

## Easter Grapevine 2023

### From the Pastor

Springtime is a fabulous time of transformation. In Autumn, leaves curl up, rabbits and bears hibernate underground, and water freezes. It seems as if everything is turning inward, storing up energy, reflecting, and bidding its time. For this reason, Autumn and Winter are times for introspection and deep thought, sitting by the fire with a book and a cup of hot tea.

Spring, however, is a time to leave all that aside. Spring is a time when the world erupts in a cavalcade of colour, texture, and scent. Spring is a time when it is easy to be as extroverted and as exuberant as the season.

Soon, we will walk outside on Thursday mornings. When we have food drives, we will be able to sit on our lawn chairs in the sun and chat and laugh without shivering. Soon, we will be back in Peace Park watching the evening concerts, strolling down to the street in the evening to Gelato Village, golfing with friends, and sitting out on the terraces of Peter Piper's and The Butcher and Banker, watching the world pass us by.

Life is returning to a rhythm and a pattern that we understand. Sunny days. Fresh air. Warmth. Birdsong. Blossoms. We are entering a time when more than ever, it is easy to hear the Song of Praise that all of creation sings all the time, but especially in the Spring.

One of my favourite bits of scripture is the so-called Springtime Rhapsody from Song of Songs. Found in chapter 2, it has the beloved words,

*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.*

*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

It is time for a welcome change, the writer reminds us. It is time for easier living. It is time to stop and notice and smell the spring flowers. It is time to listen to the birds. It is time to look for the sweet things that are about to bloom and ripen in our gardens. It is time to remember that we can still see, in so many ways, the vestiges of the original garden around us. In the winter, we may forget that it is there – but in the spring, we are reminded powerfully that its goodness and beauty still linger. That God, just as God does every Spring, is recreating the world, and offering each of us an opportunity to participate in that recreation.

This Easter season, Carmen Lansdowne, the moderator of the United Church, wrote what I thought was a very good article about Lent and Easter. Her article talked about how it is such a very good time to change the world. Instead of presenting the task in a daunting way – she tapped into the energy of Spring, and Easter and Resurrection – and instead of terrifying us with the amount of change we need to effect – encouraged us to think about change not so much as an onerous task, but as an opportunity to be exuberant, joyful, and transformative with ourselves, our family, our friends and our community. Indeed, she made change seem something playful, and lovely.

Carmen Landowne's goal for the United Church is "To build new connections and rebuild old ones. To work towards social change that sees a world cared for, and human dignity honoured. To walk together every day in repentance and reconciliation. To march and fight and change unjust systems together. To pray together. To sing together. To discern together."

This is so much the same work of our Strategic Plan which has as its vision to become "a confident congregation, serving God, encouraging diversity, and partnering with our community and others for social justice."

I think Carmen is right. It is a good time to change the world. It is a good time to be as creative, as generous and as exuberant as the season that God has given us.

The winter is past. The flowers appear on the earth. The time for singing has come. It is a good time to change the world.

*Robert Lawson, Pastor*

**EASTER SEASON SERVICES:**

Sunday April 2	Palm Sunday (pick up your palms on Saturday April 1 at the Food Drive)
Thursday April 6	Maundy Thursday Service at Wesley United Church at 7 pm
Friday April 7	Good Friday Service at Wesley United Church at 10 am
Sunday April 9	Easter Service – Communion

**From the UCW**

Recently the UCW had two great gatherings:

"Wellspring," located adjacent to the Meridian Centre, is a cancer support place for those with cancer and their family members, or anyone with questions. They have a variety of programs intended to educate, to give diversions, or even to give you a hat or wig. The building is beautiful and has a kitchen, meeting rooms, activity and exercise rooms. Approximately fourteen ladies attended and everyone enjoyed meeting the staff.



The World Day of Prayer service on March 3 was attended by 53 women and men. Seven churches were represented. Our music director, Bill Outred not only played and sang for us, but also did all of the electronic set up and clean up. The UCW could not have made this special service possible without the help of many volunteers, and the church staff. Everyone helped bring the service together to be such a success.

The UCW is for ALL of the women in the church. There is no membership, we meet on the third Wednesday each month except January, July and August. Just come and join the group in the Friendship Room at the church for a time of fellowship. We have fun while worshipping and learning, followed by refreshments.

*Trudy Pickersgill, UCW President*

## News from the Outreach Committee

### **HOPE CENTRE TOUR AND INFORMATION**

The Hope Centre put out a call for help and we are very proud to let you know that there has been a donation of \$1,000.00 given to them to purchase much needed provisions for the Food Bank.

Fonthill United Church has supported the Hope Centre for many years and yet some of us do not know or understand all their functions. Mr. Jon Braithwaite has been gracious enough to offer a tour of the facilities to our members who would like to take the time to find out more about the centre. Please note that because of the activities within the building, the tour would be at 8 a.m. before the food bank opens.

There has been no date set as we would like to know how many people would be interested at that hour of the day. If you are interested, please put your name on the list in the Narthex or telephone Janet. Once we have an approximate number we will set a date.

### **HARVEST DINNER**

We have now stopped serving dinners at Central United Church until November, when we will start again. We served approximately 80 meals each month and the persons receiving them were very grateful. It is rewarding to see that we can help someone less fortunate than ourselves. The UCW provided all the cookies and muffins that were given out with the applesauce for dessert. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

### **NIGHTLIGHT**

Knap Sacks are still being given to the persons arriving at Nightlight. As you know, the basics are included and all contributions of toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, body wash, etc. are gratefully received and used. There is a basket outside the kitchen if you can help.

### **BANDSHELL**

We are doing it again! Last year we supported an evening of music at the bandshell. The feedback from the public was amazing, but we did not take full advantage of promoting our Church. This July we hope to see more of our members out to enjoy the evening (wearing the blue) and we will be promoting the Church in other ways too. More information will be coming as the date gets closer.

*Submitted by Janet Hamilton, Chair*

## Funeral Luncheons

The UCW is no longer able to look after organizing the important task of funeral lunches. While many of the ladies are willing to help out, we now feel it would be better handled by the Church as a whole. Men, women, young or old, this service is still being requested and it should be a church effort.

The following is how it all takes place. First someone agrees to oversee the process – a coordinator; and their team – the congregation. The minister or the office secretary will contact the coordinator with the date, time and estimated number of attendees. The coordinator will contact Leslie for table and chairs setup, and will call the phoners or team to call the congregation for sandwiches and dessert. (The UCW has a list of people always willing to help.)

A team member\* purchases milk, cheese, pickles, serviettes. The team member\* sets tables, with tablecloths, creamers, sugar; flowers optional. (\*Team member here is most likely someone who will do this for all funerals.)

The coordinator organizes team/congregation for assistance in getting the food ready and serving, and another group for cleanup. While most of the UCW are not able to do this anymore, a list can be provided of those still willing to help.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions, as I truly believe this is one way of providing an important service to those in their time of need.

*Betty Garner*

## From the Ministry & Personnel Committee

The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee acts under the guidelines of The Manual of the United Church of Canada. The committee functions around three roles, which are the consultative and supportive role, the healthy relationships role, and the supervisory role. We provide resources and support for the staff and the community of faith with respect to any issue affecting staff of our church, including ministry personnel and lay employees. The committee works to build positive and trusting relationships between staff and members and adherents of the community of faith.

If members of the community of faith have praise or concerns about staff, both ministry personnel and lay employees, these can be shared in signed correspondence and/or email with the committee. The issues will be considered confidentially by the M&P Committee, who will recommend action. Presently serving on the committee are Nancy Curran, Gaye Meloche, Alvin Penner, and Sandra Harding.

Fonthill United Church is blessed with staff who are committed to their work and we are thankful for this work in our community of faith.

If you are interested in becoming a member and/or finding out more about this committee, please contact Sandra Harding.

*Sandra Harding, Chair, M&P Committee*

## Horseshoe Falls Regional Council

The day may come when time is not defined in terms of before covid and after covid; but this is not that day. In January of 1999, the new structure of the United Church went from a four court system to a three court system and a little more than a year later, our world went into a series of on again and off again shut-downs. During that time, all meetings of the Regional Council of Horseshoe Falls were conducted online. Like any new experience there were positive and negative aspects but I found that overall there were more benefits, especially in savings of time and costs.

During its work leading up to the new governance system, the Transition Team established an evaluation process to examine the shared governance and staffing model. A former staff member, Rev. Jenny Stephens, and a lay member, Bill Allen, have taken on this work. A series of questionnaires and meetings have taken place with Executives, Commissions, staff, Councils, and a final report will be presented.

The Executive and three Commissions members meet almost monthly and the Regional Council meets twice yearly in the spring and autumn. The goal of the spring meeting is education, inspiration and celebration while the autumn gathering focuses on accountability. We will be electing our new Executive and Commission members and will welcome Rev. Lennox Scarlett, our new President, as Rev. Robert Lawson completes his term. Robert has served Horseshoe Falls Regional Council well and did a fine job of chairing the meetings. He will remain on the Executive for this next term as Past President. Our spring meeting will be held on June 8 and June 10. The Thursday meeting will be held online and the June 10 meeting will be held in person at the Meridian Centre in Fonthill. Registration will open on April 24. Further information about this, and other meetings of the HFRC, are available in the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Newsletters and can be found on the website.

*Prepared on behalf of  
Fonthill United Church Regional Reps,  
Sheila Laundry and Pat Tooley*

## **Finance & Property Committee Update**

It has been less than two months since we provided you with very detailed information on our financial position through the 2022 annual report. The budget presented, as part of that report, suggested we could be looking at a year-end deficit in the operating fund of \$55,000 and we want to assure you our efforts continue to ensure we can increase income and reduce expenses where possible.

Revenue for the first two months of 2023 amounted to \$38,249 which is \$9,234 higher than budget and \$8,505 above the corresponding period last year. The higher income is due to some 2022 catch up which came in after year-end, plus an annual donation made earlier this year than last year. Rental income is \$4,150 higher than 2022.

Operating expenses totalled \$41,416, basically the same as last year but \$2,853 lower than budget. The net year to date shortfall is \$3,166, well below the projected \$15,254 or \$11,705 reported in 2022. Timing plays a major role in the year to date numbers and as the year progresses, we will see actual results closer to budget. Nevertheless, we are very encouraged by the current position. As an example of how mild this winter has been, snow removal costs are 50% lower than 2022.

One of the initiatives under the strategic plan was to increase rental income. The consensus is that the Montessori School has worked out well and while we get additional requests regularly, we are always mindful of the needs of members, existing tenants and church operations. We can report the school has requested additional space and we do have before us an opportunity to rent the kitchen one day a week. We feel confident we can meet both of these requests which could mean an increase in rental income of approximately \$6,000 annually. We would then only consider the occasional daily rental as in the past.

As mentioned at the Annual Meeting, three quotes were obtained to determine the cost of repairing the flat roof over the side door entrance. These have been reviewed by a special committee from the Trustees and Finance, and we accepted the one from Baron Roofing. Complete details, including plans to cover the cost, will be provided shortly along with any additional rental news. We expect the work will be completed in May.

In closing, we sincerely appreciate your continued support and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the finance committee. We are also willing to discuss positive tax implications which could result from an enduring or legacy gift to the church.

*Jim Bradley, Chair, Finance and Property Committee*