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

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#### **HEALING FAULT LINES**

The fault lines of racism, indigenous rights, care in nursing homes, wage disparity, safety of essential workers including migrant workers etc. have been exposed in this pandemic. The fault lines are complex and interconnected to each other and to ever-present climate change.

We imagine a safety net which catches everyone and all creation.

We seek resilience and strength in our spiritual disciplines.

We share our stories of grace round about us.

- Wonderful and unique celebrations of a New Beginning, 50 years Ordained Ministry, Graduation from Emmanuel, and a welcoming home.
- Gratitude for the innovative leadership at Operation Sharing, Camp Tanner, Five Oaks and in our congregations as our institutions live out their unique potential.
- Prayer Cycles and Prayer Chain
- For Such a Time as This healing poems/lines from poems from poets and ordinary folks. Life changes us and our words.
- See page 11 for details of worship services in Oxford





# FOOD FOR THE SOUL Canada Day Like No Other

The CBC announced it would be "Canada Day Like No Other". It was. **We can blame or credit Covid-19 and the "Black Lives** 

Matter" movement for that. Canada was more or less shut down. Parliament Hill was



practically empty. All Canada Day parades had been cancelled.

The CBC in not being able to cover the usual Parliament Celebrations filled the day with interviews; but not just with the Canadians who found this country wonderful, but with dissident voices: the Jamaican student who feared being stopped by police on his way to or from classes; the interview with Wade from Vancouver Island who was of Indigenous, Chinese and Caucasian heritage, who said that his Chinese grandfather had come to Canada in 1920 to find that he was not welcome, except within the Indigenous community; an interviews with a young indigenous woman who found Canada Day sad because it marked the beginning of the colonial period. Then there were the parades in a half dozen major cities. These were parades protesting racism; parades that called for more action on behalf of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It was a day that celebrated not just what was great about Canada, but another narrative was given a voice, namely what in Canada is broken and what needs fixing.

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The Bible is replete with stories of the dominant narrative aettina rudely interrupted by someone giving voice to the marginalized. God's vision community was one without marginalized people; a community where they would be brought to the centre. It happened at least symbolically on Canada Day 2020. Somewhere in Halifax a mother of African or Indigenous descent living in an apartment to small and too hot, said to her 10 year old daughter. "Grab your flipflops, Honey! We are going to a parade. And this year, we are going to be in it!" GW

#### MORE VOICES NEEDED:



Hebron UC is looking for some copies of More Voices. Please arrange with Sandra Stock <rsstock@execulink.com>

#### FRIENDS OF OXFORD

In time, we'll gather. In the meantime, let us know how you are. oxfconnections@gmail.com



https://www.grandriverbooks.ca/open and selling books online



Keeping in Touch: News for UCW Groups

Keeping in Touch folder has latest news and updates from UCC

Women National President, Beulah Hayley

#### **PRAYER CYCLES**

- Oxford United Ministries updated https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-Prayer-July-8-2020
- United Church of Canada Antler River Watershed

https://www.prayercycles.ca/antlerriverwatershed

To Join Regional Prayer Rooms
Beginning July 4, you are invited to join a
facilitated half hour on-line time of prayer
(modeled after the Prayer Room at GC43), to
pray for every pastoral charge by name.
https://www.prayercycles.ca/

## Ministerial Leadership sought for congregations in Oxford:

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

**Innerkip UC –** seeks short-term Ministerial Leadership during medical leave of Rev Karen Low.

#### **CHANGES IN OXFORD:**

Congregation of **Curries UC** is selling their building.

## New Facebook page!

for

#### **Oxford United Ministries**

https://www.facebook.com/OxfordUCMinistries/

NOW Posting CONNECTIONS

LIKE US and FOLLOW US

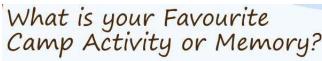
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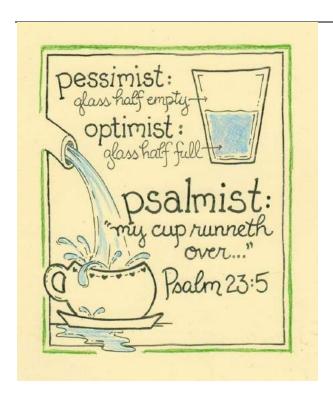
Follow on
Facebook or
Instagram
@CampTannerInc
for fun activities

throughout the summer! Hey Campers!





Each week of "camp" this summer we will be posting an activity to enter you in a draw to win a Camp Tanner T-shirt. Like the Camp Tanner Page, share this post, and comment your answer to the question to be entered to win. We will let winners know each week before we post the next challenge/activity







#### **PRAYER CHAIN**

Contact Prayer Chain Leader Olga McKellar for on-going prayer concerns.

o.mckellar@sympatico.ca

## HOW DID COVID19 SWALLOW SUMMER 2020?

Whatever became of the Sunday School Picnics this year? What happened to the church community gardens? How many Garden Weddings did you hear about or Family Reunions?

Camps Tanner and Bimini were no longer highlights of fun and learning and safe friendships, no longer summer jobs for teens who learn to lead, to care and to counsel. Day camps and Vacation Bible Schools were blotted out.

Even the comfort of community services of remembrance disappeared.

For sure, COVID19 Swallowed Summer 2020 for most Church communities in our area.

PRAYER is not something you say, it is something you do to help you live out your faith and honour your God. So, think about the effect of this virus on your Church Community. Thank God for any little bites left of summer programs in your congregation. Think of how you can help keep the people you know in your congregation in touch, assured of friendship and care. Resolve to do whatever God lays on your heart and pray for strength to do it faithfully.

O God, on whom we count when we are in need, remind us that as your people we are called to feed your sheep. Help us to faithfully tend our communities of faith. Olga McKellar

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## COMINGS AND GOINGS AROUND OXFORD...

## A WARM WELCOME TO Rev Sherpherd Munikwa to Dundas St UC and to Oxford

On June 27th, after a 4-day drive from

the Carmanville
Pastoral Charge in
Newfoundland, the
Reverend
Sherpherd Munikwa
and his family
arrived in
Woodstock, Because



of the Covid virus Sherpherd (pronounced Shepherd), his wife Adline and their daughters Inzwirashe Grace, Kupakwashe Rejoice and Tovimbanashe Joice had to self isolate for 14 days. **Dundas St. United is looking forward to having the Rev. Sherpherd begin his ministry**. Originally from Zimbabwe, he was 6 years (or as he says 7 winters) in Newfoundland before being called to Dundas St. He has been active in the wider church and is currently working on his D.Min. through St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon. **Welcome Rev. Sherpherd and your family; we can hardly wait to get to know you better.** 

Submitted by Rev. Margaret Trapnell

## **CONGRATULATIONS 50 years**



Rev. Ken Jackson
ordained on May 31,
1970 in Brandon,
Manitoba. Ayr News, June

3, 2020 (thanks Sandra Stock.)

Back in 1975, five years into my life as an ordained minister, the United Church celebrated its fiftieth year. The catchphrase at the time was "A Brief Halt at Mile Fifty". (It wasn't until two years later that road signs converted to metric.) The implication was, of course, that significant dates didn't mark achievement;

rather, they were merely **signposts on a continuing journey**. In a sense, upon reaching fifty years as an ordained minister, my feelings are similar.

My official status now is "Retired Minister", although I view the phrase as somewhat oxymoronic. People with iobs retire; people with callings don't. If you've been called to serve, there is no point in time when you are "uncalled". As long as, by God's grace, I have the health and strength to continue actively in ministry, I hope that I will, and I am blessed to be able to serve the wonderfully supportive people of Willis United Church. I certainly don't feel like a retired minister, although God knows, there are times when I have felt like a tired one. But that's been true for the last fifty years.

Fifty years.

Fifty years since that warm spring day on Sunday, May 31, 1970 when the then-Manitoba Conference ordained a group of us in Brandon, Manitoba. It seemed at the time a completion to nine long years of spiritual struggle and training, from the time when I had been accepted as a candidate for the ministry. But it was merely another beginning, as every end is.

Fifty years.

I could ask, "Where has the time gone?"

But time doesn't "go". It doesn't disappear, as smoke disappears from a fire. Time accumulates. It accumulates in terms of memories, experiences and wisdom. I have been blessed with the first two in abundance, even if at times I may wonder whether I have accumulated so much of the third.

Fifty years have been marked by many people in many different circumstances. My own "milestone" is no more special. I note it and move on, not knowing where my journey will end. Or where it will begin. Rev Ken Jackson

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CONGRATULATIONS JESS! We join Trinity United Church Ingersoll in congratulating Jessica Swance on completing her Master of Divinity at Emmanuel College in May 2020.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

These words have been ringing in my ears over the last 13 years, from the day I stepped out of the high school in Ingersoll for the last time, to the day where in my living room, my partner hosted an unofficial, official graduation ceremony for my completion of Seminary at



Emmanuel College. Especially now, the words of Jeremiah have been providing me comfort and reassurance for my future ministry prospects in this time of Covid and uncertainty.

I began my ministry, not the moment when I gave my first choppy sermon in front of a congregation, but the first time I was brought to the front of Salford United Church. I was baptised over the water that my family and community had prayed over and blessed, marking my journey and relationship with Creator, as well as the journey my community would walk with me. It is because of my family, my Oxford/ London Conference community that I believed in myself and developed a relationship with the

land and the God who created all that lives and breathes in it. From summer camp at Pearce Williams to the Swell youth services, Bible readings in church, public speaking after my mission trip at a young age, all of these have served as building blocks to my faith, my journey with Creator and the love that I have felt from the encouragers around me.

When I left my small town and moved to Toronto to be closer to my partner and school, I felt a longing for my close community and the people who impacted my life so much. Each time I come home I am reminded as to why I love ministry so much, because I have the best community support I can ask for.

So, as I take another tender step along my journey, I cling to the hope of the future and the plans Creator has for me and my family. Covid has slowed down my student placement opportunity at this time, but I know that there is work for me to do when the time is right. Right now, my work and ministry is with my family and supporting my partner's ministry as she deals with the impact of Covid on the homeless population in Toronto.

God is good, all the time.

All the time, God is good.

Thank you everyone for encouraging, loving and impacting my faith journey this far. Please keep praying and encouraging because we all know, once you are in ministry, you will always be in ministry!

Love and Blessings,

Jess Swance

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### PRINCIPLES OF A JUST RECOVERY

https://350.org/just-recovery/



The COVID-19 global pandemic calls for a united global response which ensures a just recovery and transition to a better future for those most in need in the wake of this crisis.

350.org is an international movement of ordinary people working to end the age of fossil fuels and build a world of community-led renewable energy for all.

Although not an initiative of the United Church, it is likely that General Council will be signing on to endorse #JustRecovery Very soon.

Every day we make choices. Never have the choices we make been so important to shape our society, economy, health and climate for decades to come.

## There are 5 principles to be upheld at every level:

- **1.** Put people's health first, no exceptions.
- **2.** Provide economic relief directly to the people.
- **3.** Help our workers and communities, not corporate executives.
- **4.** Create resilience for future crises.
- **5.** Build solidarity and community across borders do not empower authoritarians.

If <u>you</u> can support COVID19 #JustRecovery, please sign the open letter at https://350.org/justrecovery/#signletter

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#### OXFORD UNITED **REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)**

## **Congratulations Azieb,** Welcome Home.

Some of you will remember the Zekarias family, now of London. As you know, we are currently sponsoring Abrhazion's sister Sara and her family, as well as cousin Bisrat and nephews Mussie and Kidane.

The first Canadian home for the Zekarias family was in Woodstock. This picture was taken at St. David's United Church five years after the family arrived from



Eritrea. You may not recognize Azieb (far right) now since the picture was taken 26 years ago. Azieb graduated



from College as a Registered Practical Nurse. She had been working at nursing homes in Lucknow and Wingham until the Covid-19 pandemic lead to staff being restricted to

work at one facility only.

Azieb is now one of the RPN's at People Care in Tavistock. Although Tavistock is in Perth County, so many of the residents there will be from Oxford.

Congratulations Azieb on choosing People Care. We are so pleased and proud to welcome you; to know that you are on the staff at one of Tavistock's Long-Term Care Facilities and are back close to Oxford, your first Canadian home. GW

**Editor's note**: For ease of reference, all OURS stories published the CONNECTIONS are stored online at:

https://tinvurl.com/OURS-Committee-2020



https://www.operationsharing.ca/

#### **Bullwinkle's Eatery and Hospitality Training Centre in Woodstock**

Takeout lunches available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (from noon to 1 pm)

Running temporarily out of College Avenue United Church. Tuesdays and Thursday, lunch is minimum of \$1; Wednesdays, lunches are free.

**PLEASE NOTE: VOLUNTEERS** urgently needed for food preparation.

#### **Oxford County: Food for Friends**

Please remember to give your 25 cents each time you shop at supporting grocery stores in Woodstock and Ingersoll.

#### The Inn

The Inn homeless shelter, serving all of Oxford County, is at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock. Free of charge for those 16 and up. It operates nightly from 7:30 p.m.

Mail financial donations for Operation Sharing to Treasurer of Operation Sharing, P.O. Box 20081, Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 8X8.

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## NEW SUMMER DAY CAMP PROGRAM

Their recently launched summer day camp has required some changes for a new set up, increased

sanitization, and gathering all the supplies required.

Extra supplies are needed to avoid cross contact.



Game Supplies: Hula hoops, Pylons, sports balls, Frisbees, Long ropes
Craft Supplies: Beads and bracelet making things, Markers, Tape,
Construction Paper, Shoe Boxes, Toilet
Paper Rolls, Straws, Popsicle Sticks,
Stencils, Decorations (pompoms, foam shapes, stickers), Glue sticks, Paint brushes, Non toxic paints, Paper plates and cups, Tissue paper, Elastics, Sidewalk Chalk

**Other:** Bug catching nets, Plastic Bottles (any size, lots needed), Smore supplies (Marshmallows, graham crackers, peanut free chocolate), Lots of duct tape, Bug spray and sunscreen, Newspapers, Small marshmallows, Spaghetti noodles, Party supplies

Please contact Hospitality@FiveOaks.on.ca to arrange.

Five Oaks and our Acorn Adventure Campers thank you!

**Volunteer opportunities** are still available at Five Oaks. If interested, e-mail <a href="mailto:hospitality@fiveoaks.on.ca">hospitality@fiveoaks.on.ca</a> or call 519-442-3212.



The Kitchen at Five Oaks is now preparing delicious take-home meals. Available dates vary.

Details available here: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/fiveoakscentre">https://www.facebook.com/fiveoakscentre</a>

**Five Oaks appreciates your ongoing support.** If you are able to donate, at this time, you can do so by e-transfer to <u>finance@fiveoaks.on.ca</u> or by cheque sent by regular mail to Five Oaks, 1 Bethel Road, RR 3, Paris ON N3L 3E3.



In a recent
Facebook post,
our Moderator,
Richard Bott
confessed that it
is not easy for
him to wear a
mask. But he
does it to protect
others and
himself.
Check out his
compelling
personal story
on page 11.

https://tinyurl.com/Masks-and-Moderatork

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#### In the Mask Lane



There may be another reason in this Covid-19 era for wearing a mask. It could make you look younger. Our daughter went to the LCBO to buy

**a bottle of wine**. When she arrived at the check-out and reached into her backpack for her wallet, **the cashier asked for ID**.

In defence of the cashier, I can't imagine a job where one of your tasks is **to discern the 17 and 18-year-old customers from those who are 19.** That is difficult enough, but then to do this where everyone wears a mask is to increase the difficulty ten-fold.

However, even with the mask, to be mistaken for an under 19 teenager, was for our daughter, a compliment. **July happens to be her birthday month. She will be 56**. *GW* 

## **GATHERING** for Worship –

Norwich UC Licensed Lay Leader, Dawn Jones has joined the ranks of those on YouTube. Already YouTube are Kintore/Brooksdale UC, Mt Elgin UC, Peace UC, Trinity UC – Ingersoll, Westminster UC-Thamesford.

During the Pandemic, the Provincial Government is trying to push through BILL 175 which guts existing home and community care legislation, dismantles public oversight of home care and sets the stage for increased privatization of Healthcare. If you are concerned call your Member of Provincial Parliament.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE -Online Resources

- United Church of Canada https://www.united-church.ca/
- Facebook page United Church of Canada

https://www.facebook.com/UnitedChurchCda/

- Facebook page Antler River
   Watershed Regional Council
   https://www.facebook.com/groups/ar
   wrcucc/
- Facebook page Oxford United Ministries (former Oxford Presbytery ) <a href="https://www.facebook.com/OxfordUCM">https://www.facebook.com/OxfordUCM</a> inistries/
- KAIROS
   https://www.kairoscanada.org/
- Citizens for Public Justice, www.cpj.ca

**Mandate Magazine** United for God's Mission (not available online but subscriptions available from UCRD)



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#### FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS MM

Summer - the lazy, hazy days of summer. **But. Not. This. Summer**. This COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fault lines of climate change, racism, indigenous rights, housing and care for seniors and the homeless, public health care, neo-liberal economics, essential workers – both here and migrant - in the life we called normal.

Still we imagine a safety net which catches everyone; a just recovery for the planet and ourselves. It is a lot. I'm often surprised by unexpected grace in poetry. (Only bits of published poems are quoted below but all can be found on the internet.)

**Listening to CBC's Q on June 10**. Tom Powers interviewed Alice Quinn who recently published an anthology of poetry of the experience of COVID 19<sup>1)</sup>. A few poets read their work. I was deeply moved hearing Edward Hirsch read his poem <u>Eight People</u>, written after a shocking week of isolation in Brooklyn when 8 people died in his neighbourhood in New York.<sup>2)</sup>

#### Eight People by Edward Hirsch

Eight people died on my block ... and I didn't know what it meant ... locked up with the relentless bad news...

... I didn't know if God, too, had gone into hiding and sheltered in place.

Together in a Sudden Strangeness: America's Poets Respond to the Pandemic Novel June 2020

https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-50q/clip/15781339-full-episode-angie-thomaswinnifred-jong-online-column-alice-quinn-10062020 at 1:01:07

#### When Women Were Birds - Terry Tempest Williams

· · · · · ·

The birds still remember what we have forgotten, that the world is meant to be celebrated."

Here in Oxford, Glen Wright finds grace in everyday things.

#### Robin Rap - Glen Wright

I awaken too early; I simply can't sleep. I go get the paper, And that's where we meet.

I'm in the doorway; The robin's in the tree. He is filling up the darkness With tra-la-loo tra-la-lee.

Why sing in the darkness When the night is so long? Why don't you just wait And celebrate the dawn?

"Because from darkness comes hope," Was his answer for me. Which is my translation Of tra-la-loo, tra-la-lee. Glen Wright

On June 16, saxophonist Rev Peter Woods<sup>3)</sup> of McKay United Church (Ottawa) hosted "Music and Meditation – Kindness of Jazz", with former Moderator the Very Rev. Gary Patterson who curated poems<sup>4)</sup> with the theme 'Uncertain Times'. These poems evoke spiritual resilience and strength. Below are a few.

- Rev Peter Woods jazz saxophone at London Conference years ago in Mitchell.
- The Rev Gary Patterson titled his selection of poems <u>Uncertain Times</u>. Read by Carolyn Sutherland. Rev Peter Woods on Saxophone. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/peter.woods.9275/videos/10160016141068345/">https://www.facebook.com/peter.woods.9275/videos/10160016141068345/</a>

#### Not Knowing - Leonard Cohen

Not knowing where to go, I go to you. Not knowing where to turn, I turn to you .... Defeated by silence, here is a place where the silence is more subtle... And here is the fastening of mercy.

#### The Way It Is William Stafford

People wonder about what you are pursuing...Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding...don't ever let go of the thread.

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#### Hope is the thing with feathers – Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard; And sore must be the storm That could abash the little bird That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land, And on the strangest sea; Yet, never, in extremity, It asked a crumb of me.

#### Lightening the Load - Francis Dorff

The first thing we have to do is to notice that we've loaded down this camel with so much baggage we'll never get through the desert alive.

Something has to go...

# Moderator Richard Bott<sup>5)</sup> shared his personal experience of difference WEARING A MASK

I have claustrophobia. Intense, pleaseknock-me-out-I-can't-stand-this, claustrophobia.

A packed elevator is hellish.
A stopped elevator is a terror of
Lovecraftian proportion.

I won't even try to describe what being in an MRI scanner is like...

But, for those of us who \*can\* wear them? Please. Let's. There is no risk...

I get not liking wearing the thing. Really, I do. A recent graduate of College Avenue Secondary School, Woodstock, puts words to her personal experience of difference. Kirsten is daughter of LLWL, Kathleen Welch. granddaughter of Edith Cavin and part of the community of Norwich UC.

#### DISASSOCIATION - Kirsten Michie

"Out of body experience" isn't quite accurate

It makes it sound like when a cartoon character faints

And their soul leaves their body It sounds kind of funny, doesn't it? It's really not.

Have you ever felt out of place in your own body?

Like a puzzle piece shoved in the wrong spot

Or when you visit someone And they keep their silverware in a different drawer?

Disassociation is like sleeping in a motel Where the bed just isn't right

How do I even begin to explain what it's like

When your own body no longer feels like home?

This blessing of **Rev Jim Ball, Harcourt UC, in Guelph** was inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century Frenchman, Henri-Frédéric Amiel:

Remember life is short and we know not how long our journey will be. Let us then be quick to love and hasten always to kindness. And as we go may God's grace and joy, courage and hope, wrap us round and hold us up and carry us forward, as together we make our way through this common life. Amen and Amen.

<sup>5)</sup> Moderator Facebook page 27 June 2020

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https://arwrcucc.ca/

#### **NEWSLETTERS ARCHIVED:**

'Campaign Archive'

**Minutes of the Commissions** (Human Resource, Covenanting, Mission and Discipleship) of Antler River Watershed Region are available on the website. https://arwrcucc.ca/



**Watch this video** from Black Clergy in the United Church of Canada.

https://tinvurl.com/Black-Clergy-Response

United against Racism

#### On June 18, General Council **Executive issued this statement:**

"We affirm Black Lives Matter,"

...The Executive acknowledges racism as a sin and admits that the church has not confronted adequately the racism within its churches and councils.

The letter to members states:

We confess that our United Church has not been such a sanctuary against racism. In particular, we regret that our church has been complicit in racial injustice, and that systemic anti-Black racism still exists within our **structures**. The church has not always lived up to its understanding of itself. We are sorry for our inability to hear and respond to the pain of our Black siblings."

ALLIES KNOW THAT WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH. STANDING WITH ACTIONS ARE IMPORTANT.

#### **AVAILABLE IN OXFORD**

#### Services

**Dundas St. UC** New minister July 1

https://www.facebook.com/dsuc285/

Kintore/Brooksdale UC July holidays Mt Elgin UC website:

https://mtelainunitedchurch.webs.com/

#### Norwich UC:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMplr X3w-f6iEa5dgJmvqbw/featured

#### Peace UC, Plattsville at 10:am

https://www.peaceunited.ca/

#### **Trinity United, Ingersoll**

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDcxY bhDAUqxEx2yd4kjx0Q

Westminster UC, Thamesford 10:30 am

https://makingconnexions.com/live/

## Services (message and/or

video) available by email request.

College Ave UC pastorlloyd@collegeave.ca **Hebron UC** - rsstock@execulink.com

St. Paul's UC, Tillsonburg

stpaulsunited@execulink.com

St. David's UC, Woodstock

stdavidswoodstock@gmail.com,

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

**Next Publication:** Wednesday,

August 12, 2020

#### **SUBMISSIONS DUE:**

Noon Monday, August 10, 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

#### Past Issues for 2020 stored:

https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-CONNECTIONS-2020