



## **The Return**

The larger story found in the Sunday lectionary passages about King David that we have been following this summer, is the story of how God's chosen people responded when they were finally able to cross the Jordan River and return to the land of their ancestors.

After wandering for forty years in the desert of Sinai, they were no longer the slaves who had escaped Pharaoh by following Moses across the Sea of Reeds. They were no longer a small tribal society. When they realize that their society is now a lot more complicated than it was, they realize that being governed by judges no longer works. And so, as they faced how they had changed, and thought about what their new society might look like, they decided that they would prefer to be governed by a King, rather than by judges.

When we change – when our world suddenly changes – very often some of the old solutions and some of the old ways of being that we used to turn to for comfort, no longer seem to work.

For the past eighteen months, people of all faiths have lived through a period of Exodus. And we have looked forward to our own return. While our Exodus has not been as trying as the Exodus that Moses and his followers lived through, we are kidding ourselves if we blithely believe that returning to church will be similar to going back to school after a pleasant summer vacation. The eighteen months we have lived together as a community in exile has been a period of great uncertainty, fear and anxiety. Like the Israelites who entered that desert, we are emerging from our wandering as different people.

I know that the experience of the pandemic has changed me, and I know that it has changed many members of the congregation. We have lost loved ones. We have spent hours and hours and hours alone without company. We have spent too much time with some of the people we were lucky enough to have in our bubble. We have learned new skills such as cooking and gardening and birdwatching to deal with the boredom. Some of us have become more resilient. Some of us are fragile. Some of us are exhausted. Some have come to see our faith as more important than ever before. Some enjoy Zoom, and have no intention of ever returning to church. And some are just over the moon that they can come to church again!

Please, as you prepare to return to church, take into account how much you have changed. You will be pressured to return to old ways of being and relating to people, that may no longer work for you.

BC Medical Officer of Health, Dr Bonnie Henry from BC, coined the phrase during the pandemic, "Be kind, be calm, be safe." Safety continues to be a consideration. And yet, as we return, and as we start to mingle together again – remaining calm and kind is going to be even more important.

As we return, it is my prayer that we do so gently, carefully, realizing that we have been changed, eager and curious to understand each other, and exactly who it is that eighteen months of anything but normal has fashioned us into being.

*Robert Lawson, Pastor*

## News from the Outreach Committee

At this time the Outreach Committee consists of six people: Nancy Curran, Gail DeKoning, Lyn Taylor, Sharron Bradley, Margot Fraser and me, Janet Hamilton. Pastor Robert is included in all our meetings. We are the body that will make suggestions to the Council as to how our Church can help others, and help improve our community. This can be in the form of donating time, money or product.

Some areas our congregation are already participating in are:

1. Pelham Cares
2. Supporting the ministry at Brock University
3. Donating space to the Scouts
4. Donating to The Hope Centre
5. Supporting Cave Springs Camp
6. Donating socks and coats to those in need
7. The UCW have been tireless in their support to the Women's Shelter, Out of the Cold program and financial donations to groups who have required assistance.

Heather Jesik and the Worship Committee have organized the non-perishable food drives for Pelham Cares.

For many years **The Hope Centre** has been a local charity that Fonthill United Church has supported. Ron Kretchman is currently serving as a board member. The Hope Centre is a food bank and a housing support agency that operates as a hub. It has been in existence in Welland for 45 years.

They are currently expanding their food bank because demand has tripled since the beginning of Covid and the demand is expected to continue. It was suggested that we could facilitate the painting of a bright and inspirational mural on the wall of the renovated store. Our committee fully backed this project and came up with the idea to partner with Start Me Up Niagara's Art Program. **Start Me Up Niagara** offers services and programs to support people facing significant challenges such as poverty, homelessness, unemployment, disabilities, addictions and mental health issues. Their goal is to provide opportunities for these individuals to help them increase their level of self-sufficiency and improve their quality of life. By doing this, we are actually helping two different Regional Charities who both support vulnerable citizens in our Region.

Council approved a budget of up to \$1,500 to finance this project for The Hope Centre. Currently, The Hope Centre and Start Me Up Niagara are working on developing a theme and vision for the wall. Once that is complete, the project will be priced out with the artists and we will try to make this work within our budget.

**Nightlight Youth Services** has now been introduced to this list of worthy causes. Nightlight is a short term and transitional housing service, with 8 beds for youth and young adults. It provides 16 to 30-year-olds with temporary shelter and basic needs for youth who are homeless or without secure stable housing.

As well as a comprehensive support system, including 24-hour staffing, they provide access to community resources and the implementation of various development programs. The program is designed to assist youth in reuniting with their family or finding them alternative living arrangements within one month of their arrival. The programs enable youth to work toward independent living through education, employment support, money management, recreation, healthy living and life skill development.

With the approval of Council, our congregation is donating kits that include the basics such as tooth paste and brush, deodorant, hair brush, and body wash, etc. We have delivered 18 as of this date. We have also donated some bus passes that are handed out by the staff as needed. There is a basket in the Narthex if anyone wishes to donate a product that can be used by these persons. As well as what goes into the kit - underwear, flip flops and towels are appreciated. You can research these organizations online or give one of the committee members a call if you have any questions. If you wish to volunteer, let us know.

Every monetary donation from our members would go toward a tax receipt from the church. Just write on the envelope it is for the outreach program and be sure your name and address is on it.

We won't stop supporting the groups like Cave Springs Camp, and the Ministry at Brock but we are also looking at other ways we can support our neighbours. We are in communications with organizations such as the Blood Bank, Wellspring and the library.

The congregation can be proud of what we have accomplished. This committee is thankful for every input of ideas or help that you offer.

This Church Family, working together, can and does make a difference. We can be proud.

*Submitted by Janet Hamilton, Chair*

## We Are Still One Church

At last! Some of us are actually attending in-person church services. I hear comments from those who attend about how wonderful it is to be back in church and to see folks face-to-face. Others, having faced the steep learning curve of Zoom, are continuing to worship online, having received the order of service from Patrice each week.

We have the needed technology. You will note from reading the finance report that we now have new high speed internet and a new computer for Bill Outred, through which the service is processed online. Many of you have commented on the improved quality of the online service. But, having the improved technology is not enough, we need dedicated people to use the equipment and that's where Katelyn Jesik comes in.

Pastor Robert first noticed Katelyn helping her mother, Heather set up for a Zoom meeting. He thought her skills would be invaluable for our Sunday services and approached Bill with the idea. Bill was only too happy to have another pair of hands and eyes, leaving him to concentrate more fully on his ministry of music.

Katelyn is not a trained IT person, and does not use Zoom in her day job at Benefit Trust. However, like all young people, she has grown up with technology and uses platforms like Facetime to keep in touch with friends and family. It was an easy transition for her to work with the ministry team each Sunday morning.

Together, Bill and Katelyn are able to pay more attention to the aesthetics of visual production like camera angles and volume. Our online services have improved, and the in-house congregants (about 20) are just happy to be in church each Sunday.

Online worship has its challenges, and if you have comments about the online services, we would like to hear them. What made worship meaningful for you?

*Sheila Laundry, Chair of Council*

## From the Pastoral Care Committee

It has been a very trying time for everyone, but at last we are able to do some in-person visiting, to have a hug, to touch a hand. Phone contact continues, but so much better to be face-to-face.

The Pastoral Care Committee will meet again on September 1. If there are any concerns or need for support, we are always available for you.

*Marleene Kretchman, Chair,  
Pastoral Care Committee*



## News from Cave Springs Camp

Cave Springs Camp will be hosting “Grand Opening Events” for the newly constructed Legacy Hall project on Friday October 15 – Sunday October 17. The events will include an Opening Ceremony on Friday, Open House on Saturday, and Dedication Service on Sunday. These events will be open to everyone.

*Alvin Penner,  
Cave Springs Camp representative*

## UCW News

There will be a UCW meeting for fully vaccinated women of the church on Wednesday, October 13 at 1:30 pm. The meeting will be dependent upon the state of the virus activity in our area.



The meeting will be held with chairs safely spaced, in either the Friendship Room or the Lower Hall, depending on the number of people who will be attending.

The phoning group will be calling the UCW members to remind them of the meeting.

*Trudy Pickersgill, UCW President*

## Opportunity for Study

Bible study by email. One page of topics and Bible lookups emailed each week. For details, email Dan Barrett through the church office at [fonthilu@vaxxine.com](mailto:fonthilu@vaxxine.com).

## Staying Connected

### Friday Morning Zoom Coffee Hour

Connect with each other every Friday morning for coffee, conversation, and, occasionally, some theological reflection. If you are feeling the need for some face-to-face fellowship time, this meeting is for you. Zoom Meeting ID: 335 965 846

### Sunday Morning Worship Services

Please join us each week for Sunday worship in the sanctuary! HOWEVER, because our numbers are currently restricted, please call or email the church office no later than Friday at noon to reserve a seat.

We will continue to offer Zoom services as well at 9:30. If you are not yet ready to return to in-person services, please join us via Zoom.

Zoom Meeting ID: 289 273 222

## Getting in Touch with Fonthill United Church

Pastor Lawson ..... [RLawson@vaxxine.com](mailto:RLawson@vaxxine.com)  
Sheila Laundry, Council Chair .... 905 892-6433  
Bill Outred, Music Director ..... 905 899-2439  
Patrice Walker, Office ..... 905 892-6433  
Office Email ..... [fonthilu@vaxxine.com](mailto:fonthilu@vaxxine.com)  
Church address ..... 42 Church Hill, Box 926  
Fonthill ON L0S 1E0  
Website ..... [www.fonthillunited.com](http://www.fonthillunited.com)  
Facebook ..... [www.facebook.com/Fonthilu](http://www.facebook.com/Fonthilu)

*Your email and phone messages are welcomed,  
and are checked regularly every day.*

## Finance & Property Committee Update

Our initial comment in the 2020 Fall Grapevine was a well-deserved “Thank You” to Rev. Robert, Bill Outred and Patrice Walker for the extra effort and commitment to ensure Fonthill United continued to operate and function during the initial six months of the Covid pandemic. Appreciation was also extended to Leslie Hoffman for the extra work she did to ensure the property was as safe as could be.

It is difficult to believe that was one year ago, and while we are back to a partial schedule, the extra effort and responsibility placed on our staff has been significant. So again, a sincere Thanks to Robert, Bill, Patrice and Leslie for your continued commitment to Fonthill United. We hopefully will be back to the “New Normal” within, well-----.

Revenue for the Operating Fund to July 31 amounted to \$114,882, or \$4,212 below 2020. The bulk of this reduction can be directly attributed to lower wage subsidies from the Government. The principal reason for the reduction stems from the fact that the program is now using lower percentages than when it was first introduced in 2020.

The Operating Fund deficit at the end of July was \$10,323. This is roughly \$1,300 over 2020 but \$1,600 below budget. We are seeing some savings in building costs from 2020, mainly in snow removal. Costs continue to be monitored closely.

Some additional highlights over the past few months include:

- In June, Cogeco installed a new high speed internet cable in the building which has helped in the delivery and transmission of the weekly Zoom service. A new computer was also purchased for Bill Outred through which the service is processed. Both these purchases were covered from a donation received last year to help with technology improvements.
- In July, a new computer was purchased for Patrice. We should add, in both cases, the new computers replaced equipment which was several generations old and beyond upgrading.
- We have received a quote of \$4,000 to complete repairs in the quiet room stemming from roof leaks in January. We do not consider these repairs a high priority at this point but will hopefully get them underway in the fall.
- The music teacher, Vicky, has resumed using her office in the church and has requested to use the gym for group lessons. Once she can determine numbers, we will set an appropriate rent. We expect the Scouts will be back in the fall. We are exploring other potential users but if you know of any rental prospects, please let Patrice know. All renters must follow protocols in place and understand the building could be closed by Government regulations if cases increase.
- In view of “media speculation” that interest rates could increase in the short term, two recently maturing investment deposits were renewed for only one year, rather than a longer period.

In May, Council agreed to the creation of a planning committee to review, discuss and develop some policies as to how we can address longer term issues. There is no question Covid has presented some new challenges which we feel may be with us for some time to come. How do we ensure Fonthill United is positioned to respond? We would appreciate any comments you may have to assist the committee.

In closing, members of Fonthill United continue to express their generosity in so many ways. One is their continued financial commitment to the church. Be assured your support is welcomed and very much appreciated.

*Jim Bradley, Chair, Finance and Property Committee*