

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 1 of 10

As the Walls Come Down

There are changes in March's issue – some expected and some not. Let us pray for each other and God's mission as we reflect and bless these stories that we might see the possibilities of the Spirit at work.

Maybe we rewrite the Psalms with God as our therapist; celebrate with the UCW their ongoing work with their Annual Meetings; spread the word for Camp Tanner, the small Camp with a big heart which still needs staff. Maybe your interest in history and biblical translations will be triggered with the untold story of a former Minister at Norwich UC. Maybe we plan to attend our next Friends of Oxford event in April; are inspired by the Comings and Goings in our churches. Maybe we reconnect with Operation Sharing, our outreach here in Oxford. Maybe we attend the Grandmother's Tea as part of our Truth and Reconciliation commitment and other programs offered at Nations Uniting.

Maybe our hearts soar and also ache when we read the good as well as the difficult news for our 2 Refugee families. Maybe we encourage someone to go to the Youth Rallies or Confirmation weekends. Maybe we recognize the 'Common Strength' of 2 very different women in agriculture. Maybe we welcome the Antler River Watershed Regional Meetings on March 18 or 19 as well as their Social Justice Fair May 9. Maybe we're glad to be reminded of the Lenten disciplines about creation and a giant free swap meet.

May we always be open to the Spirit.



FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Lenten Reflection

It was Mary's guardian angel who told her to name her son Jesus. Assuming the angel spoke Aramaic, Mary would have heard not Jesus but Yeshua. **Fourteen hundred years earlier the name was Yoshua, the liberator who brought down the walls of Jericho.** St. Paul, writing in Greek, used Iasou. In Latin it was Iasus which gave us the name Jesus. But Jesus remained as Yeshua, or Joshua, the one who freed people and brought down walls. Wall building may be one of the sins from which we need saving.

Some walls are necessary of course. Bullies must be stopped, especially if they are us; viruses need to be contained. But as Robert Frost said in his poem Wall Mending "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out."

Jesus lived up to his name. **Walls between Jew and Samaritan, between men and women, between children and adults, between tax collectors colluding with Rome and right wing Zealots out to destroy Rome, between Roman soldiers and Jews, etc. were brought down.** When Jesus announced good news to the poor he was announcing a new distribution of goods envisioned in the "Year of the Lord."

Lent is a time to bring down walls and set people free. Opportunities abound with Operation Sharing and support of refugees; with the County talking of affordable housing and the elimination of poverty; with the work of reconciliation that goes on with our indigenous sisters and brothers. We have come a long way. We have a long way to go. **It's the work of Jesus. It's our work as well. gw**

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 2 of 10

Communities of Faith care for each other and welcome the opportunity to pray for each other and for our mission in the world.

PRAYER CYCLES

1. Update of former Oxford Presbytery March 11, 2020
(<https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-prayer-March-11-2020>).

- **United Church of Canada – Antler River Watershed**
<https://www.prayercycles.ca/antler-river-watershed26c697c9>

Congregations without called or appointed Ministerial Leadership:

Avondale UC (Tillsonburg) working with Otterville UC; Hickson UC, Norwich UC, Oxford Centre-Curries Pastoral Charge, Sweaburg - West Oxford Pastoral Charge, Foldens UC, Burgessville UC.

Knox UC Embro has called Rev Susan Cole effective September 1, 2020.

Dundas St UC is searching for a Youth Minister and Minister as Rev Bonnie Pilkey is retiring May 1, 2020.

Innerkip UC is looking for short-term Ministerial Leadership while Rev Karen Low is on Long Term Medical Leave.

The Cluster (Sweaburg, West Oxford and Foldens) has been disbanded.

PRAYERS for our sisters and brothers as they consider how they might SHARE Ministerial Leadership; CLUSTER with Pulpit Supply; STEWARD their property.

Prayer Chain: In February, there was some interest shown for a Prayer Chain for situations and/or people in our lives. Some may want to know what it looks like and time commitment etc. It will be what it needs to be for those called to this important work. **Please contact the editors if you are interested.**

Spiritual Connections

The Psalms Revisited.

Many of you will know the Monty Python skit where a young man walks into an office looking for an argument. The receptionist directs him to room 12 where he meets Mr. Barnam played by John Cleese. They proceed to argue.



It was a reminder of the Psalms in ancient temple worship. When you went to the temple to pray you would choose the Psalm that best represented your need.

According to Old Testament scholar Walter Bruggemann, if someone seething with anger and about to punch someone, came to the temple, that person would be directed to the area where Psalm 58 was being recited; a Psalm where the author asks God to do the punching. **It was anger management with God as therapist.** If someone was feeling God had abandoned them, they would go to the Psalm 22 area etc. **One had 150 choices with one third being Psalms of lament, disappointment and loss.**

These poem/prayers embraced the whole human condition. Whether your life was **high with gratitude or brought low with grief you could share those feeling with God within a like minded support group.**

Can we recover that tradition? Do we want to? If "Yes" then find a modern translation of the Psalms – or write one. **Select a Psalm that reflects the need of the congregation that week, come out from behind the pulpit and read the Psalm with purpose and passion. It may just unlock the healing, or the hallelujahs embedded in those ancient texts.** GW

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 3 of 10



UP COMING DATES FOR OXFORD COUNTY UCW 2020

March 18, 2020 9:30 am

Oxford Annual General Meeting

St Pauls' UC Tillsonburg

Download their beautiful Poster at

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

April 18, 2020 9:30 am

The 58TH Annual Gathering Antler River Watershed UCW at Trinity UC Ingersoll Theme is **'Hands Across the Water'**.

Find registration material and agenda at <https://tinyurl.com/UCW-material-for-April-18-2020>

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

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

Knox UC PORK BBQ

April 8

116 Kincardine street Embro

Adults \$20.00,

child 12 yrs and under \$10

email: knoxembro@gmail.com for more information

<https://tinyurl.com/Embro-Pork-BBQ>

CAMP TANNER NEWS

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Save and register before March 31, 2020 for Early Bird Pricing! Visit our website or call our registrar, Sandra (number listed below), for more details.



STAFF APPLICATIONS EXTENDED

Camp Tanner is hiring Counsellors, CITs, Lifeguards, Directors, a Cleaner and a First Aid Support. Applicants should visit our website for more information. Applications have been **extended to March 21, 2020** which is also the deadline for staff scholarship applications.

Visit our Website:

www.camptanner.ca

SPRING CONCERT FUNDRAISER

Our Spring Concert Fundraiser (to support staff scholarships) will be held on **Friday, April 17, 2020 at 7:00 pm at College Avenue United Church in Woodstock.** Performers include Allison Lupton, Shane Cook, Kyle Waymouth and the Curbstone a Capella Quintet. Tickets are \$20 and include a light refreshment.



For Registration:

Sandra Schurman 519-475-4833

For Event Tickets:

Margaret Dykeman 519-532-4875

Sheila Greason 519-349-2768

Download Posters for Camper Registration, Hiring, Spring Concert Fundraiser here:

<https://tinyurl.com/Camp-Tanner-posters>

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 4 of 10

The Celebration of **NORWICH UC** **200th year continues and reveals...**

Historians are fascinating people who rise with glee at a 200-year celebration. Revered historian, Marie Avey of Norwich UC was astounded and delighted when she heard back from former minister Rev. David who served Norwich UC from 1981-1988 and was active in the wider church and Canadian Bible Society. It appears the Reverend David, as he has become known, has been discovered.

In 1959, as a young seminary student at McGill, David wrote a 3 page letter to the head of the Revised Standard Version biblical translation team challenging the RSV's use of the word "homosexual" in 1 Corinthians 6:9. 10 years later, the NRSV changed the translation to read 'sexual perverts'. **The head of the translation Committee admitted that they had poorly translated 2 Greek words and were wrong.**

In an attempt to discover how the Bible became Anti-gay, interested parties searched the archives of Yale University in 2018, discovering this unique correspondence. This past fall, November 2019, Reverend David made a presentation in Seattle Washington on **"The Reformation Project" on the subject of Christian faith and the LGBTQ+ Sexual Orientation.**

You will want to check out the rest of this fascinating story at

<http://canyonwalkerconnections.com/forging-a-sacred-weapon-how-the-bible-became-anti-gay/> which also includes a video of an interview with him.

Sure, history is not only exciting, but you never know where it will take you! MM

FRIENDS OF OXFORD

See old friends face to face and make new friends. Eat, listen to each other's stories and Bible stories, sing together and generally be open to the spirit.

Make CONNECTIONS.

FUTURE DATES:

April 15, 2020

Note Location:

St David's UC,

190 Springbank Ave, Woodstock.

Supper + Table Groups + guest, Kevin Steeper (Regional Pastoral Support Minister for Antler River Watershed)

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Cost: \$10.00 for soup and sandwich
Or bring your own bag lunch.

Please contact Lloyd Bennett

pastorlloyd@collegeave.ca

to say you are coming; need supper or not; vegetarian; your community of faith and any dietary restrictions.

Once you order a meal, we request that you pay for it, even if you are unable to attend.

All are welcome

- **Tentative date June 17.** Planning ideas and volunteers welcome. Need to confirm a previous suggestion that we meet in January, March, June and September on the 3rd Wednesday.



**OXFORD PRESBYTERY
FACEBOOK PAGE**

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

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 5 of 10

COMINGS AND GOINGS...

LORI MINLER AT MT ELGIN AND NEWARK UC

The editors asked Lori Minler to write about her excitement in her new position.

When I first started in ministry I worked hard on a five year plan (I was young and idealistic!), and although that was many years ago, I still remember a wise friend gently saying to me, "Don't forget to leave room for God to do God's work." More than two decades later, those words still resonate with me, and I have been surprised to see where God has led me through the years.



In January of this year, I began serving at Mt. Elgin United Church. Although it has only been two months, I am getting myself settled into new faces, new routines and new relationships.

At a time when we are facing difficult times in the church world, it is good to be reminded that no matter where God may call us, what we will find is good and faithful people who continue to serve the church and live out their faith in their chosen communities.

In the short time that I have been at Mt. Elgin I have seen that faith lived out through honest conversations, tears shed, prayers shared, hopes and dreams given voice, fears faced, joy and laughter. We were created to be in relationship and in community, and I look forward to continuing to develop both strong relationships and healthy communities with both Mt. Elgin and Newark United Church, and to see where God may be leading us all.

COMINGS AND GOING...cont'd

Some of you may already know by now, **Rev. Jane Van Patter** has announced her retirement October 31, 2020! St. David's UC, Woodstock and Oxford has been blessed with her many years of service.

Rev. Cordell Parsons has resigned from The Olde West Oxford UC Cluster. Parsons served **Foldens, Sweaburg, West Oxford and Burgessville.**

Rev Susan Cole has been called to serve Knox UC, Embro, in September. She is a native of Oxford County and it will be good to see her round and about.

COVENANTING SERVICES:

Sunday, March 22 at 10:30 am
Covenanting Service the Antler River Watershed Region with **Rev Tracy Crick-Butler and with Trinity UC,** Ingersoll during morning worship at 10:30 am.

Sunday, April 5 at 10:00 am
Covenanting Service of Mount Elgin UC with the Antler River Watershed Region and of Mt Elgin UC with **Lori Minler** during morning worship at 10:00 am.

Picture taken on the March 8 Covenanting Service of the Antler River Watershed Region with Nancy Vandenberghe, Student, Designated Lay Minister and Hebron UC.



CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 6 of 10



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

Operation Sharing issues financial request

Operation Sharing would, first, like to **thank all the organizations, businesses, churches and individuals who have supported us through the years.** Your contributions have made it possible for our charitable organization to run a variety of programs including the Food for Friends food card program and the Inn homeless shelter, which runs nightly at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church.

However, Operation Sharing has come upon lean times – at the end of 2019 the organization had **\$90,000 less in the bank compared to the end of 2018.** Some of the reasons for this are unknown to us and some are known – some grants did not come through, for example. Donations at the grocery tills for Food for Friends are also down. Times are tough all over. But still, we are making a public appeal for financial help so we can continue to deliver our vital programs.

Financial donations for Operation Sharing can be forwarded to its Treasurer at P.O. Box 20081, Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 8X8. Thank you for your support.

Submitted by Eric Schmiedl, Operation Sharing Director of Print Media

Oxford Insight: Check out the February newsletter of Operation Sharing, (<https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-Insight-February>) for a summary of our **local housing 'crisis'**. In the County of Oxford there is a need for housing not just for homeless people but for a 'continuum' of housing issues up to medium income individuals!

(Globally, the United Nations has a Special Rapporteur on the right to housing. **The Shift** is a new worldwide movement to reclaim and realize the fundamental human right to housing – to move away from housing as a place to park excess capital, to housing as a place to live in dignity, to raise families and participate in community.) *

http://www.unhousingrapp.org/the-shift?fbclid=IwAR0bRD52llgyfU0j_eMtivQh4-h2QIWC7Kuwia

OPERATION SHARING **2019 ANNUAL MEETING**

Thursday, March 19, 7:00 pm

College Ave. UC, Woodstock.

Potluck at 5:30 pm.

Membership Dues of \$5.00

Hard copies of the Annual Report available
Annual awards handed out.

Open to the public



We care that people are homeless in cold weather. We care that they also have more personal difficulties. We are grateful that Operation Sharing with our support and the County of Oxford runs a **year-round homeless shelter in Oxford, the Inn**, where people get help, an evening meal and breakfast. Bless Old St Paul's Anglican Church who have made space available, (see this issue of Oxford Insight <https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-Insight-June-2018>.) Note the adjacent article requesting financial donations. MM

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 7 of 10

GRANDMOTHER'S TEA

Noon till 2 pm, March 25

Hosting Community of Faith:

Mohawk Chapel

**Address: 301 Mohawk St.
Brantford, ON**

telephone: 519-756-0240

Everyone Welcome

Potluck luncheon

Bring your favorite
dish or dessert
and share in the fun
and laughter



**NOTE: Please bring your own cup,
plate and cutlery.**

Nations Uniting
Sharing Centre

Listings of Programs

1652 Chiefswood Rd. Ohsweken, ON

All are Welcome to join in learning and
having good conversation

Bible Study, Sharing Circle, Films

March 16: 10:00 am -noon **Sharing Circle**

March 18: 1:30-3:30 pm **Bible Study**

March 25: 10:00-11:30 am, **First Contact
(Part 2) Episode 2**

For April and ongoing Programs see
<http://www.nationsuniting.com/> or email
nations.uniting@gmail.com

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

Norwich UC March Break Camp

Mon 16th – Fri 20th

Norwich UC April 7 at 4:30 pm,

Messy Church

Norwich UC MOMS and TOTS

each Wednesday morning in

Parlour from 9:00 – 10:30 am

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>

Confirmation Retreat

Five Oaks, April 3 - 5

Colour Outside the Lines, Unravel
Faith, Resurrect Hope and Create
Radical Beauty on Earth with Ruth
Noble, Alana Martin and Kathy
Douglas.

A retreat to support & enrich the
confirmation process of your
congregation. For both youth &
leaders. Come, [share the journey!](#)
For information email [Kathy
Douglas](#).

**Have a burning desire to write an
article for our Newsletter?**

Submissions welcome!

Contact Glen or Marg, the editors,

oxfconnections@execulink.com

ETONIA UC Spaghetti Suppers

101 Hwy 2

Wednesdays, April 1 and May 6

5:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Adults \$12; Children to 12, \$5;

preschoolers free

ALL YOU CAN EAT

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 8 of 10

Update on 2 Refugee Families

Thank you so much for the response to our appeal for funds that was made in the Fall of 2019. Some of you continue to give which is so appreciated and needed.

Sara Temnewu, daughter Salem, 22, and sons Fithawi 18 and Naod, 13 are doing well in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Salem and Fithawi have found part time employment by embroidering colourful borders on the white cotton garments worn by women.

You may remember that the application of



Freweini Mabrahtu and her family was turned down. All our attempts to reverse that decision failed. Despite our pleas to Freweini to stay in

the refugee program while we re-applied, **Freweini has decided that she and her daughters are unwilling to face the dangers and hardship in Khartoum for another 2 to 3 years. It would mean waiting in a dangerous political situation with little food, her children out of school and no work for her.** She has asked that her son Bistrat, 20, be sponsored while she and her two daughters move to Uganda to find a life for themselves there. **We are completing the application to re-apply for Bistrat.** Almost immediately, Habte Zekerias, their co-sponsor in London, since Freweini and her two daughters were not coming, **asked if we could sponsor two of his nephews who had fled Eritrea for Ethiopia. The OURS committee will meet April 5th to consider this.**

*Glen Wright, Member of Oxford United
Refugee Sponsorship Committee*

An Unique Kenyan experience

Women are the key to ending world hunger! A powerful message for International Women's Day.

27 years ago, Folden's resident,



Kathryn Mayberry (far right) formerly of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, (CFGB) encouraged women in **the Ugali Growing Project as a Fundraiser of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.** **Suzanne Stoop** (left) of Mt Elgin organized this year's Dinner at Trinity UC in Ingersoll. She welcomed guests saying **'Kenya is the 3rd largest exporter of fresh cut roses'** - which graced the tables. It was a tasty authentic Kenyan feast. **Carol Thiessen**, (centre) Senior Policy Advisor, with Canadian Foodgrains Bank introduced the film **'Common Strength'**

(<https://foodgrainsbank.ca/campaigns/woman-to-woman/>). Globally, over 800 million people face hunger today. The number is rising due to climate change and violence.

Kenya is one of the CFGB projects teaching zero till, permanent soil cover and diversifying crop production. **'Common Strength' is a compelling video**, of the common bond between **Colleen who farms 17,000 acres in Manitoba and Lucy who farms 2 acres in Kenya. Why women?** Research shows that women sacrifice themselves so their families can eat; long term change comes from empowering women and **if women farmers had the same access to resources as men, their yields would increase by 20-30%.** Men have sought better paying work off the farm.

Hunger is on the rise. To help: Donate. Pray. Learn. Advocate. check out <https://tinyurl.com/harvest-letters-of-CFGB>

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 9 of 10

CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

Annual Lenten Campaign.

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

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

Check out their website for other materials. The Oxford Climate Response Team with Norwich UC Creation Care Team still has postcards available for congregations. **Contact Dawn Jones to get digital materials or postcards** (519 423 6010 or jdjones@xplornet.com).

Follow the Facebook Page of Oxford Climate Response Team for daily Lenten practices related to creation – both our use and appreciation of it. Posted by Dawn Jones.

https://www.facebook.com/Oxford-Climate-Response-Team-1864170697163042/?ref=your_pages

Rabbi Richard Address, D.Min

**Our Long and Winding Road
Seeking our Path in the Longevity
Revolution**

Siloam United Church, London
Saturday, April 4, 2:00 - 9:00 pm

Rabbi Address is a leading authority on Boomer and Older Adult Ministry. He hosts the weekly radio show "Boomer Generation Radio" in Philadelphia and speaks regularly on issues related to baby boomers, aging and how Judaism can impact our lives as we age.

Download the [poster and registration form](#). Contact [Siloam United Church](#) by [email](#) or phone at 519-455-9201.

Rabbi Address was well received at the Boomer Conference at Siloam UC in 2019. Register before March 27, 2019.



<https://arwrcucc.ca/>

February newsletter

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

Or sign up here

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

Regional Meetings

March 18 or 19

"Wait! WHAT?"

[Click here to register for one of the meetings.](#)

The Antler River Watershed Regional Council staff is holding four gatherings for Ministry Personnel, Regional Council Lay Representatives and anyone interested in the Regional Council.

**ANNUAL MEETING May 29-31
Gentle reminder to elect
Congregational Delegates**

ReuseApalooZaha

Saturday, April 25 8:00 am 'til 12 pm

A GIANT FREE SWAP MEET

Details here www.reuseapaloozaha.ca

**At the Embro Community Hall
in Zorra Township**

Your Poster available at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Reuseapalooza-April-25-2020>

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Vol 2 Issue 3

March 11, 2020

Page 10 of 10

SOCIAL JUSTICE FAIR



**Antler River
Watershed
Region's Network**



Uniting social justice activists in the Region to re-invigorate, re-connect, plan.

May 9, 2020 –9:30 am –3:30 pm

Siloam United Church

1240 Fanshawe Park Rd E, London,

Topics and Speakers

9:45 Welcome/ Land Acknowledgement

10:00 Housing Crisis/Income Inequality –
Sister Joan Atkinson, CSJ

11:00 Palestine/Israel Human Rights –
Marianna Harris

11:30 – 1:30 Lunch

12:00 Indigenous Stories – Elder Geraldine
Robertson and Dwayne Cloes -

1:00 Women for Change – Kate Graham

2:00 Climate Justice – Skylar Franke ED of
London Environment Network

Display Tables

Climate Action London

Bridges out of Poverty

Kairos

Broadview

Fridays for Future

Kings College Social Justice

Food Security & Food Justice in Canada

BDS (Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions)

UNJPPI (Palestine/Israel Network)

Immigration

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Indigenous table

UCW - Women for Change

YOU – Youth Opportunities Limited

LGTBQ

Find poster and biographies at
<https://tinyurl.com/Social-Justice-Fair-May-9>

**E-mail the Chair of the Region's Social
Justice Network, Carey Wagner, at
cqwagne@sympatico.ca**

CONNECTIONS – News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

Next Publication: Wednesday,
April 8, 2020

SUBMISSIONS DUE:

Noon Monday, April 6, 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://tinyurl.com/Oxford-CONNECTIONS-2019>

