

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 1 of 8

### CELEBRATING OPEN HEARTS.

Written over the double front doors of Norwich United Church are the words, **"Open Doors, Open Hearts, Celebrating God's Love."** The congregation understands what it means to live into the words of this declaration. While the "Open Doors" **welcome all into our church**, the doors also open, **going out to the community and sharing the light of God's loving Spirit.**

Norwich United Church holds an atmosphere of acceptance and welcoming for all of God's creation, with the understanding that **everyone's spirituality is holy ground and must be respected**, that what we do matters, and that how we love matters.

An "attitude of gratitude" was reflected a few weeks ago as Norwich United Church took the last weekend in September to celebrate **202 years of worship upon the same land.** While many congregations might have been tempted to focus on the past, at NUC, we celebrated who we are today with hearts ready for tomorrow.

**The celebration began Friday evening with a sold-out dinner.** Our chef who was brought in from Sweden planned and prepared a scrumptious five-course meal. The dinner guests were members of NUC and the wider community. As we broke bread together, we all agreed we had taken part in a truly enchanting evening.

**Saturday evening's** captivating **"Light up the Night"** was **sincerely magical.** With some of Oxford's finest musicians on the playlist, the talent surpassed all expectations. I can only offer my



sympathies to anyone who missed this evening's fine entertainment.

**Sunday morning,** we gathered for worship. Our choir's anthem opened the service with the sweet voices of children proclaiming God's love. Mary Anne Silverthorne presided over the **covenanting services with Norwich United church and the Regional Council of Antler River Watershed. Followed by the covenanting service with Norwich United Church and me,**

**their minister Janice Pow.** The liturgy was filled with delightful symbols, representing the past, a silver pitcher dedicated in 1881 by the Young People at the Norwich Methodist Church and



### Discipleship for Earth Healing

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



#### NEW DATES!

- Friday, Nov 4 to Saturday, Nov 5 at Trinity United Church, 118 Church St, Ingersoll ON

- In person (limited) or streamed. No cost.
- To register, contact Lynne Dunlop at [lynndunl@exculink.com](mailto:lynndunl@exculink.com)
- ❖ For more info go to [jessicahetherington.ca/events](http://jessicahetherington.ca/events)



# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 2 of 8

representing the future, a piece of stained glass designed by one of the kids in our summer camp program. In the end, everyone present understood we had **"pinky sworn" to the future** by the grace of God, to love one another as we are loved by Christ, sharing God's vision of peace and justice.



Feature article by  
Janice Pow DLM at  
Norwich United

### CONNECTIONS – News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

**Submissions no greater than 250  
words welcome and due by Noon  
Friday Nov. 4, 2022**

**Publication Date Wed. Nov 9, 2022**

**CO-EDITORS:** Marg Murray + Glen Wright

**To add or remove names, email**

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

**CONNECTIONS website**

[oxfordunitedministries.ca](http://oxfordunitedministries.ca)

Oxford United Ministries Facebook page

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

### GRANDMOTHER'S TEA

**October 26, 2022**

Norwich U.C.

Contact Phone: 519-863-  
3637

Noon – 2:00 pm

Potluck Lunch

A time of Friendship and Sharing

A program supported by Nations Uniting

### UNITED CHURCH RURAL MINISTRY NETWORK's latest ENews #21- Oct

**2022** is available [here](#). Valuable stories about **rural ministry initiatives across Canada**. For example: Trauma workshops, reports on Hurricane Fiona, Niagara School for Missional Leadership + rural perspective on General Council 44.

### EDITORIAL

This is a month of celebrating Open Hearts: Norwich UC worshipping and working for over 200 years. Opening our hearts to include the earth with Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington; to consider new possibilities for Camp Tanner; to welcoming Bisrat Yamane who had endured 6 years in a refugee camp, and to renewed understanding of Fred Kaan's hymn **"worship and work must be one."**

MM

### INDEX

Celebrating Open Hearts, Norwich UC,.

Cover Story

Editorial—Marg Murray, co-editor 2

Masthead 2

Grandmother's Tea Norwich UC 2

United Church Rural Ministry Network 2

Oxford County of Ontario Helps  
Ukraine 3

### OXFORD—Comings and Goings

Community of Faith Profiles Approved 3

Congregations in Search Mode 3

Discipleship and Earth Healing –  
The Rev Dr. Jessica Hetherington 3

Operation Sharing 3

Hebron UC 4

Camp Tanner 4

Be Still - Olga McKellar 4

OXFORD Legacy Fund 4

Oxford Prayer Cycle 5

Oxford Worship Services 5

For Children of All Ages – G. Wright 5

OURS welcome for Bisrat Yemane 6

OURS – Marj Martin 7

**CLOSE to OXFORD 7**

Five Oaks 7

**ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED Region 7**

ARWRC Prayer Cycle

**Food for the Soul—Not Zoned For  
Kindness Glen Wright, co-editor 8**

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 3 of 8



### OXFORD—COMINGS AND GOINGS

#### COMMUNITY OF FAITH PROFILE APPROVED.

Innerkip UC. Karen Willis, DLM, appointed long term half-time, July 1. Kintore – Brooksdale UC, Rev. Janet Uren appointed 6-month retired supply **CONGREGATIONS IN SEARCH MODE**

- **Avondale UC** (T'burg)+**Otterville UC**
- **College Ave UC**
- **Dundas St UC**
- **Kintore + Brooksdale UC**

### DISCIPLESHIP FOR EARTH HEALING

with Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington, Ecotheologian.



Join us to learn about connections between our place in creation and the need for lament. Join us to deepen our discipleship response to the ecological crisis. Join us to explore and make our commitment to healing the Earth.

Cancellation of earlier dates due to COVID.

**New dates for this hybrid event are Friday night**

**November 4 to Saturday, November 5, at Trinity United Church, Ingersoll.** No charge for the event. The workshops include time in a nearby park which is wheelchair accessible. **Registration (by October 31) is required for both in person and virtual.** To register contact

Lynne Dunlop at <lynndunl@execulink.com> or 519-539-3805. There is more info at this website [the Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington](#) We are grateful for our sponsors, Oxford Legacy Fund and Hope Council of ARWRC.



### OXFORD COUNTY OF ONTARIO HELPS UKRAINE

#### Wondering how to help?

- Join their [Facebook page](#) to see housing list, donations of furniture, job opportunities.
- Invite a speaker – Karen + David Murray, Larisa Zhukova (an eye surgeon) are available to speak to groups.
- Email [oxfordhelpsukraine@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordhelpsukraine@gmail.com)

**Bethany Lutheran Church, Woodstock is issuing receipts for money donations!** There is a support group for host families to share information. Fuller report in [August CONNECTIONS](#), pg 5

**Thank you to all who have helped. It is deeply appreciated!**

### OPERATION SHARING

Current needs in this season of



Thanksgiving, at The Meeting Place are taxable items like shampoos, body wash etc.

Please leave donations at College Ave. U.C., 22 Wilson Ave with a volunteer from Operation Sharing. See 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** For details, email [info@operationsharing.ca](mailto:info@operationsharing.ca).



Be blessed when you **give a Dollar at the till** for others to make nutritious choices so they can shop with dignity.

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



# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 4 of 8

### BE STILL

I had an encounter last week in the grocery store. The woman ahead of me in line had four little children each morphed into an octopus type creature with 8 arms and legs all going in different directions and yelling happily as they unloaded her cart, ate candy snatched from a low shelf or pretended to be a steam engine. The mother was oblivious and stood peacefully smiling in their midst. She was wearing a tee shirt which proclaimed: Be still and know that I am God.

Ever since that encounter I have been pondering Palm 46:10. What, I wonder, did the verse mean to that mother? What does it mean to me when I am myself in the midst of chaos in my life? What does it mean to so many of us as we despair of the state of our world?

Scholars say it was written in a time of war when Israel was at a critical point in its development. Does it mean we need to calm down, relax and take a break? Does it mean we need to turn our troubles over to Jesus and keep calm as we carry on? Does it just mean to remind us that most of our efforts to control our own lives are futile; God is already on it so relax? Maybe it is a reminder that we need to talk to God often; listen to God daily; depend on God always. Hebrew scholars say that the word used here for 'be still' means cast down or let fall; drop it! Let God do God's work while we tend to ours.

We are safe in God's hands. That mother knew her four rascals were safe on that patch of aisle. She was therefore able to 'Be still and know that God had her back', as God always has ours.

*Olga McKellar*



**HEBRON UC would appreciate 12 copies of MORE VOICES.** Please contact Lorna Gardner, Hebron Board Chair, [nanofmany321@gmail.com](mailto:nanofmany321@gmail.com).

### CAMP TANNER



#### Camp Tanner Annual General Meeting

Friday, November 25th, 7pm

Knox U. C., Embro

**All Welcome to attend**

**We will be reviewing this past summer, recruiting new members, and seriously discussing the future of our camp.**

*Submitted by Kate Wintermute, Registrar*

### THE OXFORD LEGACY FUND

#### **FINAL CALL FOR REQUESTS FOR FUNDING**

Please see [April 2021 Oxford Connections](#) pg 5, for information about the Fund.

Any monies remaining in this fund as of December 2022 will be forwarded to Antler River Watershed Regional Council.



**The Legacy Fund Committee needs to receive final requests for funding by October 25** in

order to review them and make their recommendations to ARWRC Executive at their November Executive meeting.

Please forward requests or questions to

**Lynne Dunlop, Committee Chair**

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

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 5 of 8

### OXFORD PRAYER CYCLE



*Together we pray for each other in our mission in the world.*

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

Oct 16, Jennifer Canning, Peace (Plattsville)  
Oct 23 Jeff Smith, St. David's (Wdsk)  
Oct 30 Retired Clergy (see [here](#))  
Nov. 6 ARWR Elected, Jane VanPatter + Exec.  
Nov 13 ARWR Staff, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa + Staff  
Nov 20 Janet Uren, Kintore + Brooksdale

### 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 or email address.

**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

Sweaburg, West Oxford, Foldens email

[properj25@hotmail.com](mailto:properj25@hotmail.com)

**Trinity UC**, Ingersoll

**Westminster UC**, Thamesford

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

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

### FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES. HOMING PIGEONS

Finding your way home has always been important. We even have a game where the team that has the most players finding their way home, wins.

Calling home has never been easier. Someone pulls a cell phone from a purse or pocket and sends a text.

But how would you call home if you lived in



Egypt 5000 years ago? There is a written record of someone at that time and place, lifting a homing pigeon out of a

cage, probably fastened to the back of a camel. He then attaches a message to the pigeon's leg and releases it. This homing pigeon flies home. These birds have been used to carry messages home ever since.

It is believed that homing pigeons use the sun, or the moon and on cloudy days they use the earth's magnetic pole for directions.

They have a direction finder far superior to ours. That's GPS without satellites, a compass without moving parts, in a bird brain about the size of the end of my thumb.

How awesome is that?

Now about that game where players have to find their way home. Did you guess its name? It is baseball.

I have to admit that The "Toronto Homing Pigeons" does not have the same ring as the "Toronto Blue Jays", but homing pigeons do have a talent for "home runs". Maybe that name change would help the Jays though the playoffs. What do you think?

GW



**United Church Rural  
Ministry Network**

[www.UCRMN.ca](http://www.UCRMN.ca)

"Connecting rural stories  
with rural people across Canada"

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 6 of 8

### OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS) BISRAT YEMANE -WELCOMED AT LAST!



More than 6 years ago, when **Rev. Jane VanPatter** was at St. David's UC, Bisrat's application to come to

Canada from Eritrea was filed. Sept 25, St David's celebrated his arrival.

**For years, the OURS Committee** (Oxford United Refugee Support) prodded and prayed. Those who attended on Sunday are pictured: Lt to Rt (Rev. Glen Wright, Marj Martin (Chair, Trinity UC, Ingersoll), Bisrat Yemane, Habte Zecharias (co-sponsor from London), Carol Ewing (St. David's UC, Woodstock), Janice Landers independent Member), Marie Avey (Norwich UC), Sharon Fraser (Knox UC, Embro).



During the service, Rev Jeff Smith, minister of St. David's UC welcomed Bisrat followed by the congregation celebrating his arrival with a Baked Potato lunch!



In worship, Habte offered the following eloquent expression of gratitude.



### GRATITUDE Habte Zecharias

Today I am here to give thanks to all of you at St. David's United Church for the wonderful support you have given me and my family for many, many years.

**I will always remember the cold winter night 33 years ago on December 08/1989 when we arrived in our new home in Woodstock. There were members of the church congregation waiting to welcome our family--Rev. Peter Scott, Helen McLeod, Jim Harrison, Becky White. Our children were very young (between 8 months to 6 years). After the 16-hour flight we were tired, hungry, and in a foreign place, not knowing what to expect.**

That night, even **though the weather was freezing cold, the warm welcome we got from our hosts filled us with happiness and made us comfortable.**

From that time---over the next 33 years, through the support of St. David's Church, we have been blessed to have several family members join us here in Canada. The latest one is Bisrat.

There is a commonly referenced verse within the Bible, when accepting and welcoming strangers, Matthew 25:34—40: "For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, **I was a stranger and you invited me in**, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick you looked after me, I was in prison and you went to visit me. **When did we see you a stranger and invite you in**, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The king will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me."

I want to finish by saying---**words will never be enough. We are grateful**



# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 7 of 8

beyond measure. We will forever be thankful for the generosity and compassion the congregation of St. David's United Church has continuously shown my family through the many years.

*Habte Zekarias has co-sponsored many people from Eritrea. He spent only 3 months in a refugee camp!*



### Marj Martin (Chair of OURS)

We continue to pray for **17 additional refugees as they endure a long wait in difficult living conditions.** Four Oxford County Churches have applied or are applying to sponsor these refugees. **Eleven of the refugees have approved applications and are awaiting the final steps that will bring them to Canada.**

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

### CLOSE TO OXFORD



Check out  
current  
**Programs + Possibilities.**  
[webpage](#)  
[facebook](#)

*Five Oaks is 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.*

### 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.



[ARWRC webpage](#)

[Facebook page](#)

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

### Regional Council Fall Gathering

**October 28 & 29 2022**

[REGISTRATION NOW OPEN](#) (until Oct 21) for Ministry Personnel or the Lay Representative of your community of faith (**BE SURE your Representative to Regional Council is listed in your Churchhub account.** If your congregation has not elected a Regional Council Representative, they are requesting that either your Governing Body Chair or Recording Secretary attend.) Attend this opportunity to connect, have your voice heard and learn what's happening.

### **ARW Region: PRAYER CYCLE**

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

Oct 16 [Rural United](#)

Oct 23 [Ilderton](#)

Oct 30 [Faith Trinity \(Shetland\)](#)

Nov 6 [Talbot Street](#)

Nov 13 [Charing Cross](#)

Nov 20 [Shiloh-Inwood](#)

Nov 27 [Maidstone-Gesto](#)



# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 4 Issue 9

October 12, 2022, Page 8 of 8



### FOOD FOR THE SOUL

#### NOT ZONED FOR KINDNESS?

On Saturday Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> the London Free Press ran a story about churches who were involved in Ark Aid's program to provide meals to marginalised residents of London. Some merchants along Richmond Row were claiming that the zoning did not allow for such activity. Churches were zoned for Sunday worship. The powers that be indicated that the merchants may have a point and closing the meal program as it was being practiced was a possibility. Although First St. Andrews United Church is involved in the program, it was the Baptist Church near Richmond Row that made the merchants nervous.

One can feel only outrage, especially in this Thanksgiving season.

It was a reminder of a year ago when the city council of "the Friendly City" of Woodstock removed the benches from the downtown park so the men and women who are homeless would be discouraged from gathering.

But back to the London story. It just so happened that Sunday, the day after the Free Press story, the lectionary texts featured two of the foundation blocks of the Christian Faith, neighbourliness and the confronting of injustice. The Old Testament text told the story of the prophet Jeremiah in prison for calling out the King for the injustice in Jerusalem. The gospel told us of the rich man who neglected the needs of the poor man at his gate (Luke 16). The rich man ended up in a hot place after he died.

Some might suggest that the penalty for neglecting our poor planet is resulting in a

hot place, but it is here on earth. We call it global warming. We have just witnessed the fury of hurricanes when the oceans warm.

The gospel message was to close the gap between rich and poor. The Jeremiah story ends with Jeremiah buying a field in a land about to be lost as a sign that restoration is possible, in spite of evidence to the contrary. It was a bold move of hope in what seemed to be a hopeless time.

**The Sunday scriptures are a stark reminder that churches that are zoned for public worship should also be zoned for public action.**

While many of our churches themselves are in crises, it is in just such a time we have opportunity to look at the church's mission: **how we best live in hope; how we participate in God's vision of restoration; how we partner with God who, with our help, intends to make all things new.**

*Blessings, Glen Wright, co-editor*



**To sign a petition in support of First Baptist and Ark Aid see [here](#)**

Sometimes, being a good Christian meant being a bad Roman. So before you accuse people of being unpatriotic, ask yourself which empire they're actually serving.

—  
STEPHEN MATTSON