



# Connections

*Humber Valley United*

Connected Creative Caring

December  
2020

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## *The Reverend's Reflection* *"The Visit"* Luke 1:26-38

If you step into my office and look at my back wall, you'll see a copy of a painting of the annunciation by John William Waterhouse. In the painting, the angel Gabriel comes to Mary in her garden where she is weaving. The painting expresses the very moment when Gabriel tells Mary that she will give birth to the Messiah, and shows most evocatively, Mary's response: on her knees, her right hand on her head "How can this be?" Her left hand over her heart, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord."



We speak of Christmas as a time of miracles and mystery, a celebration of God invading our lives. Every year at this time, we remember how the story of the birth of Christ is also the story of how God broke into the life of an ordinary young girl and made it extraordinary. Christmas is the story of the birth of Jesus, and it's also the story of how that young girl, Mary, risked everything to say "yes" to God.

Mary's initial reaction to Gabriel's news was that of cautious astonishment. Astonishment and surprise seem like natural responses to an angel of God. "How can this be?" is a natural, human response, and one that anyone would make in Mary's situation.

"How can this be" also means "why me?" Mary is astonished that God chooses *her* to bear the Messiah. This is the mystery of Christmas: that God chose Mary precisely because Mary has nothing – Mary is a young woman in a society that favours men and maturity; she is one of the "lowly"; yet God favours her. How can it be that God came to us, and was born to the ordinary, to the low in status, and chose to live as one of us?

If we assume that because we lead ordinary suburban lives of trying to stretch our dollars, trying to stay grounded in society that is moving at a dizzying speed; if we assume that our very boring lives of work and sleep mean that God does not break through, then Mary's story disproves this assumption.

Mary also says: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord." If only we were Mary, quick to understand the magnitude of God's favour upon us; able to obey; to listen and understand God's call. Like Mary, we are surprised when God breaks into our lives. We fall to our knees with the weight of it; our hands on our head, hoping to **Continued on page 3**

## OF NOTE

Daytimers are zooming on November 30. Virtual tour of Italian piazzas.

There is an Event Calendar on our website that will let you know what's happening.

Want to see back issues of Connections? They are available on our website going back to 2015.

Who is on our Board? Who are the leaders of our committees? The list is on our website too.

UCW Christmas Market still has some items left. Contact Linda Grass. [lgrass@rogers.com](mailto:lgrass@rogers.com)

Elder \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Its going to be a smaller Christmas this year.

Smaller for all of us. No Christmas concert, no Christmas pageant on the front steps, no lighting of the trees and caroling. A lot less shopping since Toronto has closed down all but essential retail. No parties for every group you belong to. No big turkey dinners with ten to twenty-five people of all ages opening all those presents under the tree. Many fewer presents under the tree. No big bags of ripped wrapping paper. Hardly any dishes to wash.

But maybe it will really be a much more meaningful Christmas. With a lot more time to listen to all those Christmas carols — at home, not in the mall — and more time to write Christmas letters to friends and family. And to connect by phone, or Skype or Zoom with friends and family from all over, not just nearby.

Time to think about all the people you are missing, and time to contemplate the meaning of the gift of a new life.

Rev. Lena gives us much to think about in her Christmas reflection; I've read it several times and each time something new pops out. How about this thought:

"Remember that moment when you were suddenly and completely happy, comforted without knowing exactly how? We *have* heard ourselves say, quietly and inexplicably: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord." Remember how you wished to feel peaceful again?"

When I was little we spent Christmas Eve at my aunt and uncle's place next door to our own. They had real candles on a balsam fir tree — it was relatively safe because the candles were carefully placed and there was a big bucket of water nearby. The candles were lit and we all sat around and chatted and munched on goodies. It took a few hours for them to burn down, and as they did, some went out and it became darker and darker in the room. There were amazing shadows on the ceiling from the two or three remaining candles. I was allowed to stay up and now cherish the memory of the happy voices and togetherness as the light magically played on the ceiling and eventually disappeared. When it got dark no one wanted to leave.

That was a small Christmas — not about gift giving — but about being together. My Christmas wish to you is that you will be together with someone you love.

This issue of *Connections* features photos and stories of

nativity scenes, some new, most old, all precious.

There is also a lot of material about our church finances and raising funds to keep our church going. Our church has been buzzing this fall — so many people doing so many things to keep us together as a worshipping community. And, with hard work, and your support, we have raised almost enough to meet the goal we had set before the COVID time hit us!

I have a big wish for 2021. I wish that we will all be together in the sanctuary for Sunday worship and Rev. Lena Medeiros has the opportunity to preach to all of us sitting in the pews looking at her.

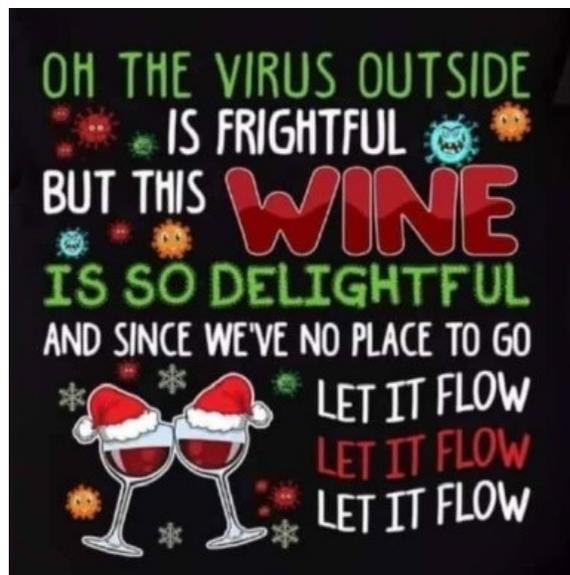
I would like to thank all the people who contribute to *Connections*, and to *Keeping in Touch*. Our publications are popular because of your contributions. I would also like to thank my proofreaders: Sally Jo Martin, Sally Roper, Judith and David Dallimore, and Deb Turnbull. And the office staff and volunteers who print and collate *Connections* and bundle it into packets for the Elders to deliver.

If there is one thing I have learned doing *Keeping in Touch* it is that the smiles and laughter keep us going. The joke below comes from one of my dear regular joke contributors.

I love to hear from you. Please send me your comments and suggestions.

[Susanne@hyneslegal.ca](mailto:Susanne@hyneslegal.ca)

*Susanne Hynes*





## The Visit

continued from page 1.

hold back the voice that calls us to life beyond ourselves. We trip over the questions that underlie our fear: “Why me? I don’t know how to organize a food drive! I don’t know what to say to someone, even a friend, who is sick and in hospital! I can’t stand up at the pulpit and read all those Hebrew names – everyone will snicker at my pronunciation! I can’t believe that God has found favour with me, not me who can be selfish; not me who has not always been a good friend and neighbour; not me who sometimes doubts the existence of God; not me who is good at drowning out the voice of God.

And yet, as flawed and lowly and human as we are, God favours us and breaks into our lives. We, too, can echo Mary’s response – “Here I am, servant of the Lord” – even if we need time to think about God; to discern with hands on our heads.

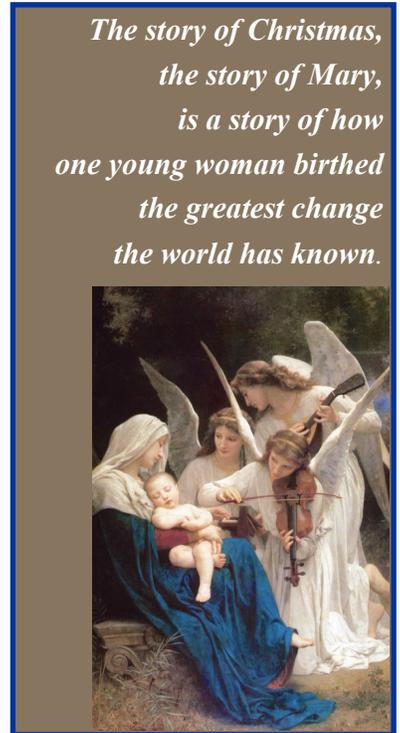
Eventually, though, our other hand moves to our heart – because we can bear witness to how God overtakes us. Remember that moment when you were suddenly and completely happy, comforted without knowing exactly how? We *have* heard ourselves say, quietly and inexplicably: “Here I am, the servant of the Lord.” Remember how you wished to feel peaceful again?

With hands over our hearts we understand that the Christmas story is a story of how nothing is impossible with God, that even the lowly have a role in God’s world; that all of us, men and women, are bearers of God’s message of love.

The story of Christmas, the story of Mary, is a story of how one young woman birthed the greatest change the world has known. The story of Mary is also our Christmas story: the story of how each of us carries within us the ability to say “yes” when the angel of God appears to you and says: “Do not be afraid...for you have found favour with God.”

May the God who comes to us again and always, bless you and keep you.

*Yours in Christ,  
Lena*



In his Advent message, Moderator Richard Bott reminds us that for everything there is a season.

The Advent season is not just a time of waiting—it’s a time of preparation as we prepare for the baby Jesus. We have to move one step at a time without fear, without worry. Because God is here, with us.

God is with all of this wounded world. Advent—especially this Advent—is a time to remember that.

[Click here](https://www.united-church.ca) to view the message or go to <https://www.united-church.ca>

Moderator Richard Bott's 2020 Advent Message

**The Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott**  
Moderator of The United Church of Canada

### Joan Lowey-Chlebus 1933-2020

(Joan was soprano soloist in the Chancel choir for many years.) Joan phoned me to say goodbye and we talked about all the years we sang beside each other in the choir. It was one of the most heart wrenching conversations I've ever had. I thought Joan was handling it in typical Joan fashion.. very accepting and matter of fact about the cancer, her pain and her decision. I think she was trying to make me feel better! She has been a good friend of many years and I will miss her smile and her beautiful voice.

*Ann Allenby*



### Charlotte Newhook ? — 2020

Charlotte became more active in church activities at St. Luke's, especially UCW, after her husband died. She avidly collected cash register tapes for the Another Need To Serve UCW group who counted the totals and sent them to charities for medical equipment such as wheel-chairs. Charlotte became involved in knitting many pairs of men's mitts especially for the Rexdale Salvation Army. Both at St. Luke's and Humber Valley she was eager to help. Often she would whisk your saucer to the kitchen while the teacup was still in your hand. We'll miss her but we have many fond memories. God Bless. *Carol Jones*



### Isobel McKinnon 1915-2020

Isobel was kind, gracious, and generous, an inspirational role model for all four generations of her family. She was the last surviving graduate of the Hospital for Sick Children, School of Nursing, Class of 1937. She was a long time member of Rotary's Inner Wheel, Humber Valley United Church, and more recently Trinity United Church, Collingwood.



### Muriel Steed 1919-2020

At the age of 101, Muriel witnessed a century of change and guided her family through it with love, compassion, and faith. She was predeceased by her husband, Arthur (2007), who was Humber Valley United's founding minister.



### Jean Koziak 1940 — 2020

Jean and Jim have been active members of HVUC for many years. They were favourite Sunday School teachers back in the 80s. Jean was active in Unit 6, Outreach, especially the effect:hope leprosy charity, and an usher on Team 4. She worked for Big Sisters and was a supporter of Girl Guides. We will miss her ready smile and many stories as she greeted people by the door to the sanctuary.

*Susanne Hynes*



### Gail McGilvery 1934 — 2020

Gail was a high school teacher before staying home to raise her 4 children. She volunteered as a translator of high school text books into Braille for over 30 years. Later in life she volunteered to teach Adult English Literacy for the Peel Board of Education. Gail also loved the outdoors. She loved camping, canoeing, sailing, and hanging out at the cottage with her family and friends.



### Bob McGilvery 1929 — 2020

Bob loved the outdoors; and was also an avid 10-pin bowler. He loved to sing in choirs; at St Luke's United Church, McKellar United Church, and as a member of the Queensmen Male Chorus. Robert was also an excellent carpenter and built several items for the cottage and for their home. Gail's favourite, the solid-oak curio cabinet, is still in her room.



Gail and Bob died within a couple of weeks of each other, both suffering from COVID.

### Emmy Lou Taylor 1982-2020

Emmy Lou, the younger daughter of Gail Taylor, was a beautiful young woman with a lot of artistic talent. She was confirmed at Humber Valley and attended HV Junior Middle School and Richview Collegiate. She had a promising career in drafting. Emmy loved animals and loved to cook. She will be sorely mourned and missed by her family and friends.

*Susanne Hynes*



## From the desk of the **Chair of the Board**

What a year this has been!!!

I just want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has tried to ease the pain and stress of COVID-19 by keeping our community together – so many to thank.

Thank you to Rev. Rick and Rev. Lena for your ministerial leadership. Thank you to our staff (Kelly, Anita, Janet, Zoran, Dragan, Jill, George, Claire, Michelle, Licia, Anne) for being there for our congregation, our ministers and each other.

Thank you to Susanne Hynes for her enthusiasm and all her energy and efforts to keep us connected through “Keeping in Touch” (78 issues already this year) and “Connections.” We could not have survived this year without you trying to keep us together.

Thank you for Anne Pietropaolo for leading our seniors programming with almost 2,000 participations supported by a Seniors Advisory Committee (Roger, David D., Deb and Rev. Lena).

Thank you to Joanne Stenerson who has been providing support to many through “Daily Bread” (as I write, almost 150 sessions) and now, “Jesus and Java.”

Thank you to Jill and George and the soloists for allowing us to worship online and to Claire, Maddie, Michelle, Licia and Alexis for providing stories to engage “the child within.” Thank you for Claire and Licia for your children and youth ministries.

Thank you to the Board who always seem to have many items to discuss and the members of each of our church committees and teams. Thank you to our COVID-19 support team and to Peter for leading the charge against COVID.

Thank you to Joan Belford for leading our many fund raisers – even in a time of a pandemic we have had a lot of fun and raised some money for the church at the same time.

Thank you to our Search Team members, under Allan Orr’s leadership, for continuing your search for our Transformational Minister and for the Search Team, under Sharon Dowdall’s leadership, who identified Rev. Lena, as our Supply Minister, for us in our time of need.

***Thank you to each and every one of you!***

***You have supported each other.***

***You have called each other.***

***You have shared a laugh and a tear.***

Thank you to our elders, led by Brian, for reaching out. We continue to be a blessed “church family” of people who really care for each other.

To each of you and your families, a Merry Christmas and may 2021 see a vaccine and a time when we can worship and socialize together.

Please continue to support our programs, our church and our ministries including our online services.

To many of you, see you on Zoom – very soon.

Blessings,

*Deb*



***Connected Creative Caring***



## Water for Life — Advent 2020

Each year at this time of Advent, Humber Valley considers the safety and convenience of fresh water straight from the taps of our homes. But we know that such safe water, close at hand is not the case in many communities in Canada and in developing countries.



For many years we have supported the building of wells in Africa with [GAIN](#) (Global Aid International Network). Humber Valley United has donated enough to build 22 wells in Tanzania and Benin with money from Capital Funds raised for our 60th anniversary and with very generous donations from members of the congregation.

Three years ago we researched the needs of Canadian indigenous communities and decided to also support [Water First](#), a charity based in Creemore Ontario. Their work focuses on the training of young people for water treatment plant certification. Preventing “boil water directives” is the positive outcome of this education.



Capital Fund cheques will be mailed to these organizations as follows:

GAIN - \$2,300

Water First - \$2,200

**You are invited to make personal donations to Water for Life if you wish.**

Cheques payable to HVUC with Water on the memo line will be appreciated.

You can designate which organization you prefer to support.

Undesignated amounts will be shared equally with GAIN and Water First.

With thanks from the

*Outreach & Action Committee*

### *Hope Springs Eternal*

I grew lettuce in my balcony planter this summer and let it go to seed.

Those seeds have sprouted and really want to turn into proper lettuce plants. And then along comes Jack Frost and the snow.

Gorgeous green sprinkled with snow.

*Susanne Hynes*



# A Landmark Hike for Hospice 2020



## HUMBER VALLEY UNITED CHURCH and THE DOROTHY LEY HOSPICE

We, as the Humber Valley United Church Margo Marchers, have once again joined with our thirty year community partner, The Dorothy Ley Hospice, to make Hike for Hospice 2020 a resounding success. We rose to the challenges of a VIRTUAL Hike; we pivoted with every obstacle that COVID-19 threw at us.

And the results are truly remarkable; the final numbers are in:

### HVUC MARGO MARCHERS RAISED \$9,037.41

Humber Valley's level of support for The Dorothy Ley Hospice is highly recognized and deeply appreciated. Our donations contributed significantly to the Hike for Hospice raising \$147,000, exceeding their goal of \$125,000. Without this level of support, the Hospice would not be able to ensure that those they serve will live fully, on their terms, in the time that remains, with comfort, hope and dignity.

Many years ago, Dr. Dorothy Ley said it best: *Spiritual Care lies at the heart of hospice. We will comfort you and those you love. We will not leave you. We will watch with you. We will be there.*

THANK YOU, Humber Valley Margo Marchers.

To join the  
"Comfort & Joy" service  
please go to  
**Humber Valley's Facebook page**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 2nd, at 4:30pm.**

A link will be posted at  
[www.hvuc.ca](http://www.hvuc.ca) for easy access.

If you can't make that time,  
the service will be viewable there  
anytime following.



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Humber Valley United Church  
*invites you to*



*An  
Evening  
of  
Comfort  
and  
Joy*

**Wednesday, December 2, 2020**  
**4:30 pm**  
**Virtual Service**

# Nativity Scenes

## *The Italian Christmas Village*

I loved school until the end of grade 4. In grade 5, my well-intentioned teacher wanted us to learn as much as possible, but he did so by burying us in homework. Suddenly I had no leisure time to be a kid. Meanwhile, my best friend was in the other grade 5 class and stopped playing with me since she was busy with her new friends. I was devastated.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, I arrived home for lunch one day, and Mom kept sending me on errands upstairs. Unbeknownst to me, she wanted me to find a surprise in my bedroom. Eventually, I came across the most beautiful sight: my Mom and grandma had bought me a tiny 3 foot Christmas tree, with a string of 10 multicoloured lights, and two boxes of pink satin balls to match my bedroom. Every night, I went to sleep with the tree lights on and my Dad turned them off before he went to bed. It was one of the few joyous memories I have of that autumn.

That Christmas, my younger brother gave me a star for the top of my tree: it was a piece of cardboard with broken egg shells glued on and spray-painted in gold. I still use it today. Every year I made sure I got at least one special ornament to add to the tree and dated it carefully before I packed it away. The plan was that when I grew up and moved out, I would already have all the decorations for my first tree in my own home.

Throughout my childhood and young adulthood, I watched for a nativity scene to put at the base of my tree. I wanted something cute and fun, like the picture beside “Away in the Manger” in our childhood Christmas Carol piano book.

I didn’t find anything, so tried making my own out of bread dough ornaments, but never managed to finish it what with the busy schedule of a university co-op student who was a prolific community volunteer.

My older brother studied architecture at the University of Waterloo and his 4A term was taught in Rome. Scott arrived home from his trip 2-3 days before Christmas and as he unpacked his suitcase he pulled out a handmade cardboard box with an Italian Christmas village inside. He found it in a Christmas market at Piazza Navona when he was out for fresh air on a winter evening.

Imagine a 24-year-old gent, on a student budget, in a foreign country, busy with end-of-term projects, exams, and packing to come home: and yet he took the time to stop and buy something so special for his sister. Needless to say, it will always be cherished.

*Nancy Roper*



**Nancy and her Christmas tree, in Grade 8**



**Italian Christmas Village from Scott, December 1985**

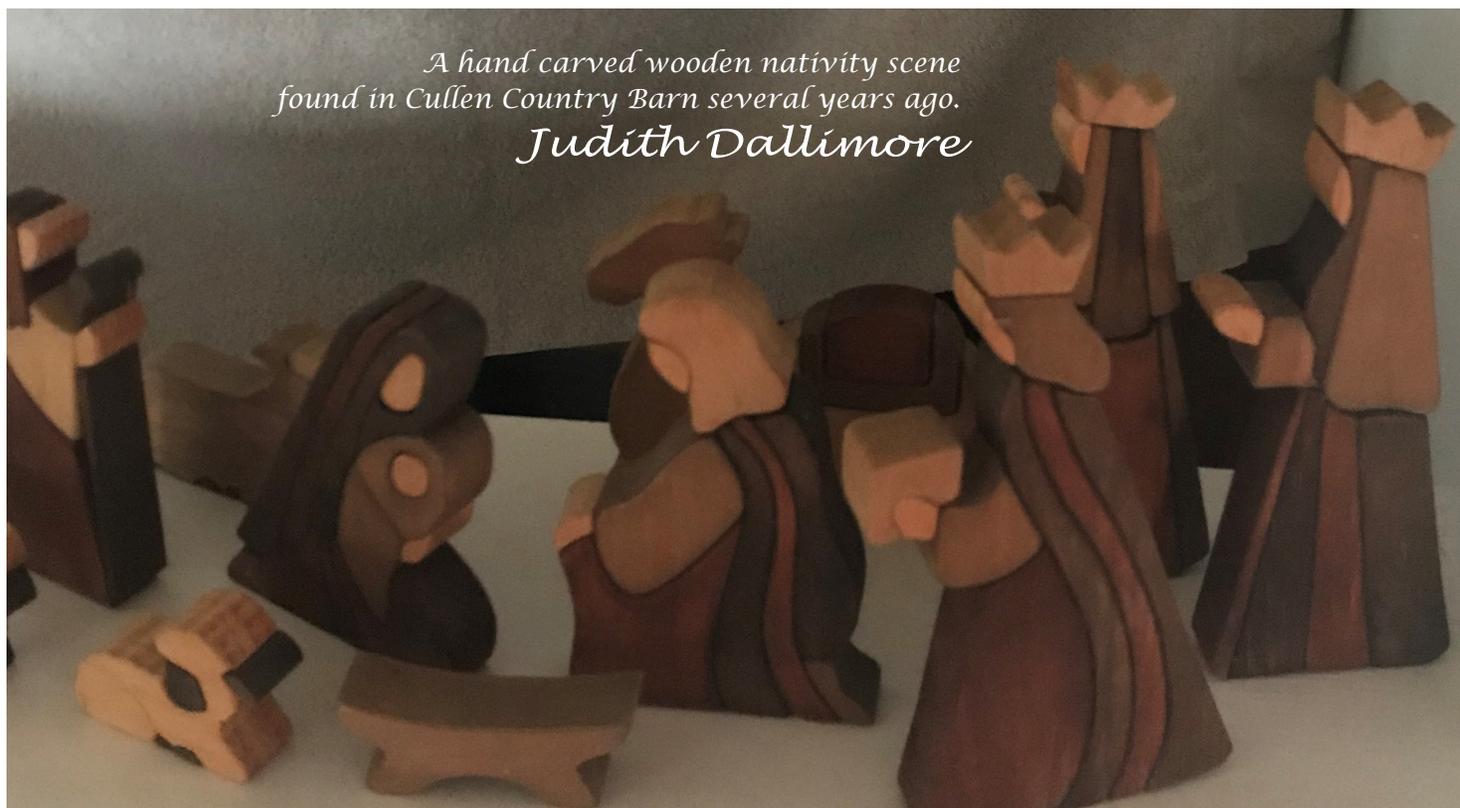
# Nativity Scenes

In our home we have 2 Nativity Scenes. One is a Do Touch and the other a Don't Touch.

The Don't Touch was bought in 1968 in Taiwan on a very hot sticky humid day in August. Taiwan was a great place to buy English Books for there was no copyright and they were cheap. I was loading up on all the latest books I could find to take back to Tokyo, Japan where I was living and English books could not be found there. As I was going between book stores I came upon a craft shop and there was a beautiful Nativity Scene made completely of bamboo. I fell in love with it immediately and bought it and it has been in a place of honour in our homes ever since. Because it was fragile it was always the Don't Touch please Nativity Scene.

Once our 12 grandchildren came along we bought our Do Touch Nativity Scene at a craft show on an island in Georgian Bay close to our cottage. I fell in love with it and knew the maker so it was bought. We had this Nativity Scene on a low table so the grandchildren could play with it, teethe on it and we all enjoyed it and still do.

*Laureen Kinnear*



*A hand carved wooden nativity scene  
found in Cullen Country Barn several years ago.  
Judith Dallimore*

## Nativity Scenes

*Two unique nativity scenes.*

The first one is made of shells I found on the beach in the village in which I lived as a volunteer in Haiti in the late 70's. I had no access to craft supplies but I could get glue and so fashioned this creche using random shells.

If one uses their imagination, the big shell is the stable, Mary (with a hat) is on the left at the back with baby Jesus (wrapped in swaddling cloths) in front of her on the ground and Joseph (also with a hat) beside her. Beside Joseph is a sheep with a small lamb in front of him.

The second is a nativity scene I bought from 10,000 Villages, a fair-trade shop, when our kids were little.

It was made in Guatemala by "Rosa" a member of a co-operative of impoverished women who, by working together and selling such crafts, developed many things to help their community: a medical and dental clinic; infant growth monitoring; a daycare with Montessori-trained teachers and more.

I actually bought two of these so each of our children could have one when they grew up as they are both adopted from Guatemala.

*Mary Ferguson*



### *Humber Valley United's Nativity Scenes*

Twenty or more years ago, as if by a miracle, a gorgeous nativity scene appeared in our sanctuary. Up until then we had angels in wreaths, Christmas trees, ornaments, and candles in our church but no formal nativity scene. There were the Christmas pageants each year with children dressed as shepherds, sheep, wisemen, and Mary and Joseph. We had a real baby in the manger at least one year.

For a few years the pageant happened on the front steps of the church so our community could join in. Adults and kids participated, and followed the pageant with caroling on the neighbouring streets.

Last year kids in JAM made their own nativity scenes and shared them with the congregation.

*All to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child*



### *My New Nativity Scene*

In early January 2020 Dave and I were in Santiago de Chile, at the end of a splendid South American cruise. We visited the spectacular Museum of Pre-Columbian Art and, of course, I had to buy something in the gift shop.

The creche you see at right was the last one left and on sale for half price. I had been thinking about getting a nativity scene for a few years. Back in the 1990s Rev. Gibson remarked to me that he was surprised how few in our congregation have Christian symbols in our homes. Dave and I have a few bibles but I think that is it. So I was thrilled to find this sweet little nativity scene.

It comes in an easy-to-store bag that opens to form the cave, or the stable where Baby Jesus was born. Mary has what I at first thought was a handle over her, but, of course, it is her halo. Three fluffy sheep are admiring the Holy Child.

This is a *please touch me* nativity scene. Nothing will break, everything feels warm and fits in a child's hand, and we can close the cave's flap in the evening so the family can sleep in peace.

Hebras del Alma, meaning "threads of the soul" is the name of the company that produces these and other crafts. Native women make the figures using local fleece and natural fabrics and dyes.

*Susanne Hynes*



### *Our Advent Scene*

Our advent scene is very precious to us. It is over 40 years old. It was a wedding gift when we got married in December 1978. Our brother-in-law's mother, Muriel Goss made Mary and Joseph by a very intricate process. I have no idea of what the process is called. Apparently she dipped material in glue, carefully shaped the material and let it harden over a coat hanger. This would be their robes. Then she glued on styrofoam balls for the heads. Jesus has a straw bed. The figures were all spray painted in gold.

Every year I carefully take the 2 adult figures and little baby out of a box and put white sparkly lights and greenery around them. They are a true reminder to my family of why we celebrate Christmas.

*Kathy and David  
Kitchen*



### *Our Creche*

We bought our hand-made stained glass creche at the One-of-a-Kind show from a Quebec glass artist the year we moved into our house, 1992. Though it cost much more than we would have ordinarily spent on something that is used once a year, we were very excitedly anticipating Christmas in our new home and thought we deserved something special to mark the occasion.



We had moved into our house on November 27, 1992. The house had been owned by a widow who, having no children of her own, had left it to her 14 squabbling nieces and nephews. One of them was a real estate agent who lived somewhere in North York and had told the others they would make a killing on this property in ritzy Eto-bicoke. However, the aunt had been a bit eccentric, and her taste in decorating was not showing the house to good advantage (think pink shag carpet, zoo-themed foil wallpaper, thick burgundy velvet curtains.) One of the nieces later told us that her aunt had owned three standard (i.e. large) poodles, which she dyed different colours for Easter. There were plastic wall sconces and fake candelabra that one of our friends told us might be of use to the props department of the Opera Society. Furthermore, the place had been occupied for a while by one of the nephews who was in a grunge band, and had left the

place looking like a poster for Sex, Drugs, and Rock and Roll.

As a consequence, the house did not sell quickly, resulting in several price reductions, which made the expectant relatives extremely disappointed. The day we moved in, we found that not only had they not cleaned, they had left the house full of detritus; ranging from a mangy-looking mattress in the basement to a fridge full of rotting food. We had every right to pursue them legally, but we also had a moving truck and a couple of carloads of friends ready to bring stuff in. So, we cleaned and we moved.

About 10 days after we got in, an ice storm split a Norway Maple in our back yard, taking down the telephone and television cables of the houses surrounding us. It was not the best way to meet your new neighbours.

It was a scramble to get enough cleaning done and enough boxes emptied to enable us to host 8 additional family members for Christmas, but we did.

And our brand new creche held pride of place.

Twenty-eight years later, every time we look at it, we are still struck by its colours, its craftsmanship, and its competing qualities of fragility and strength. It transports us from the madness of the Christmas rush to a stable long ago. It brought us a sense of reverence then, and it does now. It was worth every penny.

### *Joan Belford and Peter White*



White Gift Sunday 2019.

Need a little cheering up? Come and drive by our church at night and see the Christmas lights blinking out into the community.

A big thank you to Pippa for the inspirational idea which she carried out almost by herself - putting up all the lights.

Thank you, Pippa, for making Christmas shine in our community.

*Deb*

Wow Pippa, what a wonderful Christmas display you have given us at the church.

I go for an hour long walk every day, and night before last it was quite late, almost 8:30 before I headed out and took a route through Humbertown, along Royal York then back up Edenbridge and across beside the church. Imagine my delight when I reached the corner and looked to the left to see those cedar trees with their trunks all evenly glowing with white lights. It just blew my mind away. And I did walk over to check out your outlet hook-up etc. and get a closer view. Those straggly cedars (which I have been petitioning for years to get cut down) have never looked so good.

Last night I again did that route and in passing by the corner of Anglesey & Wimbleton, again there was a blaze with white lights, but then realized you had added trunks of 2 more sets of trees, the birches at the front. It just looks amazing, and thank you for doing that.

Cheers

*Carolyn Whiteside*

And thank you also to Carolyn who put up Christmas trees near the chancel screen and prepared the sanctuary for our Advent and Christmas services.



## Stewardship Update

The report at right shows the financial results to the end of October 2020. Results for the same year-to-date period in 2019 are also included below for comparison purposes.

As of October 31<sup>st</sup>, HVUC has a year-to-date operating deficit of \$37,494. To put this in context, the 2020 budget approved at the AGM in April projected an operating deficit of just over \$54,000. Despite the difficulties created by COVID, PAR and envelope givings have tracked close to expectation.

The key negative contributor has been the significant loss of rental income. You may recall that last year we were blessed with a major financial shot in the arm due to a movie shoot at the church which boosted our revenue by more than \$40,000. This year, we have also seen our revenue boosted by a similar \$40,000. However, this time it has come via estate/in memorium givings, some of which have yet to appear in the books. However, these are windfalls that we can't and shouldn't plan for.

By now, you may have received your givings report to the end of October along with a pledge form for 2020. If not, it should arrive shortly. I urge you to complete your pledge and submit it to the office within the next couple of weeks. If you have any questions/concerns about your givings report, please contact Anita Wakeman or myself and we will make every effort to clarify or adjust if necessary.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Humber Valley United Church. Please continue to share your generosity in support of good stewardship. God gives it all and then calls us to share. Stewardship for the Church is managing its resources and Stewardship individually for congregants is fulfilling our responsibilities to the Church to the best of our abilities.

Respectfully

*Gary Halpenny*

Chair  
Stewardship and Finance Ministry

### Humber Valley United Church

Sources of Funds	2020	2019
PAR Givings	133,059	133,144
Envelopes/Stock Donations	75,220	118,615
Use of Church	95,883	184,282
Trustees	15,652	15,830
Other	59,920	38,904
<b>Subtotal Operating</b>	<b>379,764</b>	<b>490,775</b>
Receipts for Grants, Capital, Outreach and Special	92,811	30,402
<b>Total Sources of Funds</b>	<b>472,545</b>	<b>521,177</b>
 <b><u>Expenditures</u></b>		
Payroll	306,131	337,475
Building Expenses	42,247	47,188
Office	14,052	16,942
Mission and Service	2,794	4,368
Presbytery Assessment	13,141	13,141
Music	26,120	22,487
Other Committees and	47,325	24,050
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>451,810</b>	<b>465,651</b>
Transfers to HFs	58,229	30,402
<b><u>Operating Deficit</u></b>	<b><u>(37,494)</u></b>	<b><u>25,124</u></b>



## Why do I Give?

First of all, I give because I believe in being a disciple of Jesus Christ and one of the ways I do that is in the context of my membership in a Christian church. From spreading the good news of the gospel to building wells for clean water the church actively is a force for mercy and goodness in this world. When I give I am a factor in all of that discipleship.

I also give because I can. I feel extremely blessed in our material well-being. I have had advantages that those who are less fortunate have not. The rampant materialism in today's world bothers me. I can't help but think of how much suffering could be eradicated if wealthy people just shared a little more. We often speak of the widow with her two talents, but I wish we could reach more of those wealthy landowners!



There are many reasons why you should financially support Humber Valley. The Church is there when you are born, married, for the birth of your children, their education, and supports you during difficult times; they are part of your everyday life. It is particularly important now during the pandemic that we stay connected and keep in touch with one another through the programs the Church provides. I believe you should support your Church through your talents and financial success. Monies are needed to keep the Church alive and well! Please remember your Church – you will receive special Blessings - “Bring Joy to your Soul”.

*Diane Imber*

## WE CAN DO THIS

**Gary Halpenny's remarks  
on Sunday, November 15**

In the church, we often think of stewardship as a celebration of God's generosity and of our gratitude. Both our own church, and also the greater church, are sometimes not very good at expressing our gratitude to those who make this ministry possible. Our Humber Valley congregation has been richly blessed by God in so many ways and you, our members, continue to respond through generous gifts of time, talent and money.

I'm not telling you anything new when I say that the past few months have been difficult ones for all of us in our work, our family and our church lives. It's been 8 months since the church was closed, but somehow by the grace of God and the hard work and dedication of a lot of people, we continue to move forward. There is a message in there somewhere.

The inability of many of our tenants to use the church has clearly put a strain on our anticipated income for the year.



Finally, I give because I get. The church has enriched my life in countless ways and, with the development of our seniors' programs over the past year, it continues to do so. It offers me a lifeline out of this pandemic isolation. I continue to see my longtime church friends and even meet new people! How wonderful is that?! My financial contributions to Hunter Valley United Church and the Mission and Service Fund are the least I can do to help the church that helps me.

*Donna McCorquodale*

I came to Humber Valley United Church in 1995 working in the Church office and I continue to be involved in a volunteer capacity. I have always found everybody so friendly and kind. One of my fondest memories was joining the pilgrimage to Israel – bringing my faith to life – walking Via Dolorosa where Jesus walked.

However, to the credit of all of you, givings levels have been largely maintained. Again, thanks you!!

We also have been successful in receiving considerable funding from government grants which us allowed us to build on our programming for seniors and youth.

Nevertheless, we will still end up with an operating deficit for the year. Short of the appearance of a benevolent angel, there are capital funds available to cover that amount. But that means that those funds won't be available to fund other projects of interest. And there are several of those. Clearly, that option is not sustainable over an extended period.

During a committee meeting the other day, one of our members referenced a Rolling Stones song and some of the words are relevant to our situation.

"Start me up.. Give it all you got....Love the day and we will never stop."

Most importantly, there is light ahead and with your help, we can make it a blinding floodlight. Our search committee is once again hard at work to identify and attract the transformational minister whom we seek for the long term. In the interim, we are well served and blessed to have Rev. Lena to share our journey with us. I am confident in our future and ask that you share that confidence with me.

As in previous years, you will receive a letter from me, on behalf of the Board of Directors, about stewardship goals along with a set of materials that will include, among other information, a pledge form for your household to indicate your planned givings to Humber Valley in the coming year.

Jesus tells us in Luke 12:48 "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded." Our generosity is how we make a positive difference as individuals and families, not only in our own church but also in our greater community through our outreach programs. That said, we also understand that some people may already be at the limit of their generosity for any number of reasons and that's OK.

Whatever your decision, the amount of your pledge has to be one that you are both comfortable and cheerful with. Your pledge package also will include some decision-making tools to help you to make an informed and inten-

tional choice about 2021 based on concrete information.

We are the church and together we will work to embrace the future by delivering the ministry to our congregation and to our community at large that we so cherish at Humber Valley.

### **Bob Kinnear's Remarks on Sunday, November 22**

It's my pleasure to speak to you on behalf of Stewardship and Finance, to address the on-going Financial needs of our church.

I'm not sure where most of us would have been this year, without the Blessing of Humber Valley United Church.

It's been such a treat to receive, via internet, regular issues of *Keeping in Touch*. We owe a great deal of thanks to Susanne Hynes for her tireless efforts and excellent output. Susanne counts on information flowing to her, fed mostly by our congregation. *Keeping in Touch* has kept us all - IN TOUCH! Susanne has now put out an incredible 78 issues!

Not everyone has internet, so in an effort to keep these members abreast of happenings at OUR CHURCH, issues of *Connections* are printed four or five times a year and delivered by elders and other members.

The Pastoral Care Committee and Elders, together, make sure that our church is connected with each and every person, especially those unable to directly connect with the church.

We are blessed to have a dedicated Board, led by Deborah Turnbull who amazes me at being informed in so many aspects of our church.

We are fortunate to have Rev Lena Medeiros, a caring and thoughtful minister, leading us, spiritually.

Sunday worship services as they are, would not be happening without George Turnbull's audio/video masterful work, Jill Filion leading music with our soloists providing accomplished and beautiful voices, and, occasional handbells ringing by that dedicated group, also directed by Jill. There is so much dedication here, and, there are so many others dedicated to the well-being of Committee chairs and members, all working to keep our church alive and active.

Some of us are enriched each Mon, Wed & Friday through

the Daily Bread leadership of Joanne Stenerson. This is open to all via Zoom.

There are *many* more people who deserve our thanks. I would like each of us to reflect on just how blessed we are to have HVUC in our lives.

I am here on behalf of Stewardship and Finance, but I wanted you to reflect on what Humber Valley United Church means for you.

We are missing a big chunk of our regular income as many of our tenants, because of COVID-19, are unable to use our church facility. We need to make up this loss of revenue. Sadly, we have lost several members this year and last. This also affects our income.

**Each of us has limited resources.** I'm asking each of us — you — within your respective financial resources, to con-

sider *increasing* your commitment to keep our church active and able to continue, what so far, we've been able to accomplish. Many of us support several charities but for me, and for Laureen, HVUC is the most significant and important.

One more thought: Income received via PAR has been a blessing because this automatic bank withdrawal arrangement provides regular monthly giving and helps greatly with our cash flow. Please consider this way of giving if you're not already on PAR. Just call the church office to make arrangements — or call me and I will get you set up.

Thank you and May God bless us all!

*Bob Kinnear*

*WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM COVID-19?  
Well, the list is long and varies for each of us but for sure,*

### **ADVANCE CARE PLANNING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER**

*“Of all the choices you make in life, among the most important could be the choices you make now about your future personal care.”*

Everyone is welcome, so feel free to invite family, friends and neighbours to this Zoom presentation **sponsored by the Men's Group**. [Register here](#).

Let The Dorothy Ley Hospice Staff and Volunteers offer guidance on how to start the conversation about Advance Care Planning (ACP). They will begin by offering tips for having those often-difficult conversations with others about your wishes for your care at end of life. This will flow to guidance on how to choose your Substitute Decision Maker (SDM), sometimes called Power of Attorney for Personal Care. Then how to document it all, as your legal Advance Care Plan.

It is important to take these steps now, while you are capable of making your own decisions, in order to ensure your wishes guide the decisions made for your care and medical treatment if you ever become unable to make such decisions yourself.

Discussion following the presentation will clarify any questions about Advance Care Planning and, if necessary, the intersections of ACP with related issues such as estate planning, wills, power of attorney for property, executors etc, issues that we plan to present at our first meeting in 2021 on January 25th

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2020 – 7 P.M.**

## The Lady with the Lamp

“You who will be truly happy are those who will have sought for and found a way to serve.”

-Albert Schweitzer

The COVID-19 pandemic has renewed our deep respect for the doctors, nurses, and others as they strive to keep us safe and healthy. Their contributions have been immense. Ontario’s Minister of Health, Christine Elliott, recently labelled nurses “...heroes in our health-care system”.

The World Health Organization has designated 2020 as The International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. It, in turn, coincides with the bicentenary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, the recognized founder of modern nursing.



Florence, who was born in Florence, Italy on May 12, 1820, two hundred years ago, was named after her birthplace. She had an upper-class English upbringing, as her parents, William and Frances (“Fanny”) Nightingale, were wealthy and well-connected, both socially and politically. Florence also had an older sister, Frances. The family’s principal residence was a mansion in Hampshire named Embley Park. They were devout Christians.

Florence never attended school; instead, she was taught at home, mainly by her father. She has been described as having “a great mind”, coupled with “an intensely emotional temperament and a capacity for introspection amounting to self-torture.”

It is said that, on February 7, 1837, as a sixteen years old teenager, Florence received a calling from God to serve others. There was apparently no indication of the nature of the service, however, Florence nevertheless committed herself to devoting the rest of her life to serve, regardless of the turmoil her decision would cause within her family. Fanny Nightingale, her mother, wanted her to marry well; Florence, on the other hand, viewed marriage as an im-

pediment to fulfilling God’s call. Although she never married, Florence did receive at least three marriage proposals.

Florence struggled with the issue of how to serve others. Finally, in 1844, she announced to her family that she wanted to train and work as a nurse. Since nursing at that time was regarded as a disreputable vocation, especially for a lady of Florence’s station in society, she received considerable opposition. Florence was fully convinced, however, that nursing was what God wanted her to do.

Although her parents refused her request to train at a hospital, they encouraged Florence to study British parliamentary health reports. As well, she was permitted to visit hospitals and universities in England and, when the family travelled, in continental Europe. Florence also corresponded extensively with as many health authorities as possible. What she was actually doing was educating herself, and, within three years, she apparently became “...an expert on public health and hospitals”.

In 1851, Florence gained her first nursing experience at the Kaiserwerth Institute, a hospital in Germany, and, in 1853, she accepted an offer to reorganize The Institution for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in Distressed Circumstances, a small hospital on Upper Harley Street in London. Florence’s excellent performance as a hospital administrator was brought to the attention of Sidney Herbert, the Secretary at War in the British Cabinet.

In March of 1854, England declared war against Russia, a war known historically as The Crimean War (1854-1856). Turkey had been in control of the exit from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, until Russia seized control. England needed the area to be in friendly hands; therefore, it was necessary to prevent Russia from exerting its power and influence in the region.

In October of 1854, William Russell, a correspondent for The London Times, revealed the terrible conditions in British military hospitals. The ensuing public uproar forced the Government to address the situation. Sidney Herbert asked Florence to lead a nursing mission to the Crimea. On October 21, 1854, Florence departed with a team of thirty-eight nurses; on arrival at Scutari, Turkey, she found 5,000 British soldiers hospitalized in overcrowded, filthy, barn-like structures. In Florence’s words, “it was total chaos”. Many were dying of cholera and typhus. She and the

nursing team nevertheless brought order. Florence worked day and night, often for twenty hours at a stretch. Every night, she made a personal inspection of the wards, carrying "...a linen Turkish army lantern, which was a candle inside a collapsible shade, crinkled like a Chinese lantern." She would become known as "The Lady With the Lamp", a title coined by the American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:



*"A lady with a lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good, Heroic womanhood."*

Within a few months, Florence's team had significantly reduced the death rate, not only in Scutari, but at other hospitals as well. They made the hospitals sanitary. Florence is credited with revolutionizing the treatment of the British private soldier, keeping them clean and properly fed, and by interacting positively with them. The soldiers, in turn, viewed Florence as "...something approaching worship." When her achievements became known in England, she was regarded as a "national heroine".

By 1856, when the Crimean War ended, 19,500 British military personnel had died, 15,700 being due to diseases, not battle wounds. However, Florence had succeeded in reducing the hospital death rate from 42% to 2%. The public was so inspired by her that 45,000 British Pounds was raised by public subscription to be used as she saw fit. Florence wrote an 830-page report, proposing reforms to military hospitals.

Florence returned to England as an invalid. Her health had deteriorated markedly, likely due to stress and strain, as well as overwork. Despite her fame, Florence rarely appeared in public. She lived the rest of her life in London, mostly at 10 South Street, Park Lane, in a small flat.

Although she rarely ventured beyond her residence, Florence continued to live a busy life, writing and publishing reports and articles on health-related matters, and receiving dignitaries, politicians, and others who sought her views and advice. With the encouragement of Queen Victoria and the support of Sidney Herbert, she became a vital part of the War Office, providing advice, and writing

policies and regulations on a wide-range of health issues. In 1859, for example, she was commissioned to inquire into the sanitary condition of the British army in India. Soon, Florence's work and expertise flowed from military to civic hospitals, and nursing to public health.

In 1860, using the money publicly raised to support her work, Florence founded an institution for the training of nurses, The Nightingale Training School (now called The Nightingale School of Nursing), at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. The School opened on July 9, 1860, with Mrs. Wardroper as its Head. Florence, however, interviewed all applicants and paid close attention to every detail. The School's curriculum was primarily based on her "Notes of Nursing", which she wrote and published in 1859, and which she revised in 1860 and 1861. The Nightingale School of Nursing became a model for nursing schools worldwide. In 1862, she even found time to develop a system of district nursing.

In 1872, Florence retired. Despite being almost blind, it is said that she enjoyed her final years. Her sister, Frances, and her husband became her caregivers, as, by 1896, she was confined to her bedroom permanently. In 1908, King Edward VII conferred on her the Order of Merit.

Florence died of heart failure on August 13, 1910. She was ninety years old. The British Government offered to hold a national funeral and burial at Westminster Abbey, but her relatives, aware of Florence's wishes, declined the offer. Instead, she was buried in the graveyard at St. Margaret Church in East Wellow, Hampshire, next to her parents. Florence's coffin was carried by six British Army Sergeants.

Florence, who has been an inspiration to generations of nurses, is one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's greatest figures. She was a leader in infection control and sanitation. Her achievements in public health, especially the sanitary conditions of hospitals and military barracks, are noteworthy. She was an advocate for a holistic approach to health and healing. As a social activist, Florence promoted universal access to healthcare regardless of one's ability to pay.

A true "hero"!

*Jack Berryman*

September, 2020



### LIFE AFTER LOSS

*How to move through grief with greater awareness, hope and health*

This grief education and support program is designed for those who are dealing with the death of a loved one. Taking a faith-based perspective, we will explore various aspects of grief, how it affects one's emotions, behaviours, body, mind and spirit. We will look at tasks one can do and adjustments one can make to move through grief, and help find ways to reinvest in one's life in meaningful ways. The content of the course will be based on the materials of Dr. Bill Webster, Centre for the Grief Journey.

**Leadership** Rev. Dr. Deborah Hart, Minister, Deer Park United Church. Deborah has been facilitating grief support groups for over 25 years.



**On line via Zoom**

**6 Monday evenings, January 11 – February 15, 2021**

**7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

**\$20 per participant for the course materials**

If interested, please contact [Kathy Kitchen](#) 416 239-3136 or [David Dallimore](#) 416 239-5319

*Kathy Kitchen*

Chair, Pastoral Care

Grief counseling from Rev. Deborah Hart was a positive experience for me. I was very reluctant in the beginning as I knew there was no quick fix for a broken heart. However, after I made up my mind to seek some help and join her class, I realized there were merits to be had. Sitting in a room with women and men of various ages, all suffering from a devastating loss, I realized I was not alone. We listened through the course of several weeks, sharing our grief, our anger, our guilt and our despair. This made me realize my feelings were very normal. Expressing one's emotions with strangers is somehow much easier and therapeutic.

More importantly, I also realized after listening to so many tragic and sad stories, I began to feel more grateful for the life I had for so many years with my loved one, some were not that fortunate. I slowly became aware that I must draw strength from the life I had been fortunate enough to experience. I began to feel this was something on which I had to focus and perhaps a turning point for me on my road to recovery.

Rev. Hart's classes and reading material are very helpful and maybe even more so at this particular time when we are dealing with this pandemic. I can only imagine the loneliness and despair one would feel, coping with the loss of a loved one at this present time.

*Ruth Johnson*





The [Jane Finch Community Ministry](#) is part of Shining Waters Region, formerly South West Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, near the Toronto Housing Firgrove Community.

It provides community development, offers pastoral care and is involved in advocacy through coalitions and networks in the Jane Finch area.

Minister Barry Rieder says,

*Jane and Finch is one of the hardest hit neighbourhoods of COVID in the city of Toronto.*

Although the neighbourhood is considered a low-income community with a high ratio of public housing developments, it is rich with cultural diversity and a caring spirit. This community has representation of over 110 nationalities and there are 70 different dialects spoken.

Like New York and other major centres in the United States, COVID has disproportionately affected low-income

racialized communities. This does not mean that they are not taking COVID seriously but is because of the kind of jobs they are in and the living conditions they experience. Many work in essential services of retail, food industry and factories and don't have the luxury of working from home and must work to survive. Many of the Personal Support Workers are racialized people, something that Ontario Works has encouraged newcomers to take up. These positions are low waged and many people have to have several part-time jobs to make ends meet. Transportation for most is public transit and not enough extra buses were put on the Jane St. route to accommodate social distancing. So getting to and from work puts people at further risk. Overcrowded living conditions for many has also been a problem. Sometimes two or three families share accommodation to pay for the rent which means people live in cramped social housing units. Lack of funds leads to poor nutrition that affects health and increases the death rate.

It has often been said that with COVID we are all in the same boat. In reality this is not so. Although some may be in a boat, some are outside of the boat clinging to a life preserver. It also has been said that Covid is the great equalizer but in fact it has been the realizer of the inequities in our society.

Any support that Humber provides to the community ministry has always been appreciated and in times like today even more so".

*Cheryl Drake and  
Barbara Clarke*

## White Gift Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> 2020

Usually we support The Jane Finch Community Ministry by purchasing gifts \$25 - \$30 for children 6 months to 18 yrs. and also request donations in the White Gift envelope.

With no church services in the church until January we are asking you to write a cheque payable to 'Humber Valley United Church' and send by mail or deliver it to the office.

We will then send one cheque so they can purchase the gifts and use the money where it is most needed. Please write "Jane Finch Ministry White Gift" on the memo line of the cheque.

Please also make sure your name and address are on your cheque.

Tax receipts will be included on your 2020 tax statement sent out in February 2021.

## Fundraising Update



After a year in which nearly all of our original fundraising plans were cancelled by COVID 19, the HVUC Fundraising Committee is happy to report that we have come pretty close to meeting our original fundraising goal.

Each year, the HVUC Board establishes a target for the Fundraising Committee based on the projected budget for the church. For 2020, that goal was \$20,000. We started off well enough with our Lenten Cans campaign. People responded well to the reminders of all the little luxuries they enjoyed, such as light switches and faucets, and that campaign raised \$4400. But then came COVID, and our hopes for concerts and winetasting events were dashed.

First to our rescue were Gary and Janet Ward, filling a community need and the church coffers at the same time through their generous donation of masks made by the seamstress who does alterations at the Cecil Ward and Sons Men's Store. Doug Ward also pitched in, and the Wards raised an incredible \$3362.10. (We are not sure where the ten cents came from, but every penny helps.)

In the absence of live services and thus paper bulletins, we got the bright idea of asking for sponsorships for dedications to Susanne Hynes's *Keeping in Touch*. That has raised \$2600 so far. Then, as if she hadn't done enough already, Susanne persuaded her buddy Lauren Kinnear to help her make Christmas masks. Those masks were immensely popular, and sold out almost immediately. When all is done with that project, they expect to bring in \$1740.



Not to be outdone, Murray Smith and his Men's Group agreed to organize a Car Rally through the last colours of fall. We didn't really think of this as a fundraiser, but thought it would be great for raising spirits, and it certainly was. Everyone who participated had a great time, and there have already been demands to make it the "First Annual". In addition, it brought in \$700.00. Well done, Murray, Bob Kinnear, David Dallimore, Peter White and all your helpers.



And then there was Shredding Day, an idea brought to us by Gail Cook-Bennett when another church rejected it.

We were not sure it would work, but with word spread through the fine outreach of Carolyn Whiteside, and everyone emailing friends and family, we attracted a bigger crowd than we ever expected. With the staff from Wasteco and about 20 volunteers working at an incredible pace, we shredded over 400 boxes of paper that day, and raised \$4000. What was astonishing was how grateful the customers were to get rid of their paper. We are already planning a follow-up event for the weekend after Thanksgiving next year.

Under the leadership of Kathy Kitchen and Lynn Manning, we have now begun our final fundraising effort of the year, the Fundscrip project. Under this plan, a person buys a gift card and either gives it to someone as a present, or spends it themselves. You pay full price for the card just as you would at a store, but the church gets 3% to 8% back. There is a huge array of stores to choose from. Now that we are on lockdown again, the program offers a wonderful way to do your Christmas shopping safely and quickly. I am also ordering a number of cards for myself for Metro, Sobeys and Loblaws, and will use them instead of cash to buy my groceries. Why not? It doesn't cost me any extra, and the church gets something back for it.

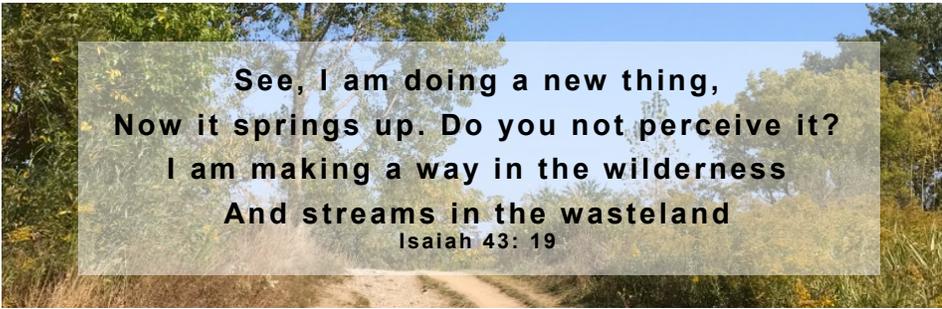
With all of these projects, plus a few dollars from the sale of Christmas cards and lanyards for masks, the Fundraising Committee expects to contribute \$17,350.00 to the church finances. Not bad for such a challenging year.

We are incredibly grateful to the people who have come up with inspired ideas for fundraising this year, and to you, the members of the congregation, for supporting these ventures. Thank you all.

*Joan Belford*

Chair, HVUC Fundraising Committee





**See, I am doing a new thing,  
Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
And streams in the wasteland  
Isaiah 43: 19**

As we enter into the season of waiting in Advent and hope at Christmas, we reflect back on a year that was unexpected in many ways. Covid 19 changed the way we communicate and connect, and we had to reinvent all the ways that we gather with friends and family. It has been a difficult and challenging year in so many ways. But it has also been a year to see afresh how God is at work in our lives.

Despite all the uncertainty, fear, and stress of this year coping with Covid 19, we have marveled at the wonderful and exciting opportunities that we have discovered together. It has been very meaningful to see many of us joining in from our homes to do fitness and yoga, share creativity with paint and crafts, talk about books, pray together, have coffee, listen to presentations, write and listen to each other's memoir stories and plays, and even dance and sing! Our special times and traditions are carrying on in new ways- we're even getting to enjoy a virtual meal together with the Daytimers.

It has been so heartwarming to see how people have supported each other in trying new activities, through challenges with technology, and getting the courage to join in on zoom class for the first time! There have been many countless demonstrations of encouragement and caring for one another.

One of the challenges we've encountered are those of us without computer or internet access, who are unable to participate in Zoom programs. We have reached out with mailing of activity packages and more recently delivering the Daytimer's meals. There is more we can do and maybe you might have some ideas to share. A pen pal program? Card writing? Care kits with activities? We'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions!

As we think about the winter coming up it's also a good time to think about new and interesting activities and topics to explore in our 55+ programs. Are you interested in Politics? History? Science? Economics? Or maybe there's a

new hobby or skill you'd like to investigate? Let's think of the possibilities! If you have an idea to share or you know of someone who might be interested in planning or facilitating a new program please let us know.

It's also a good time to express gratitude to all those many people who have helped to plan and prepare our

activities and programs. The Seniors Advisory Committee (Rev Lena, Deb Turnbull, Roger Wallis, David Dallimore and Beverley Conner) have put in many hours guiding and supporting the development of programs. Kelly has done a phenomenal job of producing our Program Guides, invitations and eblasts. Susanne has been endlessly patient and helpful in providing space in Keeping in Touch, generously sharing her experience and skills. Anita, Janet, Zoran and Dragan have all helped to provide resources and space to make our programs possible and keep us safe. Our faithful Daytimer's team has enthusiastically jumped in to create delicious lunch kits and safely delivered them to people at home And then there are all the individual members who've shared ideas, participated in demonstrations like making pastry online, playing campfire songs on the guitar, showing us how to crochet, sharing stories and photos of adventures and inventions! The list goes on!

We've learned that together we can come up with fun and creative ways to stay connected. As we prepare for this new year ahead what might you like to try? We are paying attention to all the wonderful new things that God is inviting us to in this time of waiting and hope.



Blessings,  
*Anne Pietropaolo  
and Beverley Conner*  
Seniors' Program.

The 55+ programs at Humber Valley United Church are possible with funding from the United Church of Canada Foundation Seeds of Hope and the Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors program.

Yorke Chapel in the Bloor West Village  
416-767-7452

Butler Chapel in the Islington Village  
416-231-2283



**Turner & Porter**  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

*Thank you Humber Valley United Church  
for all your support over these many years.*

turnerporter.ca

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Proud to support families in the Humber Valley Community.  
Right at Home offers award-winning support, from making a pot of soup to 24-hour nursing care, and anything and everything in between.

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Rebecca L.



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# Services in Advent and for Christmas



Please note that all the services will continue to be shown online via our church Facebook page at the times shown in the schedule below.

## Sunday, November 29 – Advent I

Premiered on Facebook, 10:30 a.m. Joni Henson will be singing with a guest flutist, Kristen Derksen. Devin will also be singing a duet with Joni.

## Wednesday, December 2 – Comfort and Joy

All are welcome to tune-in to this service beginning at 4:30 p.m. on our Facebook page. Joni Henson will be singing all the musical selections.

## Sunday, December 6 – Advent II

Premiered on Facebook, at 10:30 a.m. Devin and Michael will be singing two duets with Kristen Derksen on the flute.

## Sunday, December 13 – Advent III

Premiered on Facebook, at 10:30 a.m. Nicole and Thomas will be singing a duet with Zoran on the bongos. This is also White Gift Sunday.

## Sunday, December 20 – Advent IV

This service will be premiered on our Facebook page beginning at 10:30 a.m.

## Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service

Premiered on our Facebook page beginning at 7 p.m. This will be a Communion Service.

## Friday, December 25 – Christmas Day Service

Premiered on Facebook, at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas morning. A service of lessons and carols. George will be performing a dance and introducing a new talent – not to be missed.

**Sunday, December 27 – Sunday after Christmas service.** Led by David and Judith Dallimore, featuring music and reflections. Premiered on Facebook, at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Lena will be on a well-deserved holiday.

**Sunday, January 3 – Epiphany – Auld Lang Syne Service.** The reflection will be provided by Donna McCorquodale. Rev. Lena will be on holiday. Nicole will be singing a scared lullaby by Brahms with Michael on the viola and Jill on the piano. Premiered on Facebook, at 10:30 a.m.

## Humber Valley United *a connected, creative, caring church*



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