



FEBRUARY MEMO



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

FEBRUARY 2019

WINTER EDITION

THOUGHTS ON MY YEAR AT ST. MARKS

By: Rev. Christopher White

It is hard to believe that March 17 will be my final Sunday at St. Marks, the year has gone so quickly and I have had such a wonderful time here. So what has impressed me about my time at St. Marks?

In a word, the people. There is a depth of relationship and just a joy in being together that makes St. Marks a very special place. Whether it's a Sunday morning or one of the many events sprinkled through the year, there is a connection among you that is something to be treasured and shared. I have also been impressed with the amount of outreach that happens and the commitment to meeting the needs of this community.

Worship has also been something that I have enjoyed. Believe it or not St. Marks is a very challenging place in which to preach! In all the other churches I have a served there was an actual space between myself and the congregation, I either preached on a raised platform or from a pulpit. But at St. Marks you are right down in the congregation who are literally feet away from you, so you get instant feedback. You can see if your words are resonating or if they are missing the mark, often at the same time from two people sitting beside each

other! But there is also an intimacy that goes along with that which is very supportive.

The other thing in worship that I have appreciated is that you are a very forgiving congregation, if something unexpected happens in worship or doesn't go as planned, no one gets upset, you just roll with it.

There has also been an openness to the gifts I have brought in my ministry, the stewardship campaign, which has generated such positive results, the innovation team which is starting important conversations about future ministry opportunities and of course finding my book being studied. Thank you for that.

There is no question that the church is facing challenging times across the Western world and St. Marks is not immune to those trends. If I have a wish for St. Marks it is that once your permanent minister is chosen that you spend significant time and energy focussing on your mission and vision for the years ahead. This is critical work to ensure the long term sustainability of St. Marks and is work that all congregations need to undertake today.

In closing, both Wendy and I want to thank you all so much for your warm welcome and a wonderful year that we have both treasured.

Blessings.

SHINING WATERS REGIONAL REPORT

By: Glen Greenwood & Randy Stroud

January 1st launched the new UCC and our new governance.

Our new Regional name is Shining Waters, [Region 10.] Folks may want to visit our new Region's Website <https://region10.ca/home/> We would encourage everyone to take a moment and explore it, [especially the December 2018 Newsletter.] The Facebook address is www.facebook.com/shiningwatersregionalcouncil/

The inaugural Regional Council meeting will occur at Georgian College, Barrie May 24th to 26th.

Randy and I have been asked to represent SM's at Regional meetings. We have agreed. To make it official the congregation must approve us as your representatives at a congregational meeting. We feel that our experience as Presbytery reps and Presbytery committee work, plus our dedication to the task, qualifies us to represent SM's at Regional meetings. Thank you.

Warm wishes.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN HALL

By: Rev. Christopher White

WHAT DO YOU VALUE ABOUT ST MARKS?

I really value the relationships that we built together, the trust that was built over the 23 years. We started from a place of trust and it was an awesome and daunting experience. They trusted me enough to let me do some crazy things! We created unique worship that was dramatic and theatrical, we laid it out and everyone made it work. The most significant example of that was the Good Friday when we stripped the

sanctuary and hung 6 huge canvasses depicting the killing of the Donnelly family and they became like the Stations of the Cross. On Easter we had the same pictures present but now they were symbols of bringing new life, we had 150 people standing in the sanctuary, it was chaotic!

WHAT MADE YOUR MINISTRY WORK FOR 23 YEARS?

I would say that there were three distinct phases of my ministry at St Marks. We were very attentive to the changes in the community and had a higher level of intentionality about our ministry. We had a clear sense of who we were as a church, we saw ourselves as a small church

of great depth. Also the church allowed me to grow and gave me the space I needed to do ministry outside of St Marks, which benefited both of us.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR ST MARKS?

That they continue to be an authentic and honest and safe place for members and all who arrive. Continue to be aware of the wider community and church, there is a need and responsibility to be active in both.

THERE IS SO MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO AT ST. MARK'S!

By: Charlie Wardell

It is so great the way our family pulls together, supporting each other and growing together,

As I write this, we are looking forward to our Congregational Meeting on Sunday February 3. At that meeting, we will have the opportunity to understand and appreciate our financial strengths. It will also be exciting as Glen Greenwood and Randy Stroud are brought forward as representatives to the 'shiny new' Shining Waters Region! Their Presbytery duties have ended, as have Presbyteries themselves. They will bring experience, commitment and energy to the region as they have to Presbyteries and as they do with us. We are blessed to have them as they help to launch the new Region.

Just a few short weeks after, Sunday March 17 is a day full of events! Our youth in Confirmation Class are graduating!! Many thanks to Christopher for leading the classes and confirming what it means to be part of a church like St. Mark's. Many thanks also to the youth, who gave of their time and energies to grow with us. It will be a time that each will remember for a lifetime.

But March 17 will also bring a farewell. Christopher White will be moving on to a permanent minister role in Oshawa. As we feared, it is confirmed, Wendy is going with him. Christopher has touched our lives and many of us now know him by another name – "friend". We will miss you Christopher. Bring the same leadership, caring, energy and wisdom to your next congregation. You will be a blessing to them as you have been here.

As many of you have heard, we continue the search for a music

director. A change in life (a promotion at work) changed the plans for the person we had chosen. In the meantime, we are very thankful for Linda Meyer. She has stepped in and stepped up when her St. Mark's family needed her.

The search team for our next Permanent Minister is lined up. It's a 'wow' moment as we couldn't ask for better. We are honoured to have: Art Nicholson, Carol Collinson, Gord Maunder, Heather Urbansky, Katharina Manassis, Kathryn Moase, and Teresa Smith. Please keep them in your thoughts as they work on our behalf to find the person who will lead us forward.

As I re-read this, it occurs to me that this is very much like Christopher's sermon series: Help – Thanks – Wow! *Christopher was right... again... of course.*

CH CH CHANGES!

By: Karen Boniface

2019 has come in with many changes for our staff team.

We gave a sad but encouraging goodbye to Michael Gomiega, our Music Director of five years. He is now the Music Director for Trinity Presbyterian Church, and we wish him the best, and he knows that he is always part of the St. Mark's family.

For a short time, we had signed up Mark Oracion as our new Music Director, but sadly declined the position as he had accepted a promotion at his full time job, and needed to focus his efforts on that. We are disappointed, but wish Mark well.

We are most fortunate that Linda Meyer has stepped up as Supply

Music Director. Her many years of experience at Bel Canto Choir and at West Hill United Church (along with other choirs) has us in great hands. Thank you Linda!

The Music Director Search Team is back on the job, and is working away.

Christopher White will be with us until Sunday March 17. He will be starting April 1 as a Permanent Minister for Kedron United Church in north Oshawa.

The Ministry and Personnel team is searching for a Supply Minister, with the hopes to start in early April.

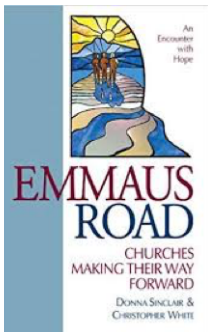
A separate Permanent Minister Search Team is working on finding a Permanent Minister with a start date on September 1. If you can think of suitable candidates for either position, please let us know!

As Presbytery has been dissolved as of December 31, 2018, and we now have Regional Councils. We are working with Mhairi Godley, our Regional Liaison to assist us with the new hiring process. We will be posting our profile and job descriptions on a new website called ChurchHub. Along with this will include our Living Faith Story, which will be discussed at our February 3rd Congregational meeting after the service.

So please give prayers for the many changes and the people affected by those changes. With this comes great opportunities and hope. We are surrounded by caring, talented and helpful people, which makes St. Mark's such a very special community of faith.

ST. MARK'S BOOK STUDY OFF TO A ROARING START!

By: Rob Peck



Our study of Donna Sinclair and Christopher White's book, *Emmaus Road: Churches Making Their Way Forward* got off to a roaring start on January 18th. What a

delight to study a book that was co-written by our own Minister! 23 people enjoyed pleasant and stimulating conversation, camaraderie and Luella Stephens' scrumptious treats.

To quote from our study book, "We live in a period of corrosive uncertainty. There are so many questions: What is the role of the church in this new world? What are the implications for worship, adult education, programs with youth and young adults? How will this church speak to its neighbours who share different faiths? What sort of churches

should we be building? What should happen within their walls? What sort of leaders do we need?" These questions are just as relevant today as when



Donna and Christopher formulated them in 2003. We considered these questions among others and now look forward to comparing our answers to Donna's and Christopher's in the subsequent chapters of the book.

We have 7 more sessions and a party to go. The remaining sessions are scheduled for February 1, February 15, February 22, March 22, April 5, April 12

and May 3. All sessions start promptly at 7:30 pm and finish by 9:30 pm. On May 24, 2019 we will have our closing party and pick the book or video study for 2020.

Friday, February 1st is a special gift for us as Christopher White will talk to us about the book. What did he and Donna intend it to do? What did it do? What has changed in 15 years? Curious? Join us on February 1st and during our subsequent sessions.

If you are interested, or if you have any questions, you can contact either Carol at the Church office, or me, Rob Peck.



HAPPY 65TH ANNIVERSARY PHYLLIS & GERALD SPENCER

By: Luella Stephens

Phyllis & Gerald were married October 9th, 1953, at the Cliffcrest United Church parsonage. They had

3 sons and a daughter who expanded their family with 10 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.

Phyllis officially retired in 2000 after serving 14 years as a United Church diaconal minister, but continued to volunteer as needed, at Greenwood Mount Zion, in Durham, for 15 years. Throughout her ministry Phyllis had the rights of sacraments

(communion, wedding, baptism).

Our St. Mark's family congratulate Phyllis & Gerald on their 65th anniversary. In addition to the certificates shown, from the Queen and Prime Minister, they also received Congratulations from Governor General – Julie Payette and Lieutenant Governor of Ontario – Elizabeth Dowdeswell. E



Mr. Gerald Spencer and
Mrs. Phyllis Spencer

I am delighted to hear that you are celebrating the sixty-fifth anniversary of your wedding and send you my warmest congratulations and good wishes on this splendid occasion.

Elizabeth R.

Congratulatory Messages from Her Majesty The Queen

Her Majesty The Queen personally approved this message, which was specially designed for the transmission of Her Majesty's best wishes to Canadians. The photograph was taken during The Queen's Royal Tour, from June 28 to July 6, 2010; Her Majesty visited Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Toronto and Waterloo.

Message de félicitations de Sa Majesté la Reine

Sa Majesté la Reine a personnellement approuvé l'utilisation de ce message pour transmettre ses meilleurs vœux aux Canadiens. La photo a été prise durant la Tournée royale de la Reine qui s'est déroulée du 28 juin au 6 juillet 2010; Sa Majesté avait alors visité Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Toronto et Waterloo.



© Her Majesty The Queen in Right of Canada represented by the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General (2011).
© Sa Majesté la Reine du chef du Canada représentée par le Bureau du secrétaire du gouverneur général (2011).

Her Majesty The Queen in Right of Canada/Sa Majesté la Reine du chef du Canada/Michelle Peries and/or Cory de Laplante, Rideau Hall

Upcoming Events

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



**Tuesday,
March 5th,
2019**

Lower
Hall

**5:00 pm to
6:30 pm**

Ash Service

to follow in the sanctuary
at 7:00 p.m.



*Guess who's
coming to dinner?*

PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Saturday, April 13th, 2019

5:45 - 6:45 Appetizers and punch at the church
6:45 - 7:00 Travel to host home for main course
7:00 - 8:45 Dine at host home
9:00 Dessert at the church

Cost: \$20 per person (collected at church prior to appetizers)

Procedures:

- 4 to 6 guests will be served main course at host home; guests will learn at appetizer course the host home where they will go for main course
- Host will provide main course
- Guests will contribute their choice of appetizer, salad or dessert
- If you wish, bring your own wine to main course only

**Registration forms will be
available in March .**

Starlight Ball

A fundraiser for St. Mark's United Church

Friday, April 26th, 2019

Q-SSIS Banquet Hall

Appetizers & Cocktails at 6:30 pm

Dinner at 7:30 pm

\$60 per person

Tickets on sale Feb 17th

Tickets available from:

**Karen Boniface Carol Caise
Melinda Calway Bill Wolba
Bettie & Dave Mackenzie
Rob Peck Tom Stephens Pat Wardell
Sharon & Trevor White (416-574-6429) or at
the office (416-439-8623)**



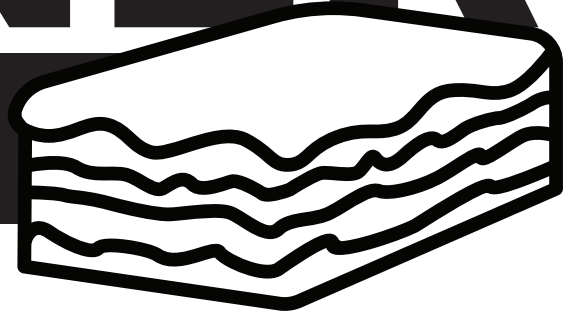
MUSIC EVENT PLANNED FOR MARCH 2ND - CANCELLED

Unfortunately, "Can You Feel the Love Tonight", the music event planned for March 2nd, has been unavoidably cancelled. Thank you Linda, Michael and all the performers, who have already invested a great deal of time in planning and preparing for what would have been an excellent show.

. Seed Project for Christian Ed .

LASAGNA DINNER

Spend Family Day with
Your Church Family



**MONDAY
FEBRUARY
18TH**

@

5PM

Stay after for board game fun!!

\$10

PER PERSON

OR

\$20

PER FAMILY