

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 1 Issue 11

November 13, 2019

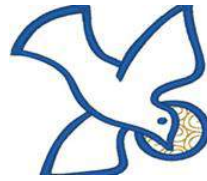
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INDEX OF OUR STORIES

The Spirit opens our hearts and minds recalling All Saints and Remembrance Day. Our federal election shows a divided country. Still changes are afoot as people answer God's call of doing a new thing.

- Food for the Soul – new meaning in the Vineyard story.
- Lynne Dunlop's record of the first semi-annual meeting of Antler River Watershed Regional Council.
- Friends of Oxford – Lynne Allin to join us on January 15, 2019.
- The comings and goings at our churches as Lori Minler stays in Oxford at Mt Elgin UC leaving Princeton-Etonia; Rev Sydney Elias accepts a call to Trinity UC, Kitchener and leaves Norwich UC; Nancy Vandenberghe becomes student minister at Hebron UC;
- Scattering the gifts of Eastwood UC with Silent Auction and De-commissioning Service for Eastwood UC as well as canvas Labyrinth.
- Changes come fast and furious. Check out the article on Christian Theology after Christendom: Engaging the Thought of Douglas John Hall.
- How lucky for a church to engage the incredible gift of Robyn Marie Butt.
- Annual Meeting of Camp Tanner, November 27
- Friends of Oxford January 15 with Lynne Allin
- Camp Tanner Dinner Auction February 8, 2020
- Confirmation Weekend Pearce Williams Camp on February 21-23.
- Coats for Kids at Operation Sharing
- Ministry with Kids November 28, First St Andrew's, London
- Grandmother's Tea, November 27
- Updated Lists for Oxford Prayer Cycle, Retired Clergy and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.
- Events and Programs for Families

FOOD FOR THE SOUL



A Vineyard Story

One of the things that makes an old preacher's day is **discovering new meaning in old texts**. That happened to me recently when I **re-discovered theologian Ched Myers on You Tube**.

I chose Myers' Bible study on the gospel of Mark's parable of the terrible tenants. (12:1-12) It will be familiar. A man buys a vineyard and puts tenant farmers in charge. When the owner sends a servant to collect the percentage of the harvest, they beat the servant. The next servant meets the same fate as does the next. Finally, the owner sends his own son and the tenants say, "If we kill him the vineyard will be ours." They do just that. **But instead of inheriting the vineyard, it is taken from them and given to other tenants.**

Myers says this is not about Old Testament prophets being beaten and Jesus, as the son, being crucified. **It is about tenants wanting to be owners. It is a parable about not being good stewards (tenants).** In Jesus' time it was about the Jewish faith. The scribes and the pharisees had not nurtured that veritable vineyard of faith stories. They had become self appointed owners.

Today, the vineyard is the earth. We have not been good stewards. The result is an environmental crisis. "Take care of it or it will be taken from you." we hear this parable say. **It is, as it was then, a matter of life and death.** Adding to that is the sobering fact that unless we act differently, there will be little of this vineyard left for the next generation of tenants – our great grandchildren. GW

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WATERSHED MEETING BY ANTLER RIVER

"The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood (or the 'hood) (John 1:14 The Message)," noted Antler River Watershed Regional Council President, Joyce Payne, in her opening remarks at the **first semi-annual Regional Council meeting held on Saturday Nov. 2 at the W.I.S.H. Centre in Chatham.** Joyce offered this verse as our Theme - as **we experience new opportunities to be the Church in a new way.**

Approximately 200 Regional Council representatives gathered as Neighbourhood, including some dozen Oxford representatives of congregations. After opening worship and Communion, and **a lively game of Regional Council Jeopardy featuring our own Doug Peck and Pam Wilcox,** we then spent much of the meeting time discussing and voting on several proposals. The Workbook for the day, 'Being Present', can be found at <https://1drv.ms/b/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqTgEj1W5QfHq1sqg?e=TkqpLe>. In time, minutes should be available on the Antler River Watershed Regional Council (ARWRC) website (<https://arwrcucc.ca/>).

The following proposals passed (with only minor changes to the above workbook): the procedure for electing General Council Commissioners to the 44th General Council July 21-25 in Calgary AB; the management of restricted and unrestricted funds sent to

ARWRC from presbyteries and Conference; the operating budget for 2020.

In the remaining time, we were introduced to the ARWRC commission chairs who gave a brief overview of their mandates and needs. **Rev. Lynne Allin provided an update on the Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support between a community of faith and ARWRC** (pages 19-21 in Workbook). **One of the challenges that each Commission faces is learning who is willing to be trained and to help with particular tasks across the Region** - e.g. being a Pastoral Charge Supervisor, assisting communities of faith with their search for ministry personnel, advising on property issues etc.

Be sure to check out the new ARWRC website (<https://arwrcucc.ca/>). There are **many new documents, handbooks, and guidelines which have been newly developed to offer pathways for communities of faith on a variety of topics.**

It was exciting and comforting to renew old Conference and Presbytery acquaintances and to meet new people who have taken on the representative's role. We look forward to gathering again in Port Elgin on the last weekend in May 2020.

Submitted by Lynne Dunlop

Check out the informative note re the new website for the Antler River Watershed RC

<https://mailchi.mp/d03939145140/arw-updates?e=0878d108a5>

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FRIENDS OF OXFORD PRESBYTERY

We gather next on **Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at College Ave UC in Woodstock at 6:00 for supper with Lynne Allin,** Minister, Congregational Support and Mission of Antler River Watershed Region. Lynne will talk about the new relationship between communities of faith (congregations) and the regional council:

- Covenant of mutual agreement
- Profile and living faith story
- Annual self-assessment
- Innovative co-operative ministries
- Overview of available resources.

ALL WELCOME MM

COMINGS AND GOINGS...

Moving:

Lori Minler from Princeton-Etonia UC Pastoral Charge to Mt Elgin UC and Newark UC, January 1, 2020.

Sydney Elias from Norwich UC to Trinity UC, Kitchener January 1, 2020.

Nancy Vandenberghe to Hebron UC as student minister, January 1, 2020.



Eastwood United Church

October 20 was a poignant celebration of 153 years for Eastwood UC. The congregation had decided earlier in October to close its doors. This difficult decision came after 4 years of prayerful discernment. The guest preacher, Olga McKellar, a daughter of the congregation, shared memories of being a young person at the church and the compelling promise of Revelations 21:6 'See I am making all things new.' A significant promise as their members seek new church homes with whom to share the blessings of their faith and skills.

There will be a **Silent Auction** to bid on memorabilia, sanctuary items, banners, kitchen supplies and furniture. **Times to view and bid:**

November 20 6-9 pm

November 21 1-4 pm

November 22, 6-9 pm

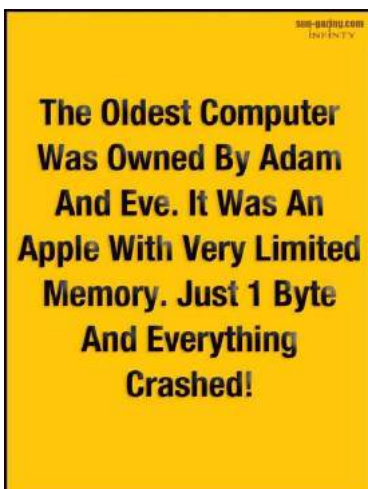
November 23, 10-4 pm.

Auction will close November 23 4 pm.

To go to a good home: Eastwood has a 25 foot **painted canvas Labyrinth**

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiQOAqTk0mGYVKWpvhTa1?e=94QjOo> acquired with money from the wider church. If you have ideas for a new home where it would be used or shared, please contact Jacquie McLeod (mcjacros2016@gmail.com).

The De-commissioning Service of Eastwood United Church **is Sunday November 24, 2019 at 6:00 pm** with Rev Maya Landell to preach.



OXFORD PRESBYTERY FACEBOOK PAGE

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

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CAMP TANNER

Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday, November 27,
2019, 7:30 pm at Knox United
Church in Embro.**

Current and prospective general members are invited for a yearly review with light refreshments.

Volunteers are needed for Committees (1-4 meetings per year).

Annual Fundraising Dinner Auction **February 8, 2020 at the Embro Zorra Community Centre.**



Funds raised help to support programs and keep registration costs low; tickets will be available in late 2019

Ministry with Kids/Youth Junior Youth Group, Senior Youth, Wider Church Connections

***Share your struggles and celebrations in junior youth (grades 4-8) and senior youth (high school) ministry**

***Connect with other youth leaders**

***Meet Kathy Douglas, Faith
Formation Minister for Antler River
Watershed Region**

**Thursday, November 28
First St Andrew's United Church,
London
350 Queens Ave, London,
5:30-7pm**

Join us for a light supper-free will
donation **(RSVP, please)**

**Contact: Chris Lindsay 519 872 5441
OR
Kathy Douglas kdouglas@united-
church.ca**



OPERATION SHARING

<https://www.operationsharing.ca/>

'Coats for kids' program

Nov 22 9am – 8pm

Nov 23 9am – 12pm

Donations are greatly appreciated:

Drop off at Collage Ave Church
between 9am and 12pm.

Monday November 18

Wednesday November 20

Friday November 22

GRANDMOTHER'S TEA



Next Grandmother's Tea
is 12 noon till 2 pm,
November 27 at
Grand River United
Church, Ohsweken, 1585
Mohawk Road (3rd Line)

Email the editors for a ride.

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Christian Theology after Christendom

Doug Hall, a native of Oxford County, is also the most well-known Canadian theologian as well as an internationally recognized theologian for his work on Contextual Theology, the Theology of the Cross, and Stewardship. **He describes Christendom as the time of the Church, since Constantine, enjoying proximity to power and serving that power rather than God on a foundation of Theology of Glory/Triumphalism rather than the Cross.** There has never been a more important time to be church. While I have read that Christendom has been dying for several centuries, my soul often aches both being part of that changing church and world in which we live. It was our hunger to explore faith without the church as we know it that led us (Dave and me) to register for the **November Colloquium in Montreal 'Engaging the Thought of Douglas John Hall'**. (A book of the lectures presented by speakers will be published in the summer of 2020.)

Of the seven Graduate papers presented the first day, I was especially interested in the paper of practical theology by Elizabeth Fisher from Emmanuel College called **'One Story of Suffering' bringing together theory and story.** While we have 'mastered' the earth, we struggle to master our emotions rather than be partners with them. **Our own stories of struggle can help us find God in our suffering always orienting us toward love.**

Of the twelve papers presented by the speakers over the next two days, the most uncommon was by Deanna Thompson **'The Gospel of irresolution Thinking Along with Douglas John Hall about Cross,**

Theology and not yet Resurrection.'

Deanna is a 10-year survivor of metastasized breast cancer and spoke about **the relationship of trauma (where suffering remains) to our illness whether mental or physical.** The question of **'how do I live' with the irresolution of illness is addressed in the Theology of the Cross** of which Resurrection is a chapter within. The need to practice lament together in public worship. Sixty percent of the 150 Psalms are lament/grief/trauma of the religious experience of God's absence which lasts more than a moment.

At the close, Doug reflected on the need for critical awareness and compassion as we face our own spiritual and intellectual struggle. He offered three themes.

1. The church should be a zone of truth.
2. Theology of the Cross is not a doctrine of atonement.
3. The suffering of the Christian church is consistent with the suffering of Christ on the cross. How are we to unlearn Christendom? The possibilities of the 'small'.

Doug remains grateful for the tradition of the Christian faith.

At 92 years of age, **the Colloquium honoured Doug for his humility, his thinking prowess and his realism and truth telling.** *In the picture are Doug and his wife Rhoda Hall; Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of Lutheran World Federation from South Africa (first PhD student of Doug's), Dave Schell, Marg Murray of Oxford. MM*



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Oxford County writer and lifelong UC member Robyn Marie Butt becomes Writer-In-Residence at

First St. Andrew's (FSA) United Church in London, ON.

The Writer-In-Residence, as writer and congregation explore the opportunities so far, looks like this. The writer:

1. Is in a voluntary service position.
2. Is available to congregational groups for presentations of her spiritual writing as well as for guidance in writing or reading.
3. Can help find suitable poems or written text for a variety of worship, church group, or personal needs, whether her own work or that of others.
4. Will be contributing to the congregational magazine.
5. Is developing drama, with FSA's remarkable resident musicians, for use in worship or special concert events.
6. Is available during her office hours in the Library Mon 1-4 pm & Tues noon-3 pm to consult on congregants' own writing, to shoot the breeze about books, writers, and reading... or to explore the riches in one of the minister's recent sermons!
7. For anyone who's ever hankered to tackle their life story (or even just a portion of it) Robyn will be running an upcoming weekly "Writers United" memoir-writing group in the new year!



Dinner and/or Concert

featuring
Pleasant Ridge

Church Roof Fundraiser

From folk to funny, from ballads to bluesy, from pop to peppy, Pleasant Ridge sings a variety of music in a relaxed and amiable style. We are Pam Bray, David Jones, Everill Muir, Vern Payne, and Kim Tomkins.



at Dundas Street United Church
285 Dundas St. Woodstock, ON

Saturday, November 30th, 2019

5:30 p.m. Supper (Chicken Parmesan)
7:00 p.m. Concert

Tickets: Dinner & Concert - \$30.00
Dinner or Concert - \$15.00 ea.

 Dinner tickets need to be purchased in advance. For info or tickets call (519) 537-7935 or (519) 537-5109

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Chalmers United Church Kintore

• Presents •

Allison Lupton with
Shane Cook & Kyle Waymouth



Singer-songwriter and fiddler, Allison Lupton, along with Canadian/US fiddle champion, Shane Cook and multi-instrumentalist and champion step dancer, Kyle Waymouth.

• AND •

Curbstone



Curbstone has been entertaining listeners with their acoustic style singing for years! The current iteration is a quartet consisting of Mark Steewe (vocals), Ian Scott (bass), Phil Rince (bass), and Alison Scott (lead percussion and 19th Century fiddle). Together they arrange and sing a diverse repertoire of music ranging from classic to contemporary all fuel from London and surrounding areas with the exception of Phil who calls Chatham home.

Sunday, December 8 @ 2pm

\$30 for Adults | \$15 for 6-12yrs | under 6 free

For tickets call **Jenny Stevens 519-476-0691** or

Marg Ogar 226-236-7358

All proceeds will be contributed to our "Give us a Lift" campaign for our church elevator. We are now a fully accessible building!




CELEBRATING OUR PAST
embracing our future

TICKETS ADULT \$30 • CHILD \$15: CALL TOLL FREE 1-855-SCOTTWOODS

OLD TIME

COUNTRY Christmas

THE SCOTT WOODS BAND



FEATURING
CANADIAN FIDDLE CHAMPION
Scott Woods
This two-hour live presentation sparkles with heartiest renditions of your favourite seasonal songs, family humour, fiddle fiddling, sensational stepdancing, and so much more! Join us and celebrate an Old Time Country Christmas with family and friends.

• The Telecaster Master **STEVE PITICCO**
• Canada's Yodeling Cowgirl **NAOMI BRISTOW**
• Spaghetti Legs **LEO STOCK**
• The Harmony Ace **KENDRA WOODS NORRIS**

VISIT: **SCOTTWOODS.CA**

Monday December 16
7:00 pm

WOODSTOCK
COLLEGE AVENUE UNITED CHURCH
22 Wilson St.

Proceeds support College Avenue United Church

Tickets may be purchased at College Avenue United Church (22 Wilson St.) 519-537-6062, or at Merrifield Book Shop (471 Dundas St.) 519-539-4220. Order by phone with a Visa or MasterCard by calling The Scott Woods Band Office at 1-855-726-8896.

EVENTS

St Paul's UC 88 Bidwell St, Tillsonburg

Community Kitchen Luncheons from

11:30 am -12:30 pm

Hot meal and dessert provided free.

Meet weekly beginning October 19.



St. Paul's UC UCW, Frosty Fair Bazaar

Saturday November 16th

9 a.m. until noon

Come do some Christmas shopping! \$2 admission includes the tearoom, vendor's market, knitting, deli, bake table, crafts, jams and jellies and much more!

St. Paul's UC Tillsonburg presents

Roy LeBlanc as 'Elvis' - Nov. 30 at

2:30 pm

Tickets \$25 from office 688-0012

Gospel Songs and other great hits.

Programs for Families

November 15 PA Day at Avondale

UC Jointly sponsored with St Paul's, Tillsonburg. 8:30am -4:00pm, \$10.00

Theme: GospelTopia

Crafts, stories, games and snack.

Call Karen 519 688-0012 for more information.

December 3 at 4:30 pm, Norwich

UC Messy Church:

Norwich UC MOMS and TOTS

each Wednesday morning in Parlour at

9:00 – 10:30 am

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PROGRAM FOR YOUTH – Confirmation Weekend



List of Retired Clergy and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

<https://1drv.ms/w/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqBvL7jV2ELKExkJg?e=uMefFw>

Woodstock Fanshawe Singers

present **Sleighbells Ring!**,

a family Christmas matinee concert

December 7, 2019 at 2 pm at St.

David's United Church.

Woodstock Fanshawe Youth Singers will
be featured in a concert for everyone.

Also, **Sing Joy!**

on December 7, 2019 at 7:00 pm at St.
David's United Church.

Oxford Winds Community Concert Band
will be featured, joining us for this cozy,
fun-filled performance.

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), Otterville UC,
Hickson UC, Knox UC Embro, Oxford
Centre-Curries Pastoral Charge

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

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

**Former Oxford Presbytery – updated
September 10 2019**

<https://1drv.ms/w/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqBxZMAfveutUyYov?e=EJkqM4>

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**Next Publication: Wednesday,
December 11**

SUBMISSIONS DUE:

noon Monday, December 9.

NEW email:

oxfconnections@execulink.com

. Please share widely to help us
connect with each other

Submissions welcome.

Feedback welcome.

To remove your name from this
mailing list, email

oxfconnections@execulink.com

**Past Issues of January, February,
March, April, May, June, July, Special
August 2019, September, October:**

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAKHtXnTBBOM-xnJP0?e=jXpUYP>