

# CONNECTIONS

## News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 1

January 8 2020

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### FRIENDS OF OXFORD PRESBYTERY

**HERE IN OXFORD:** See old friends face to face and make new friends.

***Learn about the life-giving resources available from our new REGION!***

**SOFT TOOL BAG**



ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED REGIONAL COUNCIL  
Holding and Encouraging  
Communities of Faith

**WEDNESDAY, January 15**

**Supper Meal catered by Bullwinkles of Operation Sharing.**

**Table Groups**

**Speaker Lynne Allin,**

Minister, Congregational Support and Mission  
of Antler River Watershed Region

**6:00 –8:30 pm**

**Cost: \$10.00**

**College Ave. UC**

**Woodstock**

**Cut-off date Friday, January 10.**

**Contact Lloyd Bennett**

**[pastorlloyd@collegeave.ca](mailto:pastorlloyd@collegeave.ca)**

**(please note diet restrictions)**

*Even if you are unable to attend after ordering the meal,  
we request that you still pay for the meal.*

**After reviewing the responsibilities of the Executive, and the 3 Commissions,  
Lynne will share the Tools and Resources available from the Region.**

**This event is IMPORTANT FOR ALL - ministers and laity**

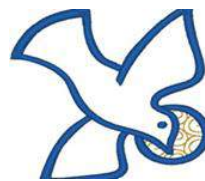
### OUR STORIES INSIDE

The Work of Christmas begins . Our hearts are full of the promise of '**God with us**'. Parts of us are still troubled about changes in our church, climate crisis and unrest in the Middle East.

We learn, love and carry on with caring intention. We read our stories seeing the signs of God's action: supporting and staffing Camp Tanner and their banquet and auction, attending Five Oaks Winter Membership meeting or the Grandmother's Tea, praying for our sisters and brothers, ourselves and planet earth – the wildfires in Australia, the increasing tensions in the Middle East. We do not know what is ahead but we trust.

### FOOD FOR THE SOUL

#### Two Poems for Christmas



There is a time when the  
**thought is so vital, the  
message so urgent,  
that prose will not do.**

It has to be poetry. Such  
is the case with two poems that act as book  
ends for the Christmas story.

**The first poem is from Luke's gospel.**  
When Mary receives Elizabeth's blessing,  
**an expression of unconditional love,  
Mary fills the room with poetry and  
song.** She praises God for her good

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fortune and for a God who "brings mighty kings (like Herod) from their thrones and lifts up the lowly; fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty." This liberation anthem, **this song of praise and freedom, moves seamlessly from the personal to the political.** (In spite of Mary's theological insight, and prophetic courage it would take more than 19 centuries before women could preside over word and sacrament. But I digress.)

**The birth story ends with Matthew.** When the Magi approach king Herod asking for directions to the new born king, authorities are summoned **and a five line poem from the prophet Isaiah is read. The words strike panic in the heart of Herod and joy in the hearts of the Magi.** There is good reason for both. In Bethlehem a new King is born; a new kingdom that Herod and all the Herods of the world, then and now, cannot outsmart, cannot outflank, cannot crush; a kingdom that will endure forever. **What an ending! What a beginning! What poetry! What power! What an epiphany!** GW

## CAMP TANNER

### Annual Fundraising Dinner Auction

**February 8, 2020 at the  
Embroid Zorra Community  
Centre.**

Funds raised help to support programs and keep registration costs low; **tickets available from Sheila Greason 519-349-2768, Sandra Shurman 519-475-4833, Margaret Dykeman, 519-532-4875, email [camptanner@execulink.com](mailto:camptanner@execulink.com)**



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When the carols  
have been stilled,  
When the star-topped tree  
is taken down,  
When family and friends  
are gone home,  
When we are back  
to our schedules,

### **The work of Christmas begins:**

To welcome the refugee,  
To heal a broken planet,  
To feed the hungry,  
To build bridges of trust,  
not walls of fear,  
To share our gifts,  
To seek justice and peace  
for all people,  
To bring Christ's light  
to the world.

*Michael Dougherty,  
co-chair of the Social Justice Committee at  
Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse, Yukon.*

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## GRANDMOTHER'S TEA

The next Grandmother's Tea  
is 12 noon till 2 pm, January  
29 at  
Nations Uniting Ohsweken,  
*Email the editors for a ride.*



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## CAMP TANNER HIRING

*Camp Director + Camp Co-ordinator:  
Applications due February 1, 2020  
All other staff positions:  
Applications due February 22, 2020*

*Details are available on website  
[www.camptanner.ca](http://www.camptanner.ca) (use the staff button)*

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### It's a Wrap

It is time once again to **wrap the figures of the nativity scene and put them away for another year.** We bought our nativity set 50 years ago when our oldest daughter Miriam was 5. Now our youngest grand daughter at 5, unwraps them from their tissue paper and places them on the lamp table by the window. Two years ago **she unwrapped Mary and asked who it was. "That's Mary," I said, welcoming the teaching moment. "Mary, Mary quite contrary?"** she asked. "Not that Mary," I said, going on to explain the difference, thinking that her answer contained an element of truth.



These are tough figures made of hard rubber. They get handled and dropped, hid and hunted.

Sometimes the lamb gets to sleep in the manger and Jesus spends the night in Mary's arms. This year, I noticed, the first act of Mary was to lean over the manger and kiss Jesus. Two minutes later Mary was carrying the lamb. "Lammy is hurt." said our grand daughter. "What happened?" I asked. "I think Lammy has a broken leg," she replied. In less than a minute the leg was miraculously healed.

In another 50 years, with a bit of luck, and a measure of loving care, our grand daughter's grandchildren will be unwrapping these enduring gifts of Christmas. In a world where almost all things change, there are some things that stay the same. In 2020 and beyond there is a need for both. GW

### The Shocking Size of the Australian Wildfires

Acres burned in recent major wildfire events



Sources: CalFire/Russian Federal Forestry Agency via BBC, New York Times



statista

### Prayer for the people, animals and land of Australia

by our moderator,

the Right Rev. Richard Bott

[https://1drv.ms/w/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqz\\_59s70oNAtxeX?e=sUUUr7E](https://1drv.ms/w/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqz_59s70oNAtxeX?e=sUUUr7E)

**Ways to help:** from Facebook page of HRH Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex

**Give essential goods to those affected:** <https://bit.ly/2ZLbQ5J>

**Support groups helping animals:**

@AnimalsAus - <https://bit.ly/39AHIOJ>

@wildlife\_vic - <https://bit.ly/2Qjk6qq>

@WIRES\_NSW - <https://bit.ly/2trrDKK>

**Help @RedCrossAU recovery efforts:** <https://bit.ly/2QNaeEe>

**Donate to fire services:**

@NSWRFS - <https://bit.ly/2ZOXOA7>

@CFA\_Updates -

<https://bit.ly/37wmKPb>

@QldFES - <https://bit.ly/2SOXn7e>

@CFSAlerts - <https://bit.ly/37uBa2v>

**OXFORD PRESBYTERY  
FACEBOOK PAGE**

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

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### Christmas Day and Beyond

If one is looking for an expression of the word of God touching people's lives, Operation Sharing comes immediately to mind. **Of all that is done in the community with and for those in need, the Christmas Day celebration at College Ave. United in Woodstock stands out.** It was begun several years ago by director Steve Giuliano. Now between 300 and 400 people of all social and economic backgrounds drop in for fellowship, food and gifts. In a time when family takes priority, we pay tribute to those who take the time to think and plan beyond their immediate families to see that the most vulnerable in our community are able to come together for this Christmas celebration.

Operation Sharing also offers the **Christmas Place** where both adults and children can shop. There is **"The Inn"** at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church which provides a place to stay for those who are homeless. **The Food for Friends** program operates out of College Ave. United in Woodstock and Trinity United in Ingersoll. **Bullwinkle's**, a pay what you are able eatery is now located in the Harvey Woods Lofts on Vansittart Ave. In addition to the work of Operation Sharing there is the Saturday. **Angel Breakfast** at Dundas United and the church folk from across the county who **provide Tues. and Thurs. noon meals** at First Baptist Church.

**It saddens us that the need is so great**, but our hearts are wonderfully warmed to see the response. It is **what love means, at Christmas and throughout the year.**

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



Operation Sharing has been publishing a bimonthly newsletter in the Oxford Review since 2003.

In case you missed it, find the **December 2019 edition of the Oxford Insight.**

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqwbUFgM0srtNLKWB?e=p8IArJ>

**It's time to stop measuring the economy by how the 1% are doing...**



**And start measuring it by how the 99% are doing.**

### GIVE A GIFT FOR THE FUTURE



Service.

Check out the website below for a wide variety of gifts to help change the world: Healing and Reconciliation, Leadership, Wellness, Safe Spaces, Education, Address Poverty and Hunger, Returning Gifts, The Future and Mission and

[https://giftswithvision.ca/?mc\\_cid=e588219337&mc\\_eid=e99e11cd1b](https://giftswithvision.ca/?mc_cid=e588219337&mc_eid=e99e11cd1b)



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### MOVING FORWARD:

#### Eastwood United Church:**SOLD** **LABYRINTH**

Innerkip UC will be the custodian of the 25 foot painted Labyrinth. Contact Jacquie McLeod 519 532 2914 to book it. Donations for use to M+S.

#### To a new home:

**VOICES UNITED** contact Jacquie McLeod 519 532 2914: 19 copies with music, 29 copies words.

### PRAYERS for our sisters and brothers considering the future:

SHARED Ministerial Leadership:  
congregations exploring the prospect of sharing a minister.

SHARED Pulpit Supply:  
congregations exploring 'clustering' around pulpit supply

SALE OF BUILDINGS:  
congregations looking at stewardship of their property.

### Nora Sanders, UCC General Secretary writing on the signs of Epiphany with the out of control wild fires in Australia and the the stabbings of Hanukkah celebrants at a rabbi's home in a New York suburb...

"I love the story of the wise ones who saw a star and knew it was significant and dropped everything to follow it and see what it had to tell them. The star they saw must have been visible to others too, but they had the wisdom to perceive its significance and to act. They journeyed with precious gifts to honour the one whose arrival was signalled by the star. **I wonder if I have the wisdom to see the signs that God has placed in the world in this time.**

**I wonder if I have the faith to journey without understanding what will be found at the destination.** I wonder what gifts I might offer. May we seek together the signs of God's call to us in our times. May we offer the gifts that the world needs."



#### Aussie reporter, Josh

**Wyndham-Kidd**, posted on UCC Facebook page writing first hand on the wildfires:

**"I want people outside Australia to know and to feel the despair and the rage and the grief and the intense need to change something,** because we all need to feel those things **to spark the determination we need to get through this crisis that will last for the rest of our lives** - but fundamentally I'm typing this out in my quiet loungeroom in Darwin because if I didn't, I think I'd just start screaming and I don't know when I would stop....."

The last thing I said on here before New Year was that **I've been living with climate grief for a long time**, and that there are **consistently four things we need to get through it**. That's still true:

- 1. You will want someone to talk to.**
- 2. You will want a way to get the grief out.**
- 3. You will want a joyful thing in your week to keep your chin up.**
- 4. And you will want something meaningful to do about the problem.**

Thank you for being my someone to talk to."

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UnitedChurchCda/permalink/10162658811060401/>

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### LIST OF RETIRED CLERGY AND LICENSED LAY WORSHIP LEADERS

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqBowSB9T2li0OLiq?e=BabH72>



<https://arwrcucc.ca/>



Five Oaks

<http://fiveoaks.on.ca/>

Membership Dues for 2020 are owed now. **Winter Membership meeting, Saturday January 11, 2020.**

### **PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES** **February 4 at 4:30 pm, Norwich** **UC Messy Church**

### **Norwich UC MOMS and TOTS**

each Wednesday morning in Parlour  
from 9:00 – 10:30 am

### **CONFIRMATION WEEKEND FOR YOUTH**

**Pearce Williams Camp**  
**February 21-23**

### **World Council of Churches**

WCC urges "maximum restraint" in escalating conflict between US, Iran: The WCC is deeply concerned by the possible consequences for the Middle East region of today's US air strike that killed general Qasem Soleimani, Iran's most prominent military commander, at Baghdad airport in Iraq. The attack is a major escalation in the confrontation between the US and Iran.



### **PRAYER CYCLES:**

Communities of faith praying for each other and for our mission in the world.

**Former Oxford Presbytery – updated December 11, 2019**

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq0AwsLIGS4BIE2La?e=ECXYfN>

### **CONGREGATIONS SEARCHING FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP:**

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

**Innerkip UC is searching for short-term Ministerial Leadership while Rev Karen Lowe is on Long Term Medical Leave**

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

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

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

**Next Publication: Wednesday,**  
February 12, 2020

### **SUBMISSIONS DUE:**

**noon Monday, February 10, 2020**

### **NEW email:**

[oxfconnections@execulink.com](mailto:oxfconnections@execulink.com)

Please share widely to help us connect with each other

Your submissions and feedback are welcome.

To remove your name from this mailing list, email

[oxfconnections@execulink.com](mailto:oxfconnections@execulink.com)

### **Past Issues for 2019 stored:**

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