



SUMMER MEMO



The Newsletter of St. Mark's United Church, 115 Orton Park Rd, Toronto M1G 3G9 • (416) 439-8623 www.st-marks.ca

MAY/JUNE 2017

SUMMER EDITION

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

By: Paul Hutchison, Minister

It has been a fast moving season again at St. Mark's and there is still so much ahead. Even with the summer slowdown, there are so many interesting people planning on leading worship that I expect folks will continue to be present for worship and connecting with each other as you delve into worship and conversations of faith.

On the 28th of May at the congregational meeting St. Mark's engages into the work of asking ourselves what is ahead for us as a congregation in the decade to come. How will we offer ministry? What possibilities of new ministries might be ahead of us? That puts a hold on the conversation about the Cedarbrae site formally, but we need to continue to be connected in conversations to ensure that the presbytery and Toronto United Church Council continue

to research what possibilities for ministry for the United Church of Canada in that location might be. There are lots of questions of potential future ministry that we still need a connection too.

In the past month, with a renewed request from Heather Morton for a Baptism Service for her Son Pier, the worship team moved forward with a draft revised guiding document for baptism that the board put into effect and directed me to be able to function within that draft document while we take a bit more time formalizing the language within. That led to Pier's baptism on Sunday the 21st of May with family present and his father, Hildo, skyped in from Tunisia! What an incredible morning of celebration of the presence of God! This was an exciting moment of movement for the congregation for sure. This was an exciting moment of movement of the spirit for sure. Carol sent out

photos of the day – my favourite is of the family checking in together on the laptop at the communion table. The world has changed! And so have we!

Summer will be upon us quickly, June has me preaching for the 60th anniversary service at St. John's as they draw their congregation to a close on the 11th, at Sharon's Father's Day Family Reunion in Fort Erie and then some study leave. I am back to lead worship for 3 Sundays in July then onto holidays and returning after Labour day.

Paul has been pushing my thinking in Galatians these days – get out of the rules – feel God – be changed. I encourage you to give it a read through – be passionate about something – run – walk – sing – hike – find a new place to connect – and dare to believe – and dare to tell others – that we are not alone. *Thanks be to God.*

ANGELS AMONG US

By: Luella Stephens

During my three year term as Chair of the Christian Education Ministry Team, I received a great deal of support from the staff of St. Mark's, as well as the Chairs of the other Ministry Teams, which I sincerely appreciate. This message is written to share my observances of some of the angels of St. Mark's whose incredible contributions help others

cope with the speedbumps in life, that can drag a person down.

Tom and I were at the Royal Winter Fair and met Art Nicholson accompanied by Alan Hall's partner, Art, who was clearly enjoying a delightful outing. We heard of previous adventures they had together and plans were in place for more, albeit "our" Art was pushing the thankful Art in a wheelchair.

Many of us also know that when Michael needed to find a new home Art and Carolyn immediately offered and were selected by Michael for many reasons. For a church function, Art chauffeured Jane Dowsett, fulfilling a dream of hers to ride in a convertible with the top down. For these and many other acts of kindness, Art & Carolyn

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ST. MARK'S BOOK STUDY WRAPS UP ANOTHER GREAT SEASON!

MORE TO COME!

By: Rob Peck

St. Mark's Book Study wrapped up another wonderful season with a potluck party at the home of consummate hosts Tom and Luella Stephens, on Friday, May 12th, 2017.

The purpose of the book study is to have fun and fellowship while adding to our knowledge of our Christian faith. We interpret that mission broadly to include any book that will teach us something about spirituality. Last year we studied Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, a look at a holocaust survivor's lessons from his career as a psychiatrist and his internment in Nazi concentration camps during World War II.

At the party, apart from enjoying a bewildering array of good food, we looked at 10 possible books for next year's Book Study:

1. Fishing Tips: How Curiosity Transformed a Community of Faith by John Pentland
2. Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do? by Michael J. Sandel
3. Grounded: Finding God in the World - A Spiritual Revolution by Diana Butler Bass
4. A Religion of One's Own: A Guide to Creating a Personal Spirituality in a Secular World by Thomas Moore
5. Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life by

Thomas Moore

6. Born Again: My Journey from Fundamentalism to Freedom by Tom Harpur
7. Convictions: How I Learned What Matters Most by Marcus J. Borg
8. Days of Awe and Wonder: How to Be a Christian in the Twenty-first Century by Marcus J. Borg
9. Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World by Dalai Lama
10. Just Cool It!: The Climate Crisis and What We Can Do by David Suzuki and Ian Hanington

Any one of these books would have been a worthy candidate for discussion. Nevertheless, we had to pick one! Our group democratically selects next year's book by considering each on its merits, then voting.

This year we started by each voting for three books, knocking off the bottom ones, then each voting for two books, knocking off all but the last two then each voting for our preference. At the end of this process, we chose the Dalai Lama's book, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*.

Amazon.ca says of this book:

"In 1999 His Holiness The Dalai Lama published the bestselling *Ancient Wisdom: Modern World*, which addressed the question of ethics for the new millennium. A decade later, His Holiness enters the contemporary debate about religion vs atheism, and returns to the theme of ethics with a major new work: *Beyond Religion: ethics for a whole world*.

"In this thought-provoking new book he argues that religion is not a necessity for pursuing a spiritual life. Rather, focusing on tolerance

and understanding between religions, as well as tolerance and understanding between believers (of any faith) and non-believers is the way forward. The way to achieve such an approach, he proposes, is through a system of secular ethics grounded in a deep appreciation of our common humanity. Aimed particularly at the general reader, *Beyond Religion: ethics for a whole world* outlines those ethics he believes should be central to our lives."

We start studying this book next year in January, 2018. Meanwhile, if you would like to get started early, books are available from Rob Peck at his cost of \$21.

...CONTINUED FROM ANGELS AMONG US

Nicholson are dubbed Angels.

Charlie and Pat Wardell are also Angels of the first order. I know that they drove a certain individual who fell down the back stairs at the church, to her home and provided care and meals until she was able to look after herself. Charlie does the back-up of all the church computers on a regular basis and helps anyone with anything that needs doing. Pat has her own Meals-on-Wheels and provides food to people who need encouragement and support. Charlie & Pat definitely qualify as being angel-worthy.

No doubt there are people you know who qualify as angels; I suggest that you share their stories in future Memos.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION SUNDAY

By: Diane Chadwick

We stock the food banks, run for cancer, heart disease and other scourges. Raise funds for hospitals and seniors homes. We play checkers with shut-ins; tidy our parks; make sandwiches in church basements for the homeless; we ferry shut-ins to medical appointments; watch out for our neighbours; deliver hot meals to the elderly and clothes to the needy.

We are 13 million strong in Canada. Half the adult population volunteers time, talent or sheer sweat to good causes. Statistics Canada reports that we devote more than 2 billion hours of our time."

You are all a volunteer in some way personally and here at St. Mark's – by being on a committee, greeting at the door, reading the scriptures, making the coffee before the service, helping at our annual fundraisers such as the turkey dinner and Yard sale, organizing the Library, preparing the gardens, our amazing choir, organizing and participating in the fun Progressive Dinners, and so much more. Our church could not function without you volunteering your time.

At our recent Volunteer Appreciation Dinner this past Tuesday night, our Interim President and CEO at Scarborough/Rouge sent out a letter to all volunteers – she states that "our volunteer program now has more than 1500 extraordinarily committed members including five lively volunteer dogs. Last year volunteers gave more than 115,000 hours – that is over 13 years! And this is just for the 3 Scarborough

hospitals. Gord Maunder and I volunteer in the Cardiac Rehab. Programme and in that one unit alone we have just over 100 volunteers who participate at the rehab. sites at Rouge Valley and as far east as Peterborough and Hastings to assist the Cardiac Exercise therapists with over 3500 patients who participated in the programme last year.

I found another article with the title: 20 Reasons to Volunteer - here are just some of the reasons: Make a difference; Find purpose; connect with your community; feel involved; contribute to a cause that you care about; meet new people; get out of the house; make new friends; feel better about yourself; and ,impress your mom!

I have one of those "self help" books called: 'You Have A Purpose - Begin it Now" that is filled with verses and sayings by many famous people - I found a couple very appropriate verses I'd like to share with you:

"Stop sitting there with your hands folded looking on, doing nothing:

Get into action and live this full and glorious life. NOW. You have to do it."

And the second verse I'll pass on is:

"Until you try, you don't know what you can't do."

On a personal note, as you know my passion is volunteering in the Cardiac Rehab. Programme – it changed my life in many ways, I've never felt happier in what I'm doing and have met so many wonderful friends and what amazes me is that you can always find a connection with them in some way once you start a conversation.

THE HELEN JONES' LIBRARY

By: Karen Wigle

THANK YOU very much to all who donated Value Village discount cards – keep them coming! They allow me to purchase good books, especially for children, at a great price. You can leave them with Carol or drop them off in the Library In Basket .

Here are some new books to enjoy right now or over the summer:

The Happiness Project Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and General Have More Fun by Gretchen Rubin is a New York Times Bestseller and a Globe and Mail Bestseller. Written with humour and insight, the author spent a year pursuing different sets of resolutions to determine if they would make her life happier. Could this book inspire you to start your own happiness project?

In The Hidden Life of Trees ,What They Feel, How They Communicate by Peter Wohlleben, an international bestseller, this forester turned author has written a book that reads like a novel, and "convincingly makes the case that the forest is a social network. He draws on groundbreaking scientific discoveries to describe how trees are like human families: tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and even warn each other of impending dangers."

Eastern Birds – The Roger Tory Peterson Field Guide will help you identify all your feathered friends. Take this along when you go for a walk in the park, hiking or camping.

If you are preparing a summer service, don't forget the library has lots of books in the Worship and Program Resources section to help you.

PROGRESSIVE DINNER

By: Luella Stephens

When the 43 participants arrived at the church on Saturday, April 29th they learned who their host for main course would be, then tickled their taste buds with an assortment of tasty appetizers, and wet their whistles with a choice of fruit punches. It was great fun to hear reports of delightful conversations – people who had known each other for many years discovered new and interesting things about their fellow

diners, while they shared a table for main course at a host home.

In addition to fun and fellowship, the event also contributed \$520. to the St. Mark's coffers.

A very special "Thank You" to the main course hosts (Suzanne & Harry Brown, Rob Burrridge, Sharon & Paul Hutchison, Carolyn & Art Nicholson, Julia & Rob Peck and Teresa & Larry Smith) who opened their home to guests and served wonderful

meals. Also THANK YOU to Guiders Carolyn Mykusz and Frances Fleury, and Rangers & Pathfinders (Arthiga, Carrie, Fiona and Maegan) who cleaned up the remnants from the appetizer course and set out the lovely display of desserts. The event was organized by Heather Urbansky and Luella Stephens (with considerable assistance from their husbands). The Progressive Dinner is an annual event – plan to join the fun on April 14th, 2018.

Upcoming Events



ST. MARK'S AMAZING LAWN AND PLANT SALE SATURDAY JUNE 3RD



**St. Mark's
United Church**
115 Orton Park Rd.
(parking lot)
**Saturday,
June 17th**
2:00 – 4:00 pm
Ages 4 to 11

Sponsored by:



BIKE SAFETY RODEO

- Safety Tips
- Equipment & Helmet Check
- Velofix bike repair truck on site
- Practice Course
- Refreshments
- Bring Bike & Helmet
- A parent must be present to register

