

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 5 Issue 9

October 11, 2023

Page 1 of 8

LEARNING FROM THE TREES *Jess Swance, Candidate for Ministry from the Indigenous Church grew up in Trinity United Church, Ingersoll.*

I always dread going home from camping. As I drive along highway 60 towards Huntsville, I take my last look around at the beauty that I will be leaving all too soon, and within an hour-and-a-half, my outside view is replaced with buildings, highways and people.



As I looked into the trees just a few days ago, I noticed that the tips of some of the trees had already begun to change. This always snaps me back to reality, remembering that changing trees means fall, and fall means a lot of work.

I automatically started to think of the list of things waiting for me when I arrive home-getting my kids back to school, back to work where I need to respond to emails and phone messages and preparing our property for the winter.

I often find myself getting really overwhelmed in that moment.

Then I remember that my vacation isn't over yet, that our gardens are still producing food, the weather squeezes out some final warm days - and it settles me down. I decided several years ago that when this annual feeling arrives, to let everything go in that moment, I can't do anything sitting in the car anyways.

The amazing thing about trees is their ability to change and adapt to the coming season. Their precious leaves, which makes them so beautiful and vibrant will change in anticipation for their next season, for their opportunity to rest and rejuvenate so that when spring time comes again, they are ready to begin blooming. (*Continued on page 2*)

FRIENDS OF OXFORD Gathering

Sept. 27 with Eric Skillings.

COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY POSSIBILITIES

We feasted on delicious UCW meat pies at Dundas St. UC. We did something we'd never done before - drawing



nature on paper plates teetering on top of our heads. We learned that **Collaborative Ministry is about sharing MISSION AND MINISTRY** - not sharing the minister! We are just beginning to explore

the many different ways God is calling us to be church. Eric encouraged us:

1. to start with small steps,
2. to dream about what excites you
3. to cooperate on outreach mission (like OURS!)
4. to share collaboratively when you still have money and energy.
5. to keep the lines of communication open between congregations and with neighbouring churches and the Region.

For those who are interested but were unable to attend, you can review Eric's presentation by clicking [here](#).

FYI: Friends of Oxford can gather if there is interest. Write a note about what to discuss, learn or do along with date and venue. We are willing to help organize and to get the word out, etc. MM

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(continued from page 1)

Creator has given time for the trees to do what they need so that they can survive another season. I still sometimes wonder if the maple is reluctant to release her leaves or if she basks in the vibrant reds and yellows of her limbs.

In ministry, it is so easy to be 'on' 100% of the time. I love the church in a unique way, and it is so easy to keep saying yes to all the things I am asked to help with. The church can keep you really busy! As much as all of those things feed my soul, I also have to keep enough energy to keep up with my kids and my family. If I run myself ragged, I am of no use to anyone let alone the work that I do with the church.

If you recall the story of Elijah in 1 Kings, I believe there is a reason why he took a rest under the shade of the tree, not because it kept him cool but because trees know the importance of rest and letting go- we can learn from creation around us.

I encourage you to find your resting place, be fed by what you are provided with. But then don't forget to get back up and continue with the amazing work you are called to do.



Jess Swance

EDITORIAL

CORE FOUNDATION AMIDST CHAOS

Beautiful fall colours evoke feelings of awe and wonder; plentiful harvest calls to mind that some don't have enough; recent events remind us that planet earth is in crisis. Chaotic times to be alive, to be Christian, to be church. All of us with different needs. I was recently reminded that keeping our core foundation healthy with food, physical exercise, sleep, mental and spiritual disciplines can help us deal with fear and pain amidst this chaos.

May these stories grow our hearts as we deal with sudden deaths, uncertain futures and wonderful celebrations. We do not live alone. We live in God's world.

Marg Murray co-editor



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CONNECTIONS – News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

**THE NOVEMBER EDITION OF
CONNECTIONS WILL BE PUBLISHED
WED. NOVEMBER 8, 2023.**

**Submissions no greater than 250
words will be considered and are due
by Noon Friday, November 3, 2023.**

CO-EDITORS: Marg Murray + Glen Wright

To add or remove names, email

oxfconnections@execulink.com

CONNECTIONS website

oxfordunitedministries.ca

Oxford United Ministries Facebook page

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

UCW FALL EVENT

Potluck lunch: Dundas St United

Monday, October 26 at 11:30

Rev Ruth Butt, Guest Speaker

Laughter and Hope

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OXFORD UC COMINGS + GOINGS



Congratulations to

Janine Lunn who will be ordained October 28 at 4:00 pm as part of our (ARWR) Region's Fall Meeting. All are invited to



attend St. Andrew's UC in St Thomas but there will also be livestreaming. Janine will continue her part-time ministry with Sweaburg, West Oxford and Foldens churches while also continuing her farm advocacy work at OFA (Ontario Federation of Agriculture). Janine's story is on page 4 of September CONNECTIONS. Link is [here](#).

OBITUARY



We were deeply saddened by the sudden death of **Sheila Greason**, well loved and respected fixture of Camp Tanner/Camp Bimini, Oxford Presbytery and Nissouori Union Church. A Celebration of Life will be held in the Community Hall at the Pyramid Centre in St. Mary's Octotober 21 from 2-4pm. Details in her obituary [here](#).

CAMP TANNER COMMUNITY



SPECIAL MEETING to discuss the future of Camp Tanner.
7:30 pm, October 13, Knox United, Embro

CARING HEARTS SUPPORT NETWORK

at St. David's UC

190 Springbank Ave, Woodstock

For coming events see their website,
call 519.536.3370 or

email info@caringheartssupportnetwork.com
www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com



OXFORD PRAYER CYCLE

Prayers for our ministry in the world.

Oxford United Churches, list is [here](#).
Pastoral Charge Supervisors noted for congregations with a vacancy or student.

Oct 15 Peace (Plattsville), Murray Rounding

Oct 22 St. David's Woodstock, Jeff Smith

Oct 29 Retired Clergy, <https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-Retired-Clergy>

Nov 5 ARWR elected Cheryl Bolton President + executive

Nov 12 ARWR staff, Chery-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Executive Minister on sabbatical till Nov 30, Mark Laird, Acting Executive Minister + staff

Nov 19 Kintore, Pirie Mitchell

CHURCH EVENTS

PRINCETON ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

Sunday, October 15 – 10 am. Potluck lunch following service.

PRINCETON TURKEY SUPPER

Turkey Supper, October 17 at

Princeton Centennial Hall, 5-6:30 pm,
Adults \$20, children (5-12) \$6; pre-schoolers free. Takeout available.
Tickets at the door. Wheelchair accessible.

ETONIA UNITED CHURCH

All-you-can eat Spaghetti Suppers

101 #2 Hwy., Etonia, **First**

Wednesday of every month from October to May (except January),

5 to 6:30 p.m. Includes dessert, refreshments. Cost: Adults \$20; children 12 and under \$5;

preschoolers free. Wheelchair accessible. Takeout available

STITCH SUPPER CLUB [Facebook page here](#), [website here](#) Each Thursday at Trinity UC in Ingersoll. 4:30-6:00
Volunteers needed. Sign up here:
www.stichsupperclub.ca/volunteer-sign-up

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THE GOOD OLD DAYS



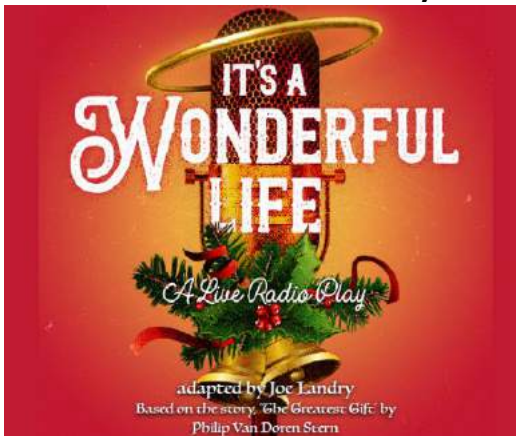
West Oxford United
Sunday October 29, 2023
Home Coming Service at 1:30 led by the Rev. Janine Lunn.
Doors also open from 2:00 to 4:00 pm

The Church is located at 354395 Church Line between Clarke Rd and Karn Rd.

Come celebrate with us to renew old friendships, meet new friends and community members, view historical photos and memorabilia and enjoy light refreshments.

Founded in 1804, West **Oxford United Church is considered to be the Mother Church of Methodism in Oxford County and is the oldest church with continuous services.** Many of the original settlers who came to "Oxford Upon the Thames" are buried in the pioneer cemetery surrounding the church.

Westminster United, Thamesford



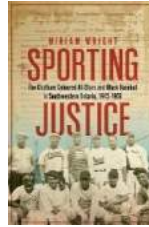
7pm:
Nov.
24-25
and
Dec.
1-2

2pm:
Dec.2

\$35.00/person including Christmas desserts + beverages.

Tickets:

<https://makingconnexions.com/show/>
or call the church office 519-285-3212.



Sporting Justice: The Chatham Coloured All-Stars and Black Baseball in Southwestern Ontario, 1915-1958, (Wilfred Laurier University Press) by Miriam

Wright, associate professor of History at the University of Windsor, is much **more than a book about baseball.** This is how she describes it:

"In exploring the intergenerational baseball history, this book develops several themes, including the way racism manifested in the players' experiences on and off the field, the connection between sports and social justice, the Black diaspora and the impact on regional baseball, the economics and politics of amateur, baseball, models of Black masculinity, and the way players themselves, and their family members remembered and made sense of that time in their lives." (p. 8)

Descriptions and reviews can be found online. All proceeds that Miriam receives are being donated to The Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society.

Miriam Wright is the daughter of Pat and Glen Wright of Woodstock.



OPERATION SHARING

The need for supplies and opportunities to volunteer continue.

Please visit their [website](#), their [Facebook page](#), call 519-320-1372 ext. 4 or email info@operationsharing.ca

OXFORD WORSHIP SERVICES

Websites/contact information for Oxford congregations are listed [here](#). Also check their Facebook pages for current services.

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FALL HOUSECLEANING

How I hate dusting. Years ago, I saw Walt Disney's movie Cinderella. In it she swept the house free of dust except for one final shovel full. That night she woke up to a voice saying, '**Dust under the rug.**' That was her reminder that she had not finished her job! Her solution to the final shovel full of dust, which I had thought was fine, was found wanting. I, like Cinderella, was wrong.

Dust is never gone. 99% of a task is never complete.

I have tried many solutions to the dust problem. None has worked. I washed the flour from the kitchen floor but as it dried, curled smears of dust appeared in the lino. I added vinegar to the window cleaning water and carefully wiped every pane of glass. Only to see lacy patterns of fine lines form on the clean windows as they dried. I bought a new vacuum and worked for an hour over my rug before taking the cannister of dust out into the garden. When I came back in, carefully wiping my shoes, looked at the rug, smiling bits of lint looked up at me. Foiled again!

Dust is almost impossible to get rid of and it is very dangerous. It damages our eyes, our lungs, our pipes and valves. It shortens our life spans by years. Think about pollen or wood smoke, not to mention chemical spills and textile fluff.

Fall housecleaning features dusting. Of all the chores we have, dusting is the most insidious and repetitious. Doing it we are reminded of time, of death, of life itself.

Dust is an interesting word. We are, they say, made of star dust. God made us so. But star dust is complex. We must learn from dust as we live with it. All of us, like all of dust, is a gift from God who created each of us in His time and for His purposes.

Olga McKellar



OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)

You are invited to the welcome to Canada celebration for Sara Temnewu and her family to take place at 10:30, Sunday, October 22 at St. David's United Church, Woodstock. Lunch will be served following the celebration.

Sara's oldest daughter, Selam arrived on August 16. Sara and her two sons, Fithawi and Naod, arrived September 21. The family is shown above.



Because Selam was 22 years old at the time that the application was made, she required a separate sponsorship.

This family escaped from Eritrea to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where they have lived for 5 years as refugees. They are now living in London with relatives. Sara and Selam will live with Grandma (pictured here) who graciously welcomed Glen Wright and Carol Ewing (see [September CONNECTIONS](#) Cover page) into her home to serve them tea.



While they were sponsored by St. David's United and co-sponsored by Sara's sister Abrhazion Temnewu of London, support came from a number of people and congregations from Oxford Presbytery.

We look forward so much to this time of gratitude and celebration.

Donations appreciated. Income tax receipts are issued by the sponsoring church. Please write "**Refugee Sponsorship**" in the memo line of cheques. **Knox UC**, PO Box 59, Embro ON, N0J 1J0; **Trinity United Church**, 118 Church St., Ingersoll, ON, N5C 2X6; **Westminster UC**, 115 George St. Thamesford, ON, N0M 2M0.

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FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES Ice Worms

Did you know that there are Ice Worms? They belong to the Nematode family.

If you have never seen one, perhaps it is because they are only **a half inch to an inch long** and live mostly in the Arctic or in glaciers. They feed on algae and bacteria in the ice.



Two international scientists in 2019 began to thaw out a chunk of perma-frost in Siberia, perhaps to measure the amount of methane released. If global warming continues, the permafrost is in danger of melting. That will release harmful methane gas into our atmosphere. But I digress.

Back to the scientists. They discovered that **the permafrost was about forty-six thousand years old**. Now that is old! Even more amazing is this: in the permafrost were two frozen ice worms. **The scientists claim that the ice worms were as old as the permafrost.**

Now this is even more amazing. Are you ready for this?

As ice worms began to warm up, they began to move. They were still alive!

Not only were they alive but as they warmed, they began to lay eggs, about 50 each. The eggs hatched, giving the scientists another 100 ice worms from worms born 46,000 years ago. How awesome is that?

In creation, wonders just never cease.

Blessings

GW



[webpage](#) + [facebook](#)

Diverse range of experiences for all ages: more about

Indigenous culture and history; explore nature with your family; rest and self-care; meet new people; unleash your creativity; work on communication skills!

Ingersoll **ISAN - 3rd ANNUAL MARCH FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION.**

ISAN is the Indigenous Solidarity Awareness Network. The March on September 30 was attended by about 400 people. Some gathered at Yvonne Mott Memorial Park to hear speakers including Patricia Marshall founding director of ISAN, Marcus Ryan, Warden of Oxford County. I was particularly moved by the powerful speech



of **Professor Cody Groat of Indigenous Studies at UWO (University of Western Ontario) who shared his own story of indigenous racism**

growing up in Ingersoll. More of his background can be found [here](#). His father, William, was a survivor of the sixties scoop, his grandparents, Stanley and Sarah were survivors of the Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford. Cody is Mohawk and a band member of Six Nations of the Grand River.

Following speeches, smudging and drumming, the march proceeded to the Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural



Museum which also featured the **MMIWG2S+ Memorial tree**

Memorial Tree for Missing and Murdered women, erected by Unifor Local 88. Members of local churches also marched. *Shown below are members of Mt Elgin UC with their minister Lori Minler (2nd from rt).*



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CATEGORY 3 REMIT: RESTRUCTURING OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH

Every Regional Council and Pastoral Charge Council has a vote on the way we relate with the Indigenous Church. Submission of votes is between March 15, 2023, and March 31, 2024. Education is an important element in our prayerful discernment concerning this remit. The material from CONNECTIONS Summer edition on page 6 is [here](#). **ARWR has provided the following new information:**

- **Upcoming Remit Education Workshop, Oct 20 at 10:00. Online Register click [here](#).**
- **Some answers to questions about the Remit. See [here](#).**

Blessings on your discernment and vote.

MM

NATIONS UNITING – SHARING CIRCLE: A safe place to Listen, to Learn, to Heal + to Grow,

Nations Uniting

Currently we are looking at films of the Residential Schools with Renée Hill, elder of Six Nations.

To join this zoom event and be part of their mailing list contact Rhonda Johns nations.uniting@gmail.com.

Grandmothers' Tea

October 25 at Fifty United Church, 1455 Highway 8, Winona, ON. Your favourite dish for potluck lunch Noon – 2:00 pm. **Wear your costume.** Bring your own plate, cup and cutlery AND your recipe!



Contact Karen

Toogood Segrave 1-905-573-8136.

To share a ride from Oxford, email Marg at murrayschell@gmail.com



Facebook page

Subscribe [here](#) to the newsletter of Antler River Watershed.

Registration now open for **FALL Regional Council mtg Oct 27 and 28 online!** Register [here](#). **Workbook available October 20 see website.** **Celebration of ministry for ordination of Janine Lunn will be held, 4:00 pm St. Andrew's UC, St Thomas.** Also livestreamed.

ARW Region: PRAYER CYCLE

As church, we are called to pray for each other and our mission in the world.

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

Oct 15 [Mount Brydges](#)

Oct 22 [Byron](#)

Oct 29 [Merlin-Fletcher](#)

Nov 5 [Drumbo](#)

Nov 12 [Port Lambton](#)

Nov 19 [Springfield](#)

Nov 26 [Southwold](#)

Climate Grief: Hard and Holy

We are in this together. It is holy work. Join Kathy Douglas, Faith

Formation Minister and connect with others who are experiencing climate grief and/or struggling to discern a way forward with theological reflection and spiritual practice to ground and support.

Details at:

<https://arwrcucc.ca/climate-justice-hard-and-holy/>

Registration Required

Fairmont UC, London ,

Wed Oct 23 6:00-8:00 pm

Email Marg at murrayschell@gmail.com to share a ride.

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FOOD FOR THE SOUL OVERHEARD CONVERSATIONS

"What causes this?" a reporter asked a meteorologist just as a recent hurricane was barreling its way across Florida. **"The ocean is heating up, the heat rises and sets up conditions for hurricanes,"** was his reply.

This reminded me of another conversation about the sea heating up. It comes from the 19th century writer Lewis Carroll in his poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter":

**"The time has come," the Walrus said,
'To talk of many things, of shoes and
ships and sealing wax, of cabbages and
Kings. Of why the sea is boiling hot and
whether pigs have wings."**

While the sea was not boiling hot, it was 37 degrees Celsius south of Florida at the time of the hurricane.

I agree with those who believe that **Carroll's poem was a critical social comment on the fallout from the industrial revolution.** Illustrations of the poem at that time depict the carpenter as a man of wealth. He may have begun as a carpenter but now he appeared to be a lumber baron, (or a Greenbelt developer.) The Walrus and the Carpenter invite a bed of oysters, perhaps representing the poor, along for the stroll. Then the poor oysters are eaten for lunch.

Industrialization, which was the beginning of "modernity" meant more goods were being produced by fewer people, leaving countless artisans without work.

Another conversation overheard was one that you may have heard this past summer if your church was following the lectionary. **It was the story of the storm on the lake of Galilee.** The boat the disciples were in was in danger of sinking. Jesus is seen walking on the raging water. Jesus invites

Peter to leap from the boat and join him in the turbulence.

The "boat" that has carried us to greater and greater prosperity began its voyage with the industrial revolution in the mid-18th century. We admit we have all benefited. We enjoy modern "conveniences". With modernity came scientific advances that are all but miraculous. Life expectancy in mid-18th century, if you factor in infant and child mortality, was about 25 years. Also, the fossil fuels such as gasoline in our cars and natural gas in our homes are part of our conveniences. It is that "boat" we are now being asked to leave. It will not be easy.

Moreover, the global demand for crude oil at present is about 100 million barrels per day and is expected to increase in the year 2024. Despite all the talk, fossil fuel cutbacks globally, have not begun to kick in.

This brings us to the last of the overheard conversations. This conversation came from our Mother Earth this past summer. She spoke by way of hurricanes, floods, wildfires and drought. Her message was clear: "Enough is enough! I am angry and I'm not going to take it anymore!"

These "words" we need to both hear and heed. How we respond is critical, for us, but especially for the life of generations to follow.



Blessings, *Glen Wright, co-editor*

UNITED CHURCH RURAL MINISTRY NETWORK (UCRMN) – for all rural and

small town folks – lay and ministry. Zoom Workshop, Nov. 16 1:00 pm, **"Pastoral Care to the Rural Church"** (especially important when you are without a minister.

To sign up for their newsletter or check out their resources on Collaborative Ministry etc., click [here](#).