurture that within all generations and with God, outside of all generations. I have been blessed.

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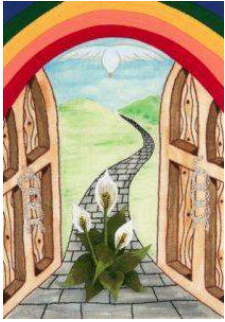
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WORLD DAY OF PRAYER -

Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action

Friday, March 4, 2022, at 2:00 pm



VIRTUALLY gather with folk around Oxford to view the superb video prepared by the Women's Interchurch Council of Canada with the host countries England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This year the theme is:

"I Know the Plans I Have for You"

Bible Study - Jeremiah 29:1-14

Marg Ogar of Chalmers UC in Kintore invites us to a Zoom service of World Day of Prayer March 4, 2022

Room opens 1:30 – 2:00 pm social time
2:00 pm service starts

3:00 pm more social time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81924368650?pwd=L1g3VmcvWEFja3ZVNfdTTUV5YnN5UT09>

Please extend the invitation to all who would like to join.

For technical assistance, email Lori Minler loriminler@gmail.com or text 226 374-4321

Last year, 50 of us gathered from 17 congregations to worship with the video from WICC.

WDP Pray NOW - a 4-part series of informed prayer together. Found [here](#).

Can't join us on March 4 in Oxford?

Watch the 55-minute service available [here](#);

or register [here](#) to join the NATIONAL WDP 2022 service on Saturday, March 12 at 1:00 pm EST.



Donations to World Day of Prayer 2022

Donations are gratefully received as they are vital for maintaining World Day of Prayer and delivering the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada's grant program. In 2020/2021, 23 grants helped restore social justice to the lives of 500,000 in Canada and internationally. [READ MORE..](#)

HANOI, Vietnam -- **Thich Nhat Hanh**, the revered Zen Buddhist monk who helped pioneer the concept of mindfulness in the West and socially engaged Buddhism in the East, died at 95.

The intention of deep listening and loving speech is to restore communication, because once communication is restored, everything is possible.

—THICH NHAT HANH

THE OXFORD LEGACY FUND
still taking requests in 2022!

Submit your requests
to Lynne Dunlop

lynndunl@execulink.com

for details of Fund see [here](#).

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Hotlinks are:

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

Operation Sharing's newsletter Helping in Unity Winter 2022 is available [here](#).

Read the first-hand stories of staff and volunteers of Bullwinkle's, Christmas Place, Extended Family program. It is always exciting to read about new volunteers like Scott McKague and the Coldest Night of the Year (see next page). This month poet Tara Myers, a Writer's Café participant, published her first poem Molly the pug which closes with the lines 'I am adorable just wanted you to know, I wouldn't always be a puppy, so take time to enjoy!'

It is cold! Homelessness and poverty continue in Oxford. **The out reach of Operation Sharing persists with the generosity of our community.**

Clothing:

Operation Sharing is appreciative of all who donated clothing to help keep our guests warm, shelves are well stocked and overflowing. With no storage space left we can not take any further donations of clothing at this time. **Thank you**

Still Needed: Adult warm winter gloves or mittens. call Bonnie at 519-529-3361 with questions

Drop off donations at 22 Wilson St., Woodstock (College Ave. United Church) Monday to Friday from 9:00am to noon.



The Inn of Oxford

at present offers temporary year-round Emergency Shelter run

out of Old St. Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock. It is Oxford County's only Emergency shelter for men and women. In the [January 28 story on Heart FM](#), Oxford County Council voted in favour in turning the Inn into a 24/7 operation. No details are available yet, but we pray that it is soon!

A couple of weeks before, the Inn was able (with \$100,000 from County of Oxford), to increase capacity from 12 beds to 25 beds! In the January 24 [story on Heart FM](#), the Interim Director of Operation Sharing Shawn Shapton noted that both the guests and staff are very appreciative of the larger lounge area and increased capacity. Old St. Paul's Anglican Church is such an incredible and gracious host. There has been phenomenal collaboration between Oxford County, Old St. Paul's and Operation Sharing.

For current list of items needed and details about delivery, please look up the pinned list at the top of their Facebook Page see [here](#) or reach Darryl Watson at 519-537-0336.

Woodstock: Bullwinkle's Eatery & Hospitality Training Centre

The Bullwinkle's team serve delicious, hot meals Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12 noon to 1 pm at College Ave UC.



Support **Food for Friends with 25 cents** at the participating grocery store checkouts.

\$ 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.

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Woodstock COLD WALK increased their goal to \$150,000 with less than 2 weeks left!

This is encouraging news that the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) here in Woodstock has already raised \$100,000. These monies are in **support of Operation Sharing's The Inn homeless shelter at Old St. Paul's. Knowing the need is so great, Scott McKague increased the goal.**

Similar fundraisers are being held across Canada. **The event this year is being held Feb. 26 with teams gathering at the Inn at 4 p.m.**

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.

Operation Sharing's Bullwinkle's Eatery is supplying food for the local event.

Recent support from Toyota is noted as is support of Woodstock Police Chief, Daryl Longworth.

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).

*With files from Eric Schmiedl
Print Media Director Operation Sharing*



photo by
Glen Wright

On our faith journey, we are sensitive to 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

THE REAL MCCOY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Windsor -Essex Roman Catholic School Board has put together an excellent collection of stories of talented and outstanding members of Canada's Black Community.

There is the story of Elijah McCoy, an engineer, who invented an automatic oiling device for steam trains. There were many copies made but only one "real McCoy" which was the origin of that saying.

You can read about and listen to **Portia White, a black singer from Nova Scotia** who performed over a hundred concerts including a number in New York City.

There is the story of **"Boomer" Harding, all round athlete**, who played for the Chatham Coloured All Stars in the thirties. One of his teammates was the father of Fergie Jenkins.

There is a book due to be published later this year by Miriam Wright (our daughter) about the Chatham Coloured All Stars. You can read about **Angela James, a black hockey player** who helped Canada's Women's hockey team win four world championships.

These are just a few of the stories that are just a **"mouse click" away, click below.**

<https://tinyurl.com/Celebrating-black-history>

Glen Wright

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ECOTHEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP

Rains fall. Rivers rise. Landslides destroy.
WHERE IS GOD IN THIS?

YES! We welcome back United
Church minister and
Ecotheologian Rev. Dr. [Jessica
Hetherington](#) is BACK!



**FEBRUARY 16 7:00-8:15
pm. Join Host Doug Peck as Rev
Jessica PREACHES and TEACHES on
the theme: "UNDERSTANDING
DISCIPLESHIP."**

This unique opportunity to learn, get a
prepared taped sermon and elements for
worship is FREE! It is part of our 4-part
'ECOTHEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP'
series (see below). Rev. Jessica will
describe her process and answer
questions. **This 'LEARNING' part will be
taped but ONLY be available to those
who register and attend.**

Whether we are preaching or chatting, we
ARE part of the wonder of creation as we
are transformed into 'NEW' disciples.

If you missed previous sessions, they are on
United Oxford Ministries website,
[https://fc.churchwebcanada.ca/oxford-
united-ministries](https://fc.churchwebcanada.ca/oxford-united-ministries).

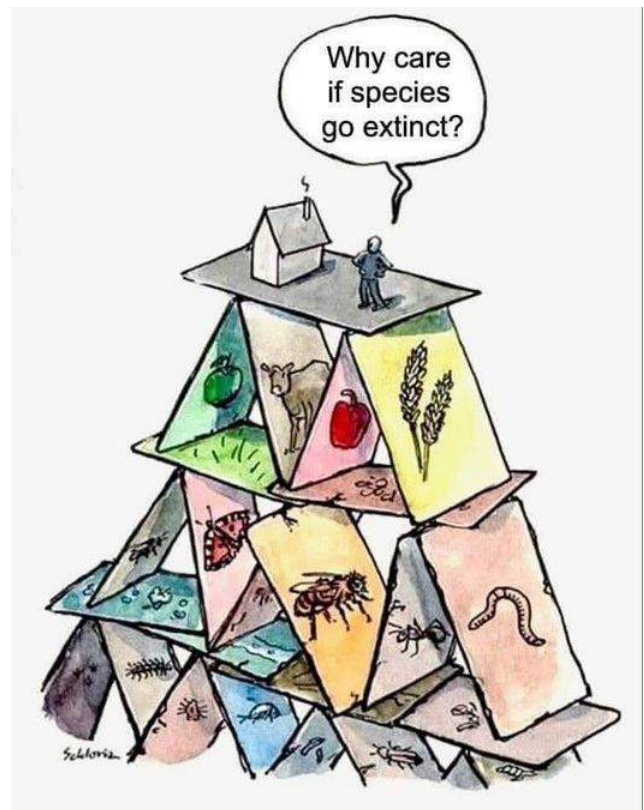
We appreciate the support of the Oxford
Legacy Fund.

MM

**Register early
with Lynne Dunlop
lynndunl@execulink.com.**

**Rev Dr Jessica Hetherington
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.**



**Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God
and knows God. Whoever does not
love does not know God, for God is
love.**

1 John 4:7-8

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RACISM IN THE CHURCH

"The United Church of Canada has made a [commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination \(opens in a new tab\)](#). A short document, ["Working Towards Becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination, \(opens in a new tab\)"](#) explains more about what this commitment might mean. People in the church are working on frameworks and strategic directions—including ways to involve the whole church—to continue to deepen [the church's anti-racism work.](#)" (UCC website.) This also includes building right relationships with Indigenous peoples. Our intent is to eradicate racism in our home, church, community and nation.

Last month, **I participated in two [sessions offered by Islington United Church: Theology](#) with Rev Michael Blair and **Voices of Racialized Clergy** which included former Oxfordite Rev. Sydney Elias, Rev. Maya Douglas, and Rev Irene Ty. **Black theology** is the lived experience of African people, from their context of being an enslaved people. Economics has seemed to justify the 'othering' of black people who didn't qualify as 'made in God's image'. **The next session with 3 panelists who have experienced personal and professional actions challenged me to consider my own covert (not so obvious) racism.** Some phrases from Sydney stay with me: 'It is a journey'. **'How we are permissive of actions that set up barriers.'** 'Persons made to feel that they can bring their whole selves.' 'Even in an ethnically diverse community, there is often no diversity in the church'. 'We are learning how to re-humanize our relationships with the other'. **'Do Not be Afraid.'** The website also includes titles of books to read on Anti-Racism. These are worthwhile videos and I commend them to you.**

MM

LONG TERM CARE – CRISIS

The recent pandemic showed a light on the problems in Canada's Long Term Care homes. There is a public review of the Health Standards Organization's (accreditation body) new *Long-term Care Services Standard* taking place between **January 27th and March 27th, 2022.**

The draft standard is available [here](#). We can take this opportunity to review and comment before it is published. See details [here](#). The standard will be reviewed and updated again five years after publication.

It is worthwhile noting that a professor at Ontario Tech University, [Vivian Stamatopoulou](#) found the language in the document to be vague without clear enforceable standards to mandate a strong increase in full-time staff to ensure continuity of care and which would address the role of home ownership.

From the workshop which I attended on January 24 with Ontario Health Coalition I learned that privatizing health care is costly. We should be wary of the pressure to privatize any aspect of health care. Privatization gets complicated with layers of ownership obscuring transparency and accountability. For-profit privatization corporations report to share holders and have higher rates of infections and death among their residents.

We pay for our health care through our taxes. It makes a difference who provides and delivers our health care. We need to ensure quality, efficiency, and universal accessibility rather than profit.

MM

LOVE OR HATE ME, BOTH ARE IN MY FAVOUR. IF YOU LOVE ME, I'LL ALWAYS BE IN YOUR HEART. IF YOU HATE ME, I'LL ALWAYS BE IN YOUR MIND.

William Shakespeare

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PROVINCIAL ELECTION

June 2, election day in Ontario is coming soon. What future do people of faith want in Ontario? Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, ([ISARC](#)) representing Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other faith communities across Ontario is a coalition of faith communities in action against poverty. The ISARC [Pre-Budget Submission of January 25, 2022](#) is a voice to help shape the province's 2022 budget.

Housing When the province puts the major focus on addressing the housing crisis by **increasing the supply of ownership housing, only developers benefit**. What about the needs of the majority of people accessing a place to live that they can afford? There is a need for truly affordable housing.

Social Assistance and Income Security It is important to lift people out of poverty in ways which respect the dignity of people.

Long-Term Care The pandemic has highlighted the many weaknesses in both our long term care facilities as well as a our community-based home-care services.

Always there is the question of how we pay the cost. Perhaps it is time to consider another theory of economics, like Modern Monetary Theory (MMT).? Stephanie Kelton explains it well in [the Deficit Myth](#). It is, simply, a realization that federal government budgets are not the same as household budgets. As Mark Twain said **"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."**

The Oxford Social Planning Council provides these fact sheets about social justice issues in Oxford (<http://spcoxford.ca/fact-sheets>). MM

*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 – our Communities 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.

Feb 13 Norwich – Janice Pow, DLM

Feb 20 Princeton – Etonia, Jane Baxter SM

Feb 27 Foldens – Lynne Dunlop PCS

Mar 6 Sweaburg + West Oxford

Mary Anne Silverthorne PCS

Mar 13 Drumbo – Ken Jackson RS

Mar 20 Dundas St – Liz Lemon VAM

Mar 27 Richwood – Michael Shewburg

For ARW Region:

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

Feb 13 [Corunna](#)

Feb 20 [Union](#)

Feb 27 [Mount Elgin](#)

Mar 6 [Komoka](#)

Mar 13 [Glencoe-Appin](#)

Mar 20 [Woodstock: College Avenue](#)

Mar 27 [St. Thomas: Central](#)

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FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES Not Just for the Birds

St. Valentine's Day is just what February needs, or what we need in February. By this time the winter is beginning to drag. We have had it with snow and cold.



If I were to pick a bird to represent the day, I would choose the Cardinal. After all about half of them come in Valentine red and in the

spring, when they are choosing a mate, the male selects a sunflower seed, if there is a bird feeder around, and offers to the female of his choice. She takes it and decides whether this is the mate for her.

Generous giving and gracious receiving go a long way in making the world a kinder and gentler place.

There is another reason we should think of birds on St. Valentine's Day. Back about the year 1380, an English poet named Geoffrey Chaucer, on Feb. 14th, which was the day the church celebrated St. Valentine, noticed that on that day birds were choosing their mates. He added that observation to a poem.

Because almost everyone was reading Chaucer, there were those who thought if St. Valentine's Day was a good time for birds to "fall in love" then why not everyone else. Somewhere along the way, love notes were exchanged on that day. Whether choosing mates or not, it just seemed to be a good time to say, "I love you." Cards and flowers. . . and chocolates, (YES!) were to follow.

So, thank the birds, the poets and the special people in your life, for making our Februarys and our world happier places.

Have a happy St. Valentine's Day! GW



[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

January 16, 2022 in their most recent newsletter alerts us to the Spring Regional Council Meeting June 9-11. The letter can be found [here](#). Next newsletter is expected in early February.



"THE OPPOSITE OF LOVE IS NOT HATE, IT'S INDIFFERENCE. THE OPPOSITE OF ART IS NOT UGLINESS, IT'S INDIFFERENCE. THE OPPOSITE OF FAITH IS NOT HERESY, IT'S INDIFFERENCE. AND THE OPPOSITE OF LIFE IS NOT DEATH, IT'S INDIFFERENCE."

ELIE WIESEL

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FYI

Interests, Informs or Inspires!

READERS share ...the fiction you are reading, the movies you are watching, the songs you are singing, or the thoughts/questions

HEART MONTH.

When my children were in elementary school in the 1970's and 1980's February was 'Heart Month'. Their teachers arranged, as the days lengthened, to take the children out into the maple woods to see how maple trees gave us sap and from it we made syrup which most of us loved to eat on pancakes for lunch.



En route the teachers pointed out how the birds were beginning to sing spring mating songs,

pairing up and building nests together as they planned their families; even the squirrels were becoming twitterpated!

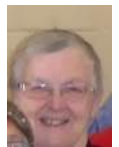
When classes returned to the schoolroom, the teachers handed out lacy white paper doilies and red construction paper and invited every child to make a red paper heart trimmed in white paper lace, a Valentine. No matter how artistic or clumsy the gluey card might turn out, every child must make at least one. Then every child picked the name of someone in the class out of a jar and proceeded to write a suitable message on their hand made card. The teachers explained that everyone, EVERYONE, in the class had some good point or gift to share; Valentine's Day was the day we could praise at least one person for her/his good point. Valentine's provided an opportunity for everyone to realize that they had some talent, some quality, some ability to enrich the life of everyone in the

class. Everyone counted. Everyone was important. Heart Day was about noticing goodness and honoring love, and everyone has something good to share, something loving to do or say.

I remember the cards my children brought home for me and for my husband--- cards I treasured for years. These cards helped us to be better parents: more patient, more kind.

A couple of weeks past we heard about a medical miracle: a man was fitted with a pig's heart when his own heart died. I wonder how he will celebrate Valentine's Day this year.

How will you celebrate? What kind of a heart do you really want: a pig heart or perhaps a non-breakable mechanical heart? **Do you have a heart full of love and appreciation or one full of anger or fear?** This month take time to express by voice, e-mail, or letter the love and appreciation you feel in your heart. *Olga McKellar*



MOTHER NATURE

Is the havoc we have recently been experiencing from Mother Nature her way of calling us to account for our selfish behaviour or **is she inviting us to be conscious and responsible?** The horrific devastations we have witnessed during the past year from unending fires, devastating flooding, excessive heat and terrible cold looks like the ravings of a madness gone wild. What can we do in the throes of it but hang on, persevere and perhaps when it subsides begin to seriously consider our options to prevent such atrocities in the future? Perhaps this is only a test and we've failed. What next? What will cause us to be mindful of our Mother Earth and live with respect and care for her? *Dyane Matthews*

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General Council 44 Feb 13-Aug 7

Theme: "Who Do You Say That I am?"



Since GC44 will be entirely online, everyone is invited to watch! Details are on their website:

<https://generalcouncil44.ca/>

Register [here](#).

Let us hold all the participants in prayer during this important time for our church.

How would your community of faith live out these new vision and mission statements of our church?



New VISION STATEMENT

Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

The United Church of Canada

New MISSION STATEMENT

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 also 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 service available by conference call. drumbocharge@hotmail.com

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