

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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### STORIES OF PENTECOST



#### FOOD FOR THE SOUL

**Easter Testimony** *Hyuk Cho, who served the former Brownsville -Delmer pastoral charge, now serves the multi cultural congregation of West Point Grey in Vancouver. The following is a testimony (abridged) of Andrea Su Xu who was baptized on Easter Sunday of this year.*

Thanks to the church and Hyuk for giving me this opportunity to share my faith with you today.

Firstly, I believe that faith is a blessing. It is our spiritual comfort. It always comforts us when we are in difficulty such as suffering and anxiety.

Secondly, religious faith helps us to uphold the moral values so that we can understand what can be done and what cannot be done. Faith leads me to respect people, care for others and be generous.

Thirdly, all religious faith makes people good. Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians have different ways of practising their faith. We need to respect different beliefs rather than to judge what we don't know.

**Why did I choose to be Christian instead of Buddhist?** The more I studied the Buddhist sutras, the more I felt empty.

When I came into West Point Grey United Church, I joined the Chinese Bible Study and Lenten Bible Study groups. Their warm hearts and souls make this church peaceful and in harmony with different cultures. With this baptism I want to mark my new life here. Thank you, God. Thank you for this Sacrament of Baptism on Easter Sunday!

#### BULLWINKLES EATERY GRAND RE-OPENING

"The Operation Sharing eatery and hospitality training centre is partnering with Indwell and is setting up shop in the atrium of Indwell's Harvey Woods Lofts on Vansittart Avenue in Woodstock." You can read the rest of Eric Schield's article 'A Match Made in Heaven' in the June issue of the Helping in Unity newsletter of Operation Sharing.

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAIHBuJ9o-IPqyXISH?e=r9mL3f>

Food preparation underway.



The community-building round tables in the atrium were purchased with money from Possibilities Fund of Oxford Presbytery (former).



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### **REFLECTIONS ON THE ANNUAL MEETING of new Antler River Watershed Regional Council, May 24-26, Port Elgin**

The atmosphere at the first annual meeting of the Antler Creek Watershed Regional Council was energized, hopeful, open and inquiring. Delegates wrapped their hearts, minds and spirits around the dawning of a New day within the church. This was a jumping off point where "all things are possible with God" (Matthew 19:26) The work has just begun. We acknowledged and gave thanks for our past and the work of the saints before us. Moving forward, expecting missteps, detours and challenges with God as our beacon, we can endure. May it be so.

*Jacquie MacLeod (Eastwood UC)*

#### **My perspective on this gathering – IT WAS BIG!**

**The venue could hold 550 people** and there were people that were not able to register because it was at capacity. It was frustrating that there were no table groups – either in the plenary sessions or in the individual Region meetings. It was hard to find people that you knew and difficult to make connections with people that you met for the first time.

#### **The keynote speaker, Cameron Trimble, was excellent.**

It was clear that the individual Regions need to meet on their own. Antler River Watershed Region was the only one of the three that did not hold a meeting in the fall. (We didn't change that much – our borders stayed relatively intact, and our Executive Minister didn't change.)

**We were participating in something that hadn't happened since 1925.** We were present at the 1<sup>st</sup> conference of the new structure of the United Church. I think that future gatherings will be

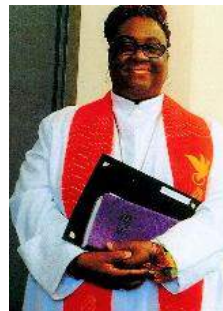
smoother, just for having had the experience of this one.

**My favourite moment of the weekend was by far something that happened on Friday. As the keynote speaker was wrapping up her speech, she made the statement 'We are not alone', and 550 people stood up and spontaneously recited A New Creed. That was awesome.**

*Kathleen Welch, Norwich UC*

### **Welcome to REV KARLENE BROWN-PALMER, Minister of United Church of Canada**

*Karlene talked with Maurice Francis about her experience.*



**1) Two items of good value in the courses you were required to take in preparation for "entry" into the UCC.**

The History and Operation of the UCC

Marcus Garvey a Jamaican liberation fighter once said

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." Hence, coming in the UCC and doing courses have been invaluable in my understanding the institution that I am forging a relationship with. It has also aided me in helping me to adequately incorporate what I have learned in the Community of Faith where I now serve.

The diversity of the UCC.

In doing the courses I encountered persons from across the length and breadth of Canada. There were differences in beliefs, methodology of doing ministry and visions as to a community's call to minister to God's people. Unlike any other denomination, the UCC embraces the autonomy of communities of faith; allowing them to be diversified yet united.

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### 2) Two challenges or struggles over the same period.

The length, timing and workload of the courses juxtaposed with my ministry responsibilities was a real challenge. Thanks to study breaks, timetabling and creative juggling I was able to manage and always able to complete both.

There were also times that I had to forgo attending meetings as there was a clash with class timing. I am praying those persons understood at the time that it was beyond my control.

### 3) One or two lessons learned about being clergy in Tillsonburg and St. Paul's.

We believe we have been divinely led to Tillsonburg and to serve St Paul's United, a community of faith with a very big heart. Both church and community have enveloped us in love and care, be it a greeting in the mall from one of the clients from our Community kitchen or a hug from our Mayor, we feel at home.

The strength garnered from fellowshiping with the Tillsonburg Area Ministerial and the sense of all denominations working together to share Christ is absolutely phenomenal. We are blessed.

We are excited to serve in the UCC and look forward to new experiences. I have been asked to serve on the Regional executive for the next three years. God being my helper.



*Karlene  
with Rev. Cheryl-Ann  
Stadelbauer-Sampa,  
Executive Minister  
and Joyce Payne,  
President.*

**May 15<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Mark Marshall and his daughter Lydia spoke at Norwich United Church about their recent trip to Israel and Palestine.** Thirty people from across Oxford came to listen and to see their many photos documenting their travels. **Kathleen Welch** offers the following personal reflection on their presentation.



**Because this was a guided tour, they were able to experience life in Palestine, with the safety net of not being Palestinian.**

While we assume that there have been struggles and conflict over this land for thousands of years, the reality is quite different. In response to the persecution of Jews in Europe, the United Nations decided in 1948 to create a homeland – Israel. **What the United Nations failed to take into account was that there were already people living there.**

At the end of the presentation, I personally had an overwhelming sense of how much I don't know and a nagging question of whether my ignorance was deliberate on my part. **My heart hurts to hear the stories of institutionalized brutality carried out against the Palestinian people.**

**The similarity to North America's**

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**treatment of the First Nations peoples is glaringly obvious.** The Palestinian people are being marginalized and limited to small tracts of land and the Israeli settlers are relentlessly pushing at those borders, demanding more and more land.

**In addition, each year the Israeli military arrests and prosecutes around 700 Palestinian children. And we hear NOTHING about this on our mainstream media.** These Human Rights violations go on unchallenged by the rest of the world. Mark had a supply of postcards from **No Way to Treat A Child Canada**, a project of the Defense for Children International PALESTINE, and supported by the United Church of Canada. (<https://www.dci-palestine.org/>)

Mark also encouraged those present to continue **to support the boycott of any and all products originating in the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.** In doing so, we can contribute toward creating a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

**(Note: Keyhole** represents the prison that Palestinians, particularly the refugee population, feel. Many refugees have kept the keys to the houses from which they were evicted in 1948 or 1967, as a symbol of hope for peace.)

### OXFORD PRESBYTERY FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/Oxford-Presbytery-690395957746547/>

**Rev. Mark Marshall & Lydia Marshall**  
**Available to share their story**  
**"Through the Keyhole: The Holy Land Today"**  
**contact**  
[revmarkconnexions@gmail.com](mailto:revmarkconnexions@gmail.com) or  
**(519) 533-8989.**

## SAVE THE DATE!

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT 25 2019**

**6:00 pm, College Ave UC,  
Woodstock**

**Friends of Oxford Presbytery  
gather to eat, laugh, worship  
and...?**

**Details to follow!**

**If you are willing to help, please  
contact Lloyd Bennett  
(pastorlloyd@collegeave.ca)**

## CONNECTIONS – News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

**Publication Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed (Except August)**

**SUBMISSION DATE: noon of prior Monday.**

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### **"But we have always done it (or understood it or preached it) that way."**

What do you do with **new information about the gospel when you no longer have a congregation** to share it with. . . ? I am talking about new insights, for example those from Borg and Crossan's book, "The Last Week." (Not new to many of you since the book was published in 2006.)



In the "Friday" chapter of the book, the Greek word for thief, referring to the two thieves

crucified with Jesus, is described by B and C as a general term for bandit often used to describe **guerrilla rebels**. Since crucifixion was never used to punish common thieves, but **reserved for those suspected of committing crimes against the state, Rome, on that Friday, was getting rid of three rebels, all wanting the same thing, freedom for their people**. Jesus lived for the marginalized, now he was to die with them. Now the three on Calvary's hill were bonded together by cause and by suffering, even though they represented radically different kingdoms: the two freedom fighters representing the kingdom of power and violence; Jesus embodying God's kingdom of suffering love. It is enough to make you weep.

Also, Borg and Crossan suggest that word **"ransom" used in Mark's gospel can mean "liberation", a theological shift**. And just a few weeks ago, in her sermon on Wisdom, Jane Van Patter stated that recent scholarship indicates that the word

**"fear" in the phrase "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." can also mean awe or adoration.** Of course!

What do I do when I have always preached it one way but now I would preach it another. It's almost enough to call me again to the preaching side of the pulpit; almost enough to wish I were 28 and not 82 and again in ministry on the four-point charge on Newfoundland's west coast. Almost.

**GW**

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**Mt Elgin United Church  
Mt Elgin Community Centre,  
333204 Plank Line.**



**STRAWBERRY SUPPER  
Wednesday June 19th  
from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.**

Menu consists of Buns, Cold Cuts, Letuce, Tomatoes, Relishes, Cake, Ice Cream and Strawberries, Coffee, Tea and Cold Drink.

Tickets are \$12.00 for Adults, \$6.00 for Children 12 and under and Pre School Free.

**Advanced tickets only by calling  
519-485-1988, 519-842-9323 or  
519-485-3197.**

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"Hi there and welcome to Illumin8Faith a podcast that shares stories of faith and hope.", is how Rev. David Exley, Rev. Isaac Mundy, and I

typically open up every episode of our podcast. **Podcasts are radio shows on the internet. You don't need to be connected to a broadcasting corporation or a radio station to have one**, so we've learned it's a fun new way to share the good news with people in today's world. Often people today aren't learning about faith and theology by stepping into a church, but they are listening to their smart phones or sitting at the computer, which has created **a unique new opportunity to reach new people and illuminate them to faith**. We seek to connect people to good theologians, or faith discussions, and stories that connect people to the lectionary readings. **Please give us a listen by searching for us on Facebook, Twitter, or search on iTunes - Illumin8Faith for episodes.**

Blessings, Rev Doug Peck



**GRANDMOTHERS TEA**  
**Wednesday June 26, 2019**  
**Noon – 2:00 pm**  
**Five Oaks,**  
**Paris**  
**Potluck luncheon**

*Bring your favourite dish or dessert and share in the fun and laughter.*

<http://www.nationsuniting.com/>

## Programs for Families

**St Paul's UC 88 Bidwell St,  
Tillsonburg**

**June 15 – Messy Church** from 10-12 noon. **Theme:** Carnival Fun. Crafts, games, music and fun! All are welcome. Hot lunch provided no charge.

Come out and see what the program is about! Children accompanied by adults welcome.

## Norwich UC

**Summer Camp** brochures and registration forms available

[www.norwichunitedchurch.ca](http://www.norwichunitedchurch.ca)

## Prayer cycles:

**Communities of faith are encouraged to pray for each other and for our mission in the world.**

### **Congregations searching for**

**Ministerial Leadership:** Avondale UC (Tillsonburg), Mt Elgin UC, Newark UC, Otterville UC, Hickson UC, Knox UC Embro, Trinity UC Ingersoll, Hebron UC.

**United Church of Canada – Antler River Watershed.**

<https://www.prayercycles.ca/antler-river-watershed26c697c9>

**Former Oxford Presbytery – updated June 6 2019**

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAIG6HFE9NkV4tEdfD?e=UjrqQn>

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### Oxford United Refugee Sponsorship (OURS) update for June

By this time **many of the congregations will have been visited by members of the Oxford United Refugee Sponsorship Committee** known as OURS.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> their **Annual meeting was held at St. David's. A review of their income and expenses was presented.** The financial campaign launched 5 years ago resulted in \$ 67,027.29. The cost of the settlement of the Mira family in Ingersoll was \$39,345.29. The amount that has been set aside for the **Mebrahtu family** is \$15,000. **The amount originally required for the Temnewu family was \$12,782, which is held in trust.** Because of a new funding formula by the Canadian Government in addition to one of the children now being 22 years old, the required amount has increased to \$21,530. **On May 8, approximately \$8,800 remained to be raised, for the Temnewu family.**

To contribute, send cheques to St. David's United Church. Cheques should be made out to St. David's United Church with the words "Refugee Fund" in the memo space on the cheque.

Currently, **Khartoum, Sudan is in political chaos.** Habte Zekarias, in London, who is the cousin of Freweini Mebrahtu (pictured above), tells us **she is at present unable to leave her residence because of the danger.** There have been two violent attempts to take over the government, with 40 people murdered in the last week. All government



offices are closed. **People are being shot in the streets.**

**It is our hope and prayer that the Canadian representatives working with Freweini and her family will do all that is possible to ensure a safe and successful outcome.**

*GW, on behalf of the OURS Committee.*

*Note: For the United Nations report: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/5/5afdb0064/unhcr-suspends-resettlement-programme-sudan-fraud-probe-gathers-steam.html>*

### A FUN THING HAPPENED AT THE CHURCH

It started when the UCW of Sweaburg United, two times a year, would invite a friend for supper and entertainment. Over the last 12 years it has grown to a ministry of the **church family to** include community members which has enriched the **fellowship and sense of community.** They have a strong partnership with the Sweaburg Lions Club: serve them supper once a month and work together on some of their fundraising. This past Thursday, June 6, I enjoyed a delicious supper with 60 other people. **We laughed hard at the skit performed by The Sweaburg Players** (Dorothy Garfat and Janet Mutch). Then the memories washed over us as **The Mudkatz, a 4-person ensemble from Ingersoll serenaded us with music from the 60s.** Old fashioned food, fun and fellowship. **MM**

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### CAMP TANNER

**REGISTER ONLINE**

<http://www.camptanner.ca/>

**For July 28 - August 7**

**CAMP TANNER**

**STILL NEEDED!**

**Life Guards**

**+**

**MALE COUNSELLORS**

Please contact Megan Ross  
([meganeliseross@gmail.com](mailto:meganeliseross@gmail.com))

### CAMP TANNER

### SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

Pictured below are the staff of Camp Tanner – well fed and happy!

Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, friends of Camp Tanner filled Boston Pizza, Woodstock for a very successful fundraiser.



**STILL NEEDED!**

**June 12 UPDATE**

### FOOD DONATIONS for CAMP (staff and campers)

Salsa (mild) .....7 jars  
Pop (variety incl. iced tea 25 cases of 24 cans)  
All Flavours Chips including Nachos ...30 bags  
Chocolate Chips.....4-6 large bags  
Popcorn Seasoning ..... 12 shakers  
Marshmallows .....12 large bags  
.....6 bags of minis  
Canned Apple Juice ..... 60 cans  
Ranch Dressing (475 ml)..... 4 bottles  
Cheese Bars (450 grams – Old)..... 40  
Cheese Slices (pkg of 48) .....8 pkg.

### FOOD DONATIONS to be dropped off at CAMP TANNER:

July 2 (5-7 p.m.)  
July 3 (6-8 p.m.)  
July 4 (all day)  
July 5 (all day)  
July 6 (all day)

Participating congregations are  
requested to advise Sandra  
Schurman (519-475-4833)  
[sandraschurman@execulink.com](mailto:sandraschurman@execulink.com).

**Camp Tanner sincerely  
appreciates our food donations.**



**WHEN? JULY 26-28, 2019**  
**WHERE? FIVE OAKS – Paris, ON**  
**[skylightfestival.ca](http://skylightfestival.ca)**  
**Congregations are welcome to**  
**worship, Sunday July 28 at**  
**9:30am. No cost.**