

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 2

February 12 2020

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OUR STORIES INSIDE

Our stories emerge from our connections with each other. Padraig O Touma offered a prayer for reconciliation connecting separation to our pain to our story to our understanding and misunderstandings, our listening and not listening, praying that we **must turn toward each other** with understanding and listening, argument and acceptance, challenge, change and consolation. Why? **Because that is where God is to be found – in the space in between.**

May we find encouragement and God in the spaces within these stories of life in Oxford County as they appear in our newsletter: last sermon, prayer cycles, the connection between Preachers, Poets and Story Tellers, Camp Tanner, UCW events, opportunity for a musician, 200 year celebration at Norwich UC, the learnings of a congregation from the pastors' stay with them, the World Day of Prayer on March 6, gratitude from a student in the Designated Lay Minister program, Youth Rally in April, Kenyan Dinner to support Canada Foodgrains Bank, Friends of Oxford meeting in January with our Region and plans for April, tribute to Black History Month in Otterville, programs at Nations Uniting Reconciliation and Grandmother's Tea, report from Antler River Watershed Human Resource Commission, obituary, Lenten Program of Citizens for Public Justice, Social Justice Fair, and dates for Family Activities and Suppers.

Question: Do you sense a need for a Prayer Chain for situations and/or people in our lives. **Please contact the editors if you are interested in being part of a Prayer Chain.**

FOOD FOR THE SOUL



As we address **the many changes afoot** (new decade, personal and pastoral relationships, new leadership and meaning and purpose), **encouragement is vital.** Last sermons are distinct and critical as they embolden faithful decision making for the ministry entrusted to us. **Rev Sydney Elias' last sermon at Norwich UC on December 29 named 4 things to keep in mind:**

1. Never Base Your Decision On Desperation. Desperation is not the same as necessity.
2. Know That The Popular And Easy Do Not Necessarily Equate To The Good And Right.
3. Seek God's Guidance. God guides, he is not a dictator.
4. Don't Ever Treat Any Decision As Final. Always be open to what God is doing.

Even as God has called us to work for a more just and caring world...**the personal dimension of God's call and the wonder should be remembered.**

When the angel of God proclaimed the birth of Jesus to the shepherds...there was also a deeply personal aspect as well – *"To **you** is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for **you: you** will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."* (Luke 2: 10-12)

(Sydney Elias' full sermon at:
<https://1drv.ms/w/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq2W6-u7pqe6P5oCD?e=MGRJRK>)

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PRAYER CYCLES:

We offer this summary of Prayer Cycles in UCC. Communities of faith are encouraged to pray for each other and for our mission in the world.

- **Former Oxford Presbytery Prayer Cycle – updated February 10, 2020**

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

- **Congregations Searching For Ministerial Leadership:**

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

- **Innerkip UC** is searching for short-term Ministerial Leadership while Rev Karen Low is on Long Term Medical Leave.
- **Dundas St UC** is searching for a Youth Minister and Minister as Rev Bonnie Pilkey is retiring May 1 2020.

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

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

PRAYERS for our sisters and brothers looking to the future:

SHARING Ministerial Leadership:

CLUSTERING and Pulpit Supply:

SALE OF BUILDINGS:

stewardship of their property.

Preachers, Poets and Story Tellers.



Preaching is part education and part motivation within a context of story telling. It is often both a joy and a struggle; a struggle with the text, a struggle with the vision of God's new community in the face of the reality of a different world in and around us. As we know, our faith comes from an oral tradition. Often it was only written down when the oral tradition was threatened.

The Psalms are an example of Hebrew poetry originally spoken out loud in the temple before a gathered audience.

I was reminded of this format when I heard of **the rise in popularity of what is called Slam Poetry**. It is poetry that is performed – read aloud before those gathered for worship.

A number of years ago Taylor Mali, a teacher, recited at a "Slam" gathering, a **three minute poem called "What Teachers Make"**. (If you are tempted to look it up, it comes or should come with a strong language warning.) The poem, on you tube, "went viral" as they say. To Mali's surprise, **students who had heard the poem began to tell him that because of that poem they had decided to go into teaching**. He kept track of the letters and emails indicating their decisions. He stopped counting when in 2012 the number reached one thousand.

It's an example among many that **the spoken word has not lost its power**. For discouraged preachers, poets and other story tellers it's a word of hope.

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<https://taylormali.com/poems/what-teachers-make/>

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CAMP TANNER

Dinner Auction on February 8 at Embro Community Centre was sold out! Board Chair Graham Anderson warmly welcomed us; Janice's Fine Country Catering plentifully fed us; Camp Tanner Staff and Volunteers streamlined the silent



auction and Auctioneer Roger McKay made us laugh as he helped us to part with our money to support the camp. An enjoyable evening.

CAMP TANNER HIRING

Staff positions:

Applications due February 22, 2020

Details are available on website

www.camptanner.ca (use the staff tab)

Camper Posters download here:

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq2dsIr5e_Ba9bUhp?e=LBYPli

MUSCIAN JOB OPPORTUNITY

Innerkip UC is looking for a musician and choir leader to participate in our worship services on Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

We will consider a single position for a musician on our electronic piano.

For details contact John Ross Ministry and Personnel email: jkross@execulink.com

Text: 519-671-2820



UP COMING DATES FOR OXFORD COUNTY UCW 2020

March 18 2020 9:30 am

Oxford AGM St Pauls' UC Tillsonburg
Download their beautiful Poster at

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq2xtsw9IoDaVFjZ9?e=6xHeB5>

April 18 2020 9:30 am

The Gathering ARW UCW AGM
Trinity UC Ingersoll

April 27 2020 6:30 pm

Spring Event Innerkip UC

June 8 2020 9:30 am

June Retreat Ingersoll Senior Centre

July 18 2020 9:30 am

Summer Event Siloam UC London

October 19 2020 9:30 am

Fall Event Kintore UC

Celebration of **NORWICH UC** **200th year continues**

Ian Bell, a Canadian folk musician, storyteller and singer-songwriter created a unique service with hymns and songs (some were 350 years old) which had been



an important part of the Methodist tradition. **"SING LUSTILY AND WITH GOOD COURAGE"** after John Wesley, 1761 included the lively sounds of singing schools, camp-meetings and early Methodist services. We learned old hymns and how they've influenced today's music. A different but inspiring worship. MM

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COMINGS AND GOINGS...

Princeton and Etonia United Churches, *when asked what they learned from Lori Minler replied..*

Life is like a train journey with its stations and changes of routes. People get on and off at any stop. In January 2015, Lori Minler boarded the Princeton-Etonia Pastoral Charge "train" and took us on a journey with many stops along the way.

We learned from Lori that.....

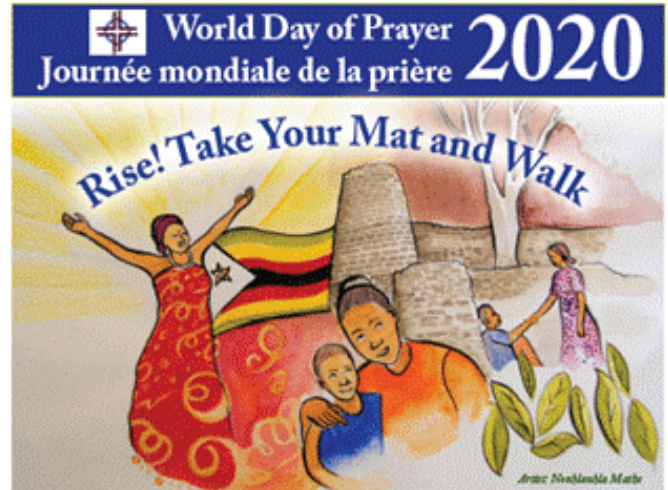
we should think beyond the words that were spoken; we can enjoy what nature has to offer us; she put maximum effort and energy to any project; we can use technology in worshipful ways; we were challenged in a thoughtful manner; Lori's sermons were an extension of her personality; she fed our spirits through her inspirational messages, guided meditation, spiritual practices and study group - these were more important than just filling seats; she chose to preach bare-footed to keep herself grounded. She punctuated her words with her sense of humour, graciousness and love for each of us individually; that in itself made the congregation feel at home and part of our church family. Her laughter and infectious smile lit up the room and helped ease us as a congregation into our weekly worship.



Lori disembarked the Princeton-Etonia "train" at the December 2019 stop. As we look back on Lori's time with us, we will reflect on great memories. We are thankful for her leadership and teaching over the past 5 years and wish her abundant blessings on the next step of her journey.

Submitted by Sally Mason.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER March 6 2020



Come and celebrate the theme: **Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk .**

Zimbabwe, one of the more southern countries in Africa, has prepared the service this year.

You are warmly invited to Hebron United Church

(676241 16th Line - at the corner of the
16th Line East Zorra-Tavistock and Oxford
Road 8)

for the 2020 World Day of Prayer Service

Friday, March 6, 2020, 1:30 pm

Join us and please stay for a time of fellowship and refreshments following the service.

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THANK YOU

I wish to let folks know that I have **successfully completed my first Learning Circle in Winnipeg: The Community's Story**. This Circle included Biblical story (how we tell story, exegesis of text and context), Proclamation (including preaching and evangelism), UCC history and theology, Worship and Sacraments.

Thank you to everyone for your support and continuing prayers.



It is with a grateful and humble heart that I write to say thank you for the gift of financial assistance I received, from the Oxford Legacy Fund. I received this gift,

in December, and applied it to my education costs for the October Learning Circle.

I feel truly blessed!

Wishing all a wonderful year ahead!

Nancy Vandenberghe, Hebron UC

Student Minister In Training/DLM Program

YOUTH RALLY 2020 ESCAPE

April 23 – April 26

Pearce Williams Centre

For high school aged youth to experience spiritual and personal growth through a sense of community. Register

www.youthrallyucc.wordpress.com or contact Shannon Hunter, Shannon-30@hotmail.com

Poster available here:

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq3JMiKiuNYLLkgMu?e=fexIEr>

Ugali Dinner offers Kenyan experience

The Ugali Growing Project is offering another culinary adventure when its members host their 20th fundraising dinner on **Saturday, March 7 at Trinity United Church, Ingersoll**. This year's dinner, **in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank**, will feature a Kenyan menu and will focus on the important role women play in ending hunger around the world. **The evening will include a screening of the CFGB's short**



documentary: Common Strength, which documents the experiences of a Manitoba farmer and entrepreneur Colleen Dyck who travelled to western Kenya to live and work alongside small-scale Kenyan farmer Lucy Anyango. Anyango is a participant in a CFGB conservation agriculture project. **CFGB Senior Policy Advisor Carol Thiessen will also speak**



on the role women play in improving their communities. Doors for the fundraising dinner open at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. **Advance**

tickets only are \$30 (\$15 tax receipt), available from Suzanne Stoop 519-485-4316.

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FRIENDS OF OXFORD

January 15, 2020,

We came, bought books, talked, ate, worshipped, sang,



learned, asked questions and laughed.

Lloyd

Bennett

welcomed us to College Ave UC.

Pat Gilmore from Grand River Bookstore

hosted a book display. We had soup, sandwiches by



Bullwinkles. Glen Wright and Lynne Dunlop led us in interactive worship of the **theme 'Held and Encouraged'** from pastoral sentences of John and St Paul's letters encouraging individuals and congregations.

LYNNE ALLIN Presentation

Lynne, from Antler River Watershed Region presented Tools and Supports available from the Region, "Good Things To Know."

We've uploaded both the handout of her slide presentation as well as the Powerpoint slide presentation in February folder for CONNECTIONS here:

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq2TbCj4KrkWuCIkw?e=aeS39z>

Questions that were answered: The ChurchHub is a new data base for communities of faith to share information with the wider church. Congregations can partition the cloud storage into public and private sections. **The Profile Worksheets**

are more detailed than the information recorded on ChurchHub. Especially important for search process with attention to financial viability, demographics, and **trends in your congregation** but also important to do annually. All of this material is on the ARW website but we have uploaded the current toolkits here for your convenience. Beware, the toolkits change and it is important to check the ARW website for the later improvements.

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAqjDgok9H2Ym3-k1y?e=1Nf4SJ>

The questions to be answered by each community of faith are: **Why do we gather? Why do we gather here? How to gather? Where do we see partners? What do we need? Lynne stressed that it was important to talk to everybody – both inside and outside the congregation.**

FUTURE DATES OF FRIENDS OF OXFORD

PRESBYTERY: See old friends face to face and make new friends.

- **April 15 2020** place to be announced
- Tentative date June 17. Need to confirm that we meet in January, March, June and September on the 3rd Wednesday



OXFORD PRESBYTERY FACEBOOK PAGE

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

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February -Black History Month

We don't have to look far in Oxford County for stories of Black History. **As we know, the area of Otterville and Ingersoll was one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad.** This safe haven was just one of many provided and promoted by the Quakers.

Slavery existed in Canada for just over 200 years, ending in 1834. Unfortunately, racism lingered for well over another 100 years in our communities.



What a surprise it was for us to discover the restored African Methodist Episcopal Cemetary just north of Otterville. We

have been there several times and always **come away with a feeling that this is a sacred place.** We envision the clapboard church built in 1856 that once stood on the cemetery grounds. On one of our visits we met a local historian who said that after the black community had left the area, all but one of the original gravestones had been taken and put in cement foundations when local barns were being built. The short distance between the small stone markers now indicating the graves, suggests that many of the deaths were children.

While members of this black community were welcomed, racial prejudice was felt. There were restaurants where they could not get a meal. They could not ride the stage on Old Stage Road just because of their skin colour. Baseball teams up to the mid 1930's were segregated. Ralph (Rabbit) Marshal of Ingersoll and John Lewis of Woodstock played on a black team in Chatham in 1915. Charlie Kelly, a black soldier from Ingersoll, got to play on a Canadian army integrated team in England during WWI.

So there is much to think about in this month designated to remember and honour the contribution of those of African decent. **It also serves to remind us of our history of racism and alert us to any racism that may still exist.**

For more information, check out Heather Rennalls' excellent 5 minute video, <https://heathershistoricals.weebly.com/otterville.html>. It is suitable for worship.
GW

GRANDMOTHER'S TEA

Noon till 2 pm, **February 26**

Hosting Community of Faith:

Mount Pleasant UC

669 Mt.Pleasant Rd.

Mt. Pleasant ON

Contact 519-484-2521

Everyone Welcome

**PLEASE NOTE: BRING
YOUR OWN CUP,
PLATE AND CUTLERY**

Potluck luncheon

**Brind your favorite
dish or dessert**

and share in the fun and laughter



Listings of Programs

At Nations Uniting

1652 Chiefswood Rd. Ohsweken, ON

All are Welcome to join in learning and
having good conversation
Bible Study, Sharing Circle, Films

February 18, 2020, 1:30-3:30 pm
'Parallel Path' with Renne Thomas Hill

February 26, 2020 10:--11:30 am
Flim: 'Truth and Reconciliation and The
Legacy of Residential Schools in Canada'.

For March etc Programs
<http://www.nationsuniting.com/> or email
nations.uniting@gmail.com

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Antler River Watershed (ARW) Human Resource Commission

Elected at the ARW Regional Meeting, May 2019, I am a member of the HR Commission and also a **trained Liaison**, I train and support the Search Team of **Communities of Faith who are in the search process, until they call and covenant with a clergy**. My first Community of Faith in Search was **Trinity UC, Ingersoll** who called Rev. Tracy Crick Butler. Her Covenanting Service will take place soon. I am also working with **Knox UC Embro, Dundas St. UC and St. Paul's UC Aylmer**. In each of these Communities of Faith their Search Team has been trained and I am now resourcing them as necessary. I have been named as Liaison to Bayham UC in Strathfordville.

The naming of a Liaison to Communities of Faith takes place at the monthly HR meetings usually by Conference Call.

Other trained Liasons in Oxford are: **Celia Orth for St. David's UC; Rev. Bonnie Pilkey for Mount Elgin UC where Lori Minler DLM, has been appointed.**

This is an amazing opportunity to serve. I enjoy these roles closely related to the work of the former Pastoral Relations Committee of Oxford Presbytery. I now travel into the former Elgin Presbytery, where I lived for many years. **It is exciting to meet new people --- people who have the same love of and dedication to the UC as I do.**

Thank you.

Submitted by Mary Anne Silverthorn

ARW and the HR Commission

The ARW Human Resource Commission (HR) has 9 members (**Chair Olva Kitchen**, Paul Browning, Jim Drummond, Carol Ferguson, Doreen Hewitson, Norm MacPherson, Beth Parsons, **Mary Anne Silverthorn**, Tracy Wygiera).

Members of the ARW Human Resources Commission were **elected at the ARW Regional Meeting**, Port Elgin May, 2019. Members are ordained clergy, DLM, or lay.

The staff resource person is Rev. Diane Blanchard; Pretima Kukadia is the Administration, Communications and Records staff person attached to the HR Commission. HR Governance Handbook outlines the work of the HR Commission. <https://arwrcucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ARWRC2019-01-Governance-Handbook.pdf>.

Passing of Joyce Macpherson

January 24, 2020 Joyce, widow of Rev Glen Macpherson, was a welcoming and



gracious presence in Oxford Presbytery Resource Centre, UCW and basically wherever she was.

Pictured here with former Moderator of UCC, the Very Rev. Jordan Cantwell, and Rev Glen at 2016 meeting of London Conference.

<https://www.brockandvisser.com/obituary/Joyce->

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CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

Annual Lenten Campaign.

**Give it up for the Earth! from
February 26 to April 9, 2020.**

<https://cpj.ca/fortheearth/>

Join this national faith-in-action campaign to increase Canada's contribution to climate justice and be part of the SOLUTION to the global climate crisis!

These dates correspond with the Christian season of Lent, but everyone can participate. **Give it up for the Earth!** expands the conversation about climate change. **Give it up for the Earth!** offers an accessible, tangible, and powerful way to respond to this critical issue by highlighting our individual and societal connections to rising greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and identifying both personal and policy actions. **Give it up for the Earth!** will signal to the government that Canadians – especially Canadian Christians – are prepared to make lifestyle changes to reduce our GHG emissions AND we want our government to match and exceed these actions with policy changes to move us further and faster towards international climate change goals. **In 2020, we are specifically calling on the federal government to invest in just transition to a modern, diversified, green economy.**

The Oxford Climate Response Team with Norwich UC Creation Care Team has postcards available for ANY congregation who asks. **Contact Dawn Jones to get digital materials or postcards** (519 423 6010 or jdjones@xplornet.com). Tech savvy congregations can find e-postcard at <https://cpj.ca/pledge-give-it-earth> or poster at <https://1drv.ms/b/s!AiDNGgSFiqOAq21ntLYqTae8VhDk?e=ajkIoc>.

See Oxford Climate Response Team on Facebook page for more Lenten activities. *From file of Dawn Jones*



Social Justice Fair!

With the re-embodiment of London Conference as Antler River Watershed Region,

the Division of Social Justice has become the **Social Justice Network of Southern Ontario, formally recognized by the Region.**

We would like to **re-unite with all Social Justice workers of the former London Conference.**

We are planning a Social Justice Fair, where we all can get together, re-invigorate, reconnect, and plan how to work together, in all our many fields. Right Relations; Climate Justice; Welcoming Refugees; Anti-Poverty; Affirming; Peace in Palestine-Israel—and more.

We have a date (May 9 from 9.30-3.30) and place (Siloam United Church in London).

There'll be speakers, booths, lots of time for individual conversations, and free-will lunch.



We'll have details of the day's program in the days to come, on the Antler River Watershed Region

website (<https://arwrucc.ca/>) and in the Region newsletter. (to subscribe: <https://arwrucc.us20.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b&id=afa2614952>))

Another way to be kept in the loop: **Just e-mail the Chair of the Region's Social Justice Network, Carey Wagner, at cgwagne@sympatico.ca.**

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<https://arwrucc.ca/>

February newsletter

<https://mailchi.mp/1fda6e8d10cc/february-newsletter?e=0878d108a5>

Or sign up here

<https://arwrucc.us20.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=ee15470ca4eab124ea964929b&id=afa2614952>

ANNUAL MEETING May 29-31

Gentle reminder to elect
Congregational Delegates

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Norwich UC Family Fun Day - Board Games & Café.

Monday, February 17 1:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Lower Hall.

Everyone welcome

Norwich UC March 3 at 4:30 pm,

Messy Church

Norwich UC MOMS and TOTS

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

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Next Publication: Wednesday,

March 11, 2020

SUBMISSIONS DUE:

noon Monday, March 9, 2020

You may share widely.

**To add or remove your name to this
mailing list, email**

oxfconnections@execulink.com

Submissions and feedback welcome.

Past Issues for 2019 stored:

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

LUNCHES AND SUPPERS

ST PAUL'S UC Tillsonburg

EVERY SATURDAY Community
kitchen luncheon from 11:30 -12:30
p.m. Free hot lunch.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE

SUPPER St Paul's UC, Tillsonburg

Feb. 25 from 5-6:30 p.m.

Tickets available at the door: Adults
\$7, \$4 Children, \$20 – Family
Proceeds to Sunday School and Messy
Church

Norwich UC Summer Camp

Program Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 25th, 5:00-6:30 pm

Norwich UC Soup & Sandwich

Luncheon Wednesday February 26,
11:30 am Take-Out; 12 noon sit
down.

St. Paul's United Church

AOTS Men's Club Annual Spaghetti supper

Sat. March 7 from 5-6:30 p.m.

Adults: \$10 and children under 12: \$6

Tickets available from church office.

519 688-0012

