

THE

# SPRING

## MEMO



The Newsletter of St. Mark's United Church,  
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SPRING EDITION

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

“I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

(Isaiah 43:19)

*By: Janet Smith Zenwirt, Minister*

The colours of Spring offer great abundance. The clusters of daffodils at the front and side of the church are in their splendour. A soft green cast is appearing along our streets as the leaves unfold. Promise lingers in the air. Yet, this is a spring unlike any other. The pandemic has thrown our lives off balance. These are not easy days and we need to be gentle with ourselves as we grow into new ways of being. Like those tender green spouts that are appearing in our gardens, we wish to flourish.

While we stay apart physically, we continue to connect with each other. Many of us spend more time on the phone or sending emails. Sunday

morning coffee is still a fixture as we start our online worship service with Coffee Hour. There are other opportunities for connection too within our church community and beyond. Bart Boniface offered words for our church sign that sum it up: LOVE CAN BRIDGE ANY DISTANCE. Love and compassion are sprouting up across the world as we make relationships our priority. Many of us are re-connecting with long-lost friends or relatives. We are forming new friends as we slow down and pay attention to those nearby. This focus on relationship gives me faith in humanity.

I see this period as a time of sabbath and growth. Our planet also is

benefitting from the sabbath. I hope that the exquisite sound of birdsong is filling your days as the sounds of the city have been stilled. Let's take this sabbath time to step back and determine what is essential for our well-being as individuals, as society, as the church and for our environment. Surely, we will not return to where we were before this upheaval. We can carve out a world with more compassion, love, grace, and creativity springing forth; a world that focuses on inclusion and justice. What are you hearing in this new silence? What creativity is springing in you?

# OUTREACH

*By: Brian MacFarlane Chair of Outreach.*

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“Members of St. Marks, we are currently in the midst of a challenging time.”

Access to the food we consume, integral to our physical and mental health, that feeds our spirit and sustains life, is being challenged. A visit to a big chain grocery store now involves lining up, sometimes for up to an hour to allow entrance to a few customers at a time.

And the stores are not the same; where once shelves were packed tight with goods, shoppers are now seeing empty shelves, unreal.

Most retailers are now no longer accepting cash, afraid of the virus spreading on it and only accepting credit or debit cards, something that many financially challenged people do not have.

And then there are our food banks. Largely reliant on food drives from organizations, there has been a sharp drop in donations of products, more so with the devastating news that contact with the Covid 19 virus is able to remain on items it has contacted for a significant time, including food items being provided for donation. In recent weeks media has reported on the overwhelming increase in food bank use, with a flood of people, many of them lining up for the first time, never imagining

before they would be in that line. The food banks need our help.

The Outreach group at St. Mark's has always been responsive to the needs of our community and especially the most vulnerable within it. The subject of food security and the interest of the congregation in starting an all ability community garden on our church property has been something that has motivated our group to determine the best way to work towards this over the past few years and the accumulated Embrace the Spirit Fund our group has saved towards this is a substantial amount. The Embrace the Spirit Fund is an incredible resource for enriching church and community life, the kinds of projects that make a difference.

Recently in communications within the Outreach group the current state of food insecurity was addressed. We have now decided to change directions on where our Embrace the Spirit fund should be used presently, addressing the urgency of where it is needed the most with a donation to the Daily Bread Food Bank in the amount of \$5,000 on behalf of St. Marks. A balance remains in our

group's fund for future Outreach project spending.

The idea of having a community garden at St. Mark's is still very much alive. Food insecurity is very much on the front burner now as the providence, handling and availability of healthy food remains a source of anxiety for many and a topic prevalent on all forums of media being consumed.

In closing I urge all members of the congregation to consider donating online to support food banks and to keep alive the idea of having a community garden on the church property and consider the role you will take in working with others and I towards making it happen if you are so inclined to be a part of making it so.

We are not alone, thanks be to god, stay well everyone.

Warm regards,

# THE SHINING WATERS WEBSITE

*St. Mark's Shining Waters Regional Council reps: Glen Greenwood and Randy Stroud*

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As St. Mark's Regional Council reps, Glen Greenwood and Randy Stroud monitor the Shining Waters Regional Council website. Other St. Mark's people also keep up-to-date by monitoring the Shining Waters website and use the many resources available on the website to assist them with their St. Mark's work or responsibilities. "The Shining Waters website includes a lot of information and useful resources" says Glen. "I enjoy reading things on the website to keep abreast of what's going on within the church community and to watch videos placed there by talented people on a wide variety of interesting topics" he adds.

Way back in 2016, when we were reviewing 'Remits' (remember remits?), we were promised a new paradigm for the church, with Presbyteries being replaced by Regional Councils and new ways to operate and manage. "With the plethora of information on the Shining Waters website, we certainly

have ready access to information, updates and resources" says Randy. "And with our current stay home situation due to the pandemic, we have time to access and read what the website has to offer".

One example of part of the Shining Waters website you may be interested in reviewing is the COVID-19 section. Take a look at the website and do some web-surfing of your own at: <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/emergency-plan/>.

Glen leads a Bible Study group at St. Mark's. He has studied at Emmanuel College (the theological college of Victoria University in the University of Toronto) and has earned a Lay Certificate in Theology. "As a licenced lay leader, I am trained to offer occasional worship leadership in communities of faith in Shining Waters Regional Council. I have enjoyed every opportunity I have had to date to lead worship at different churches, and hope to have more opportunities in future,

when we are finished with the closures forced by the pandemic". Glen adds: "I enjoy leading the Bible Study group at St. Mark's and I also enjoy serving on the Shining Waters Licenced Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) committee". As a member of the LLWL committee, Glen is part of a group that oversees new applicants, those wanting to renew their license, and more. "One of the benefits of our new governance is that we meet folks from near and far, not just Toronto. Our first meeting was in Innisfil. Lately we meet on Zoom".

For more information cut and paste this URL

[www.shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/programs/pastoral-relations/licensed-lay-worship-leaders/](http://www.shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/programs/pastoral-relations/licensed-lay-worship-leaders/)

Another example of interesting information available for review on the Shining Waters Regional Council website.



# DAFFODIL FUNDRAISER

*By Karen & Bart Boniface*

With the cancellation of the Starlight Ball and the Lawn Sale, we are in need of fundraisers. Here is a nice way of supporting St Mark's and beautifying your property! Bart and I would like to offer 10 families the opportunity for you have 20 of these St. Mark's daffodils, plus 10 complimenting white daffodils planted at your home at a cost of \$100. We will dig up the bulbs at the church in the summer, cure them, and then plant them at your place towards mid to late September. If you like, we can also give you

gardening advice at that time. Karen has cared for the church gardens and many others for several years.

Where did they come from? About 8 years ago, 300 daffodils were planted in the grass by the congregation as a City of Toronto Public Realm project. The sitting rocks out front of the church were also installed by the City. These unusual daffodils are called Pink Charm, with white petals and a peachy pink cup which have slowly increased in numbers, and if conditions are right, they will increase for you too! Planted in your lawn means low maintenance. There

is no extra weeding, and they are not bothered by squirrels, deer and insects. You just let the leaves die down, and do not mow your lawn where the bulbs are planted until mid to the end of June. That's it!

Due to the quantity of bulbs we can dig without compromising our church display, we are limited to 10 opportunities for you to take part. We would like to take requests with the deadline of May 31. First come first served! We will collect your donation in the fall. Please contact Karen or Carol with your order.





# FAMILY

*By: Rob Peck*

The Pecks have been healthy so far as we know. One exciting development in our lives has been our discovery of long-lost family members.

Back in 1928 Rob's Grandfather Stan Peck's younger brother, Leslie, was killed in a mining accident in B.C. leaving behind his wife, Helen, an American, and their young baby, Rhoda. Helen took Rhoda back to Oregon to be with her family there and our families lost touch with each other. Last July, Rhoda's daughter, Gloria, who lives in Seattle, found us through 23 and Me, a DNA ancestry tracing service. This past month Rob found about 10 old pictures of Leslie, Helen, Rhoda, Rob's Grandfather Stan, Grandmother Lena, Rob's Dad, Bob and Rob's Uncle George. We had them professionally restored and sent them to Gloria who has shared them with her sisters and mother. They say the pictures have been life-changing for them as they previously had no pictures of Leslie and Helen together, of Rhoda as a baby with Helen or of Leslie and Helen with Stan and Lena. Rhoda, who is now 92 is thrilled! We are only at the start of our families reconnecting; Julia and I are going out to B.C. for a class reunion next year and, with God's help, will visit Rhoda, Gloria and their families!



*Rob's Dad, Bob, holding Rhoda.*

*Helen holding Rhoda.*



*From left to right, Leslie, Lena, Helen and Stan*



# ST. MARK'S COMMUNITY

*By Charlie Wardell*

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## COPING IN QUARANTINE

There are many ways we are all coping in these trying times. Here are a few examples of how we are spending our days to prevent the spread of Covid-19. There's even a couple of videos! Just click on the them to watch.

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I am housecleaning many of the drawers and cupboards I hadn't had time for, taking 2 online courses: one on The Science of Well Being or what makes us happy, and a nature photography course to prep me for taking more photos in the summer (hopefully). I have also completed one jigsaw puzzle (500 pcs) and will beginning another one soon. This

is something I have never had the leisure time to do. I do have work assignments to do from home but they are not nearly as demanding as when I am working! I also work at a food distribution centre for the food banks that have opened in the libraries. I do a 4 hour shift once a week packing boxes of food to be shipped out.

I do miss in person interaction with my coworkers and friends and look forward to getting back to that soon.

*Debbie Maunder*



You and I are part of a wonderful community! Every day I'm thankful for our friends at St. Mark's. As we can't be with each other physically now, this is even more true. Absence does make the heart grow fonder.

We're learning, as a community, how to deal with the new situation.

We communicate more. More email, more phone calls, plus this new Zoom thing! We stay in touch more often, including throughout the week.

Coffee Time at St. Mark's on Wednesday afternoons is a great expression of our community.

Bible Study meets via Zoom on Tuesdays at noon. A thoughtful exploration of our stories of faith.

Teams are meeting via Zoom. Looking at the calendar I see Worship, Nominating, Stewardship & Finance and more. The work of our volunteers continues.

At Sunday morning worship services we regularly have 60 people joining in. The chat before and after is eager and joyful.

We crave social times, the familiar, and each other. St. Mark's, now more than ever, is a community of support and hope.

Thank you for living out that hope.

Bob and I are walking each day, followed by a couple of games of crib, at which I continually learn humility. We have enjoyed Sunday Zoom dinners with our family. We have used Zoom also for virtual euchre games and Happy Hours. The good news there is that I have not had to prepare appys or dessert for a crowd!!! We will have both celebrated BDs by the time of publication. Our GRAND people created a Scavenger Hunt of clues for our gifts. It is something that I have done for them and it makes my heart sing to think that they have piggybacked upon that idea.

My new trifector in this race against time:

Be well; be safe; be loving....

ntil we meet again.....

*Gayle Feeney*

This is what I've been up to: walks, reading, cooking, gardening, spring cleaning (just one thing each day) and working on making video tutorials and hyper-lapse entertaining painting videos for

my students and anyone who's interested. I'm learning lots about video editing, up-loading etc. And getting more sleep! I'm reading a book on how important 8 hr of nightly sleep is!

Here is a link to a video if you want to check it out (just copy and paste it into your browser)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbSWevQydvw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbSWevQydvw)

*Melinda Calway*

This virus has come with some blows but we are healthy and having fun. We've been playing a few different board games. Our 2 favourites are Phase 10 and Settlers of Catan. We set the table with my grandmother's good lace tablecloth, everyone gets chips and we compete.

*Alissa duHasky*

The Song Remains the Same: taking photos, reading, watching movies, listening/singing to music, yoga

Back in the High Life: family game nights, daily walks with Adrian

I've also been keeping an eye on our backyard guests including this one:

*Janet*



On the first Sunday of May, for the past 20 (or so) years Luella and Tom have been in Vankleek Hill (between Ottawa and Montreal) helping Luella's sister (Evelyn) and many other volunteers, serve breakfast at the arena. The event raises between eight and nine thousand dollars for the Canadian Cancer Society's "Wheels of Hope". Because the event was cancelled this year, Tom mentioned that he was going to miss breaking eggs (normally 140 dozen) and suggested that we have eggs on Sunday. Luella turned that idea in to a meal and we had Quiche Lorraine for dinner. Tom always seems to be photographed by a reporter from The Review, the local newspaper, so Luella decided that we should take a photo of Tom breaking the (4) eggs on Sunday, to send to Evelyn and our other two sisters. Thought we would share it with you...

*Tom & Luella Stephens*



Our dog and I are on lock down. I am not sure if you all know that the Market crashed (lol) so Ken must be at the office but his assistant works from home. Our son Tyler is an essential worker so off to work he goes. Makes me very nervous so I go around the house with my sanitizer constantly. We are all well and hope the same for our church family and beyond.

*Jane Ogaki*

These are a few of my favourite things! (Sound of Music reference intentional)

- Walks with Pat
- Sleeping in, instead of commuting into work
- Dinner at 6:00, instead of 8:00
- Time to read

that I'll miss when things get back to normal !

*Charlie Wardell*

Here's an attempt at something amusing for the MEMO. I checked with Bart and he's OK with using his name and his elevator project.

You've no doubt heard about St. Mark's elevator project. Bart Boniface and his team has been researching the installation of an elevator in St. Mark's building for some time now. I asked Bart how the project was going and his response was "It has it's ups and downs". Bart and his team have experience with elevators. The first time they were on an elevator, they found it to be an uplifting experience, and the second time, it let them down. Some of you readers may be afraid of elevators and take steps to avoid them. Elevators don't always work, but that may be reassuring because a broken elevator will never let you down. In conclusion, Bart suggests we all try the elevator dance, there are no steps. LOL.

*Randy Stroud*

The best things I have learned during this time of restricted movement are: 1) How much patience I have developed and did not know I had, and 2) How little I appreciated all the freedom of movement that we had prior to March 1st.

Best films are on Netflix: 1) Richard Jewell 2) The Lincoln Lawyer... both are top notch...

*Gord Maunder*

## PIZZA RECIPE

- 1 Cup of Water
- 2 Tablespoons Olive or vegetable oil
- 3 Cups of flour
- 2 Teaspoons Bread Yeast
- 1 Tablespoon Cornmeal
- 1 Teaspoon Italian Seasoning
- ½ Teaspoon Basil
- ½ Teaspoon Garlic Salt
- ½ Teaspoon Pepper

*Christopher Niemela*



Hi everyone! Missing you! Daily walks and my trumpet is helping with an activity and a purpose during the Covid 19 .The walks help with seeing the beauty in the community as attached. The weekly service bulletin posts hymns and that provides a variety of music to play and stay connected with St. Mark's.

We are not alone.

Be well.....

Rob Burridge



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Here's a video to help soothe the soul.

Just go to:

[www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=dTWR0hb5S30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTWR0hb5S30)

*Catherine Denault*

