



Thanksgiving Grapevine - October 2020

Fonthill United Church



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Thanksgiving – Harvesting the Grapevine

Even though harvest festivals occur all over the world, Canada is one of only seven countries that celebrates Thanksgiving as a Statutory Holiday.

Whatever our background, Canadians love Thanksgiving. We celebrate with turkey, ham, jerk chicken, enchiladas, lamb vindaloo, shish kebabs and Pad Thai. We love the special foods. We love the paid day off. We love getting together with our family and friends. We love the fall colours.

For the most part, Thanksgiving is a secular holiday. And yet, there is something sacred about Thanksgiving. It is a rare United Church, for instance, that does not have a Thanksgiving service. Indeed, whatever our roots, when Canadians meet at the table on Thanksgiving, we confront the deep truth articulated in Psalm 67, *“The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. May God bless us still.”*

This Thanksgiving, the many creative and unique ways that Canadians choose to make Thanksgiving work for them, are very much on my mind.

Giving thanks during the pandemic is going to be different this year. Here at Fonthill United Church, we are planning to open our doors on Thanksgiving Sunday. And yet, we know that more than half of you will choose to stay home and tune in via Zoom. The large holiday gatherings of family and friends are going to be smaller. Instead of serving a huge turkey, we may decide to stuff a large chicken, or even order in.

The pandemic has produced hardship. And, the pandemic has borne fruit. Indeed, the many creative ways that we have employed to keep in touch, to keep hoping and loving, and to be church and community have been a miraculous harvest.

The land has yielded its harvest, yes. And, the spirit has worked in each of us. This Thanksgiving let us give thanks for the fruits of the Spirit which have so richly blessed us and this community of faith. And, *May God bless us still.*

~Pastor Robert Lawson

A PRAYER FOR THE HARVEST

Creator God,

We give thanks for your Creation,

*Which, over the past eight months,
has taken on such great significance for us.*

When everything seemed to stop

You kept the sun rising and setting,

You ordered the phases of the moon,

You took us from spring, to summer and to fall.

You reminded us that you are always at work,

That you are with us,

That we are part of the cycle of life.

God, you have blessed us. May you bless us still.

Brother Jesus,

We give thanks for your friendly face in our midst,

*Which, over the past eight months, has lifted us up
whenever we felt cast down.*

When worry and anxiety numbed us

You loved us,

You shared our burden,

You showed us that we were not alone.

When we faced the terrifying unknown,

You were there in our family and friends,

In the face of our neighbours and complete strangers.

Jesus, you have blessed us. May you bless us still.

Holy Spirit,

We give thanks for your mysterious action,

*Which, over the past eight months, has worked within us
both individually and corporately.*

When we thought we were at our limit

You lit little fires in our souls,

You showed us wisdom,

You gave us the courage to dream again.

When we were at our most needy,

You revealed just the someone or something we needed,

Or equipped us to be that need for another.

Holy Spirit, you have blessed us. May you bless us still.

Amen.

Staying Connected

Connect With Your Pastor

If you wish to talk to Robert, you can easily reach him by email at rlawson@vaxxine.com.

Connect With Your Church

Every day phone messages left at (905) 892-6433 and emails sent to: fonthilu@vaxxine.com are checked and replied to as quickly as possible.

Friday Morning Zoom Coffee Hour

Connect with each other every Friday morning during this time of Social Distancing, for coffee, conversation, and, occasionally some theological reflection. If you are feeling the need for some face-to-face time, this meeting is for you. Call the church office for the Zoom link.

Sunday Morning Zoom Church Services

Connect with God's presence in our midst, every Sunday at 9:30 with music, scripture, prayer and reflection. Call the church office for the Zoom link.

Special Services:

October 11, 2020 - Thanksgiving Sunday / Church Reopening (*RSVP to reserve a seat*)

November 1, 2020 - All Saints Sunday / A Day to Remember all Those in Our Community
who have passed away this year

November 22, 2020 - Reign of Christ Sunday / Communion

November 29, 2020 - First Sunday of Advent

What tastes better than a bowl of warm savoury CHILI?



A team of the best chefs from **Fonthill United Church** has prepared this autumn dinner delight, available beginning Tuesday, October 6, 2020 and every Tuesday until sold out.

1 frozen 24 oz. pan costs \$8.00 (serves 2-3 people)
1 frozen 40 oz. pan costs \$13.00 (serves 4-5 people)

Chili at the Church will be available for sale Tuesday mornings, in the Narthex, between 10 am - 12 noon or by appointment.

Please call in advance to place your order.

Please pay by cheque or Interac e-transfer to fonthilu@vaxxine.com

Questions, call the church office: 905 892-6433

Regional Council Report

The Executive and three Commissions of the Regional Council have continued to meet throughout the summer. Since the provincial shutdown, all church meetings have been held virtually and the annual meeting of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council scheduled for the last weekend in May was also cancelled.

That meeting is now scheduled for November 12th to 15th and will be held virtually as well. Four sessions have been established: Thursday, November 12th from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm; Friday, November 13th from 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm; and Saturday, November 14th from 9:30 am - 11:00 am and 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. The Celebration of Ministries will be held on Sunday morning at 10:00 am and will be live streamed.

The planning sessions are being developed by members of the Executive with more information expected shortly.

Along with Sheila Laundry, I will be representing Fonthill United at these meetings.

Pat Tooley, Regional Council Representative

SAFE RETURN-TO-CHURCH RULES

Our concerns for your return to Church Service have posed many challenges. We want it to be safe, enjoyable and with as little disruption to the routine without consequence. The following is the code of conduct we require everyone to follow:

1. Advise the Church Office: If you plan to attend Sunday service, please email or call the church (905 892-6433) during the week, before the service. *If for any reason you forget, please do not stay away. We will accommodate you.* If you have a special need for seating (example: near an exit, use a walker or wheel chair) advise the office so we can be sure to accommodate you. The elevator will be available.
2. Feeling ill before church or you can't say no to Covid-19 screening questions: Stay home and enjoy the service being streamed on Zoom.
3. Masks are mandatory: We ask that you have your own mask on before entering the church. If you do not have a mask, we will provide you with one.
4. Hand Sanitizing: Sanitize your hands when you have entered the Church.
5. Register: Be sure the person in charge of listing you as an attendee, has your name. *This is in case we have to advise you of information pertaining to the detection of someone that becomes ill, and they were in attendance at the same service.*
Name Tags: If you have a name tag, and you have registered, we will have it at the desk in the Narthex. Please wear it, take it home, and wear it the next week.
6. Available: Cushions are available for your comfort. Take it home with you and bring it back the next time you attend. The cloakroom and the mailbox area on the lower level will not be available to you. Please bring everything you might need to the service (water, tissue, etc.) and take them home with you.
7. Offering: A basket will be at the Sanctuary Portal for offerings.
8. Ushers are there to organize, control and help: Seating will be assigned from the front of the church to the back. The ushers will ensure your seating will comply with COVID-19 guidelines. Once you are seated, do not get up to socialize with others.
9. Singing: No singing by the congregation at this time. Enjoy Bill and guest soloists.
10. Washrooms: If necessary, use the washroom by the quiet room. After use, clean it down with the Lysol wipes provided, in consideration of the next person. Wash your hands!
11. Leaving: The ushers will direct you. Those in the front of the Church will leave by the side door and those at the back of the church will leave by the upper doors. If you require the elevator, please wait until everyone else has left.
12. Outdoor Socializing: Maintain safe distancing and wear your mask.

These are your twelve commandments; please adhere and we will all stay safe.

Stay in contact with our Church Family, whether we are on Zoom or in the church. We need each other! Thank you everyone.



Due to the recent pandemic, Cave Springs Camp, located in Beamsville Ontario, was unable to accept campers for the summer. In order to keep our camp alive and thriving for years to come and so that we can be able to see our campers in 2021, we are proudly hosting our first ever VIRTUAL race!

The race can be completed at your convenience! You can run your Keep Cave Springs Running Virtual Race between October 1 - October 31, 2020.

You choose your route whether it is a 1km, 5kms, 10kms, ½ marathon, and for the brave - a full 26.2 miles. We encourage you to walk, run, bike or complete the race however you feel comfortable.

Virtual Community Run Together on October 3, 2020

While the race can be done any day throughout the month of October, we invite you to be a part of a virtual community and complete your run on October 3, 2020 and share your run with us on Facebook and Instagram. Share pictures of your run and congratulate all your fellow athletes!

Please adhere to social distance practices when completing your race.

All the proceeds from this race will go towards the betterment of Cave Springs Camp. All virtual participants will receive a custom finishers medal and custom tubular headband. Race Kit will be mailed to the address you provide prior to race day.

Online Registration Closes: 11:59 PM Saturday, October 31, 2020
Registration: \$40.00

For race inquiries please contact:

Race director: LAUREN CUNNINGHAM

e-mail: emikatmom@gmail.com

Phone: (905) 327-8914

For more information, visit the website for the race at:

<https://cavespringscamp.on.ca/virtual-race/>

*Fonthill United Church's
"Homes for the Holidays" Christmas House Tour
has been cancelled for 2020 due to Covid-19.
We invite you to reserve a new date - November 13, 2021*



We thank everyone who has helped make our previous 16 years of tours so successful; attendees, sponsors, homeowners, decorators, and volunteers!

Each year, proceeds from the Fonthill United Church Christmas House Tour are used to support church initiatives and local charitable programs, including Pelham Cares, the Hope Centre in Welland, and the Hotel Dieu Shaver.

We look forward to resuming this popular event in 2021.

*Join us on Saturday, November 13, 2021.
See you next year!*

You can reach us at: fonthilu@vaxxine.com
Visit our website at: www.fonthillunited.com



A note received from one of the 2019 House Tour donation recipients:

“Thank you very much for your generous donation to Pelham Cares from the ‘Homes for the Holidays’ house tour. We are so grateful for all you do for us!” - *Pelham Cares*

A letter to Fonthill United Church from the United Church of Canada:

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your generous gift to support people in Lebanon who are suffering because of the massive explosion that rocked the city of Beirut on August 4. Samer Laham of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) tells the United Church:

“Thank God that MECC’s team is safe but the situation in Beirut is beyond imagination. You cannot believe the level of destruction in many historical areas in Beirut ... Beirut needs billions of dollars to rebuild what it lost in one minute.”

We are joining with over 135 other churches through our partner, ACT Alliance, to send support directly to the people who need our help the most.

Your gift is truly a blessing as the people of Beirut begin to come to terms with what they will need to rebuild their city and their lives. Please accept our deepest gratitude for your demonstration of God’s love.

Blessings, Sarah Charters, Acting Director of Philanthropy

Report from the Pastoral Care Committee

These months have indeed been challenging for all of us. We are all in need of a warm hug - not a virtual one but a real, in-person hug.

Nonetheless we keep each other in our hearts and provide pastoral care, especially to those alone. As always, especially at this time, care for each other is expressed through so many in our church family. If anyone has concerns, we are only a call away.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Robert and Bill, we are connected through Zoom and soon able to return to the sanctuary.

We continue to meet each month, and keep in touch with Pastor Lawson each week.

Blessings! Marlene Kretchman

Fonthill United Church will be holding a drive-through **FOOD DRIVE** on *Friday, October 9 from 10 am - 12 pm* in the north parking lot (across from the Narthex doors.) Drive up to drop off your donations of non-perishable food items for Pelham Cares. There will be facilities in the lot in which to place your donations. They are also looking for new and gently used outerwear, and toiletries. And then, enjoy some fellowship time in the west parking lot. Bring your own chairs and coffee!



FINANCE REPORT

Before we proceed with our report, we would like to acknowledge and thank Pastor Robert, Bill Outred, and Patrice Walker for the extra efforts they have put forth over the past several months ensuring Fonthill United Church has operated to the extent we have. These individuals have worked tirelessly and we sincerely appreciate their commitment.

We also want to express our sincere appreciation for each and every member who has made the extra effort to drop off their givings at the church office on a regular basis. Quite frankly, we have been overwhelmed with the number of envelopes received almost daily and through these efforts we have been able to meet all ongoing commitments. THANK YOU.

There is no question the first nine months of 2020 have created more concerns and challenges for the Finance Committee than what we have seen, perhaps, over the last 20 years. It is not that these challenges have been insurmountable, the main concern to us is what will be the lasting effects of Covid-19 and what will “our new normal” be moving forward. In this regard we are no different than any other organization and it is imperative as we move forward, that we explore any and all alternatives to guarantee our long term presence in the Fonthill Community. The Finance Committee will continue to review and analyze suggestions as received. We would welcome any thoughts you might have.

The following comments on our financial results are perhaps more in depth than previous Grapevine notices but we feel, in view of current circumstances, you will find the additional numbers important and hopefully of interest to you.

For the first 8 months of 2020, operating income amounted to \$130,673 which is \$4,411 below the corresponding period last year and approximately \$5,787 below budget. Variances include:

- member givings are down \$8,887 from 2019. We are aware of the reasons behind a portion of this decline and attribute the balance to the fact we have been closed for 5 months.
- rental income is down \$3,170 which is self explanatory.
- in 2019 we received \$5,500 in revenue from the Flea Market which is not available this year.
- this income has been partially offset by wage subsidies received from the Government.

Year to date expenses amount to \$144,584 or \$11,737 below 2019 and \$7,272 below budget.

While the lower expenses were expected, some highlights include:

- one time moving costs for the minister amounted to \$961.
- custodial costs are down \$4,529 as Leslie was off for 4 months.
- snow removal costs in early 2020 were \$2,323 higher than 2019.
- capital reserves for the period amount to \$1,000 which is a new expense (included in property expense.)

The operating shortfall at August 31, 2020 amounts to \$13,911 or \$7,326 lower than 2019. We are basically right on budget.

There is no question we will miss the contribution from the House Tour but at the same time, there is also no question our position remains stable and positive. We know some members are reviewing fundraising opportunities and proceeds from these ventures are most appreciated.

In reviewing the statement, you will observe Fonthill United received very generous memorial gifts in recognition of members who have passed away in 2020. In addition, one of the families has donated an additional generous gift to assist the Church in upgrading technical equipment to complement the Zoom services. An assessment of what we might need is now underway. A more formal announcement to acknowledge these gifts will come at a later date.

As it now stands, Fonthill United will be opening for services on Thanksgiving Sunday and there is no question all of us have much to be thankful for. Recent reports would suggest the second wave of Covid may be upon us, which is unfortunate. We feel strongly however, and based on everyone's response at Fonthill United over the past 6 months, we will do just fine. Thanks to all for your wonderful support.

Jim Bradley, Chair, Finance and Property Committee

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

With the Church being closed for the past five months, one would think there has been little work to do by the Property Committee. While this is partially true we can confirm the following:

- The re-grading around the four catch basins in the parking lot has been completed and is a nice improvement. The entire area surrounding each catch basin is now level, which reduces the risk of anyone tripping.
- While on site, the workers excavated the area where the sink hole had occurred but could not determine any reason for the problem. The area was compacted and repaved.
- The hood over the kitchen stove has been repaired and now meets all fire department standards.
- A new electrical panel has been installed for all kitchen outlets which should eliminate issues evident in the past.
- Special Thanks to Rich Miller who has completed numerous jobs over the past few months in the kitchen as well as the Friendship Room. Thanks again, Rich, for your wonderful support.

While closed, our custodian Leslie was in the building periodically to do some cleaning and her schedule has increased as we prepare the building for opening. We can also report that Vicky, the music teacher, has been back for two weeks and is operating strictly in the gym where she has a separate entrance. All returning tenants are being interviewed to ensure they will be following all standard protocols. Our main focus is the safety and well-being of our staff. The situation is being monitored closely and if Government regulations introduce revised guidelines, we will respond accordingly.

Jim Bradley, Chair, Finance and Property Committee

FROM THE M&P COMMITTEE

Please know the M&P Committee meets regularly, and safely, to support Pastor Lawson, Bill Outred, Patrice Walker, and Leslie Hoffman during this time of COVID-19. Committee members miss seeing individuals in person, but are readily available if there are questions or concerns. A list of the M&P members is provided below. Congregants are invited to contact any one of them and individual members will be happy to speak with them.

Marian McDonald
Jim Molkoski
Diane Rawsthorn

Nancy Curran
Alvin Penner

Stay safe. Stay well.

Sincerely, Marian McDonald, Chair