

CONNECTIONS

News and Views of Oxford County United Churches

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BACK TO BASICS

The pandemic has already drastically changed our lives. We are more aware than ever of **the fragility of our earth home and the long-term effects of the pandemic**. We are aware that we are part of creation and community. **It is time to remind ourselves of the basics of being church**. We are grateful for Biblical scholarship on Q which surprises and challenges us.

This month our news includes:

- Retirement of Rev Karen Low, call of new minister for St David's, the disbanding of Curries congregation and sale of assets.
- **Thursday, Aug. 13, webinar with Cameron Trimble (speaker at last year's Regional Meeting).**
- Opportunities for volunteering in the ongoing ministry at Operation Sharing, Five Oaks and in our congregations.
- **On-line reflection course at Five Oaks "What the Earth Already Knows".**
- Prayer Cycles and Prayer Chain
- **Keen awareness of the challenges of inside worship during pandemic.**
- **Save the Date** for Regional Council meeting October 29 - November 1, 2020
- See page 11 for details of worship services in Oxford



FOOD FOR THE SOUL



Reset to ... Basics

From the Facebook page of our Moderator Richard Bott shared August 6, 2020. I appreciate his openness about his faith and struggles.MM

"I find myself flailing, lately. In my faith life, at least...

I feel like nothing I say or do makes one iota of difference in the face of the world's pain.

There's part of me that knows it isn't true. The **words** that each of us say, the **actions** each of us take, the **decisions** each of us make, together, **do make a difference** - on micro and macro levels.

But, right now, in the avalanche that is my newsfeed... **I can't *feel* it...**

I need to reset myself to my basics:

I am Richard, **a beloved child of God**, and part of the web of **God's creation**. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, commanded **to love God with all that I am, and to love my neighbour as I love myself.**

As a disciple of Jesus, **I choose to live UNITED:**

Uplifted by God's Love;
Nurtured through Worship;
Inspired through Scripture;
Transformed through Prayer;
Empowered through Spiritual Friendships; and,
Developed through Service.¹⁾



I just need **to stop, and remind myself who I am called to be.**

So, let me ask you - in the face of the world as it is, today, **what do you need to remind yourself?"**

1) (Rev. Dave Anderson, Eagle Ridge United Church, Coquitlam, BC, and Rev. Richard Bott)

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MORE VOICES NEEDED:



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

PRAYER CYCLES

- **Oxford United Churches updated**
<https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-Prayer-August-12-2020>
- **United Church of Canada – Antler River Watershed**
<https://www.prayercycles.ca/antlerriverwatershed>
- **Weekly Regional Prayer Rooms Began** 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/>



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

The Great Unveiling: How The World is Changing and What It Means for the Church

Join this Zoom webinar with

Cameron Trimble

**Registration not required - just
join us!**

Thursday, August 13, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Meeting Link: [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 871 7995 3296

Passcode: 334455

COMINGS AND GOINGS AROUND OXFORD...

IN OUR HEARTS AND PRAYERS

We have 12 unique but vacant pulpits, mostly rural all united in our search for transformation, peace and justice.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP:

Avondale UC (Tillsonburg) is working with Otterville UC to interview candidates; Hickson UC; Norwich UC; Oxford Centre Pastoral Charge; Princeton-Etonia Pastoral Charge; Beachville (Sweaburg - West Oxford) Pastoral Charge; Foldens UC; Burgessville UC; Richwood UC.

CHANGES IN OXFORD:

Curries UC, after much prayer and consideration, has made the difficult decision to disband. They have sold their building with conditions and closing date of May 2021. Please note the ad on page 4, for the sale of assets, August 29.

Innerkip UC – Rev Karen Low is retiring October 31, 2020.

St David's UC (Woodstock) have called Rev Jeffrey Smith from Eden UC (Mississauga) to begin November 9 2020. (Subject to approval of Covenant Commission of Antler River Watershed Regional Council)

I say "Black Lives Matter" because
"all" didn't cover
Black when they said
"All men are created
equal."

I say "Black Lives Matter" because
"all" didn't cover
Black when they said
"With liberty and
justice for all."

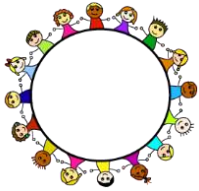
I say "Black Lives Matter" because
they're still
struggling with the
definition of "all."

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PRAYER CHAIN

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

o.mckellar@sympatico.ca

Six months into Covid19 and all of us confess that we are still afraid of the Virus; we are still upset by the changes we have had to make; we are still panicked by new ways and new responsibilities.

Forgive our weak faith and trust. Renew our spirits and our hope.

Covid has taught us about adapting to new ways of worship, new ways to celebrate weddings and funerals, new ways to keep in touch with ALL our church members, new ways to give and to serve through our Church. It has taught us the joy of celebrating being the United Church when every congregation can celebrate communion and hear our Moderator preach on the same Sunday.

Thank God for all we have learned and all we still need to learn.

What plans are your congregation making to guide and direct your worship and work until epiphany?

Have you **adapted your space** to be safe as the virus continues? Have you decided what to do about **singing**? have you planned your special music and decided what new hymns you all need to learn? Have you decided **how to help all your young families with Christian education**, as you all promised you would during baptisms?

Ask God for direction and look for God's leading then work hard to plan ahead.

What new visions are emerging in your community of service projects, study groups, mission outreach and financial goals? **We cannot live in the past. Only the present is real, and that reality is what fuels and shapes the future.**

Trust God to hold you and your church in God's hands; continue to experiment, learn and grow. We are all in this together!

Olga McKellar



Follow on Facebook or Instagram @CampTannerInc for fun activities

throughout the summer!



OXFORD UNITED REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE (OURS)

If you are willing and able to support this cause, we ask that cheques be made out to St. David's United Church with **REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP** in the memo line and mailed to:

St. David's United Church, Treasurer
190 Springbank Ave., North,
Woodstock, Ont. N4S 7R1

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

<https://tinyurl.com/OURS-Committee-2020>

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CURRIES UNITED CHURCH CLOSING SALE OF ASSETS

**Saturday, August 29th, 2020
from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

on the church site, 465003 Curries Rd.
Twp. of Norwich.

MASKS ARE MANDATORY and SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE IN PLACE pursuant to "COVID-19 Guidelines for Yard and Garage Sales published by Southwestern Public Health and will be strictly followed". Customers should sanitize items purchased or quarantine them prior to use. Limited customers will be allowed at a time. **Please be patient.**

Items include: Kitchenware; Wooden tables/chairs; "Voices United" Hymn books; Miscellaneous music books; Music folders; Misc. Bibles; Large Bible; Miscellaneous Christmas decor; 4 drawer filing cabinet; 3 coat racks; Fern stands; 2 high chairs; Dehumidifier; Photocopier HP Office Jet Pro 8600; Projection screen; Water cooler, Frigidaire refrigerator; Sets of "Harmony Rose" English china; Choir gowns; Communion tablecloths; Pew cushions; Hymn board; S.S. Attendance Board; Minister's armchair + 2 sidechairs; Communion table; Communion Service; 2 pulpits; Upright piano; Round piano stool; Baldwin 2 keyboard organ/bench; Display cases; Brass candleholders; Large wooden crosses; Small heater; Memorabilia display cupboard; Misc. furniture; Maintenance equipment.

**Note: Some items listed may be not available at time of sale.*



<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 are 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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**NOW ON FACEBOOK!
LIKE AND FOLLOW US**

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

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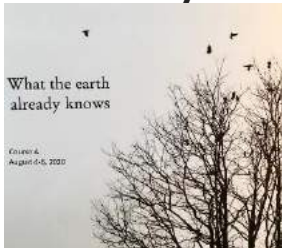


<http://fiveoaks.on.ca/>

This on-line creative reflection course is truly engaging! MM

WHAT THE EARTH ALREADY KNOWS

In the early days of the pandemic, artist and writer Kim McKellar began **using her photography and poetry as a way of expressing the inexpressible and processing feelings and thoughts** on how life has been turned upside down. **She discovered that the earth could teach her ways to quiet the chaos and find solid ground – literally and emotionally.** She has turned her collection into a book, **'What the Earth Already Knows'.**



This is being used by a variety of folk as a way to access and understand the

myriad experiences and wide range of responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and learn from the earth. Kim found wisdom outside her back door, on the small piece of land she calls home.

Through a **short practical course** that includes videos, creative exercises and technical tips, the Five Oaks Centre, in partnership with Kim, offers an online opportunity to engage you in the same process. **The aim is to encourage you to discover your own creativity and learn 'what the earth already knows' right where you live.**

Registration includes a copy of Kim's book, mailed to you.

The course takes place over **three 30-minute sessions**, with a small creative

assignment to do between sessions. **Pick the course time that works for you.** You could do the course as an evening activity over three weekday evenings. Or as a one day retreat. See course dates at this link:

<https://fiveoaks.secure.retreat.guru/program/what-the-earth-already-knows/>

Space is limited – register soon

VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

With Brian Hershey and Tom Hunt

August 26 - Time for a day at Five Oaks to work and play!

There are volunteer jobs for all ages and abilities. The day includes a free lunch and a swim.

The volunteer day in July was a lot of fun. It's a great way to spend time in nature, connect with others, gain volunteer hours and more!

Please register

(<http://fiveoaks.on.ca/program-schedule/6219/volunteer-work-day/>) **by the evening of August 24th so we know how many will be on site.**



Dave Schell and a friend splitting wood. Want to do something else? There are lots of other projects to work on.

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"Q" - A Contemporary New Document

*In our May 2020 Issue, Stan Stanhope wrote an engaging article "Q" The Hidden Gospel: Now, A New Source of Inspiration. Biblical scholarship is ongoing and fascinating. **We're delighted that this month Stan helps us to appreciate the significant events of the first century which is the background for Q's writing. Be prepared for surprises.***

Let us go back to the Apostolic Age of The Young Christian Church. This is the time between the Preaching of St. Peter's Pentecost Sermon (Acts 14-25) and the Council of Jamnia (100 A.D.) The Jewish Leaders at the Council of Jamnia closed the Canon of The Old Testament (now called the Hebrew Bible). **It was at the Council of Jamnia that the final split between the Synagogue and the Christian Church took place.**

During this first century in the mists of time, 'A Saying Document' (now called "Q" was born). This document forms part of a skeletal framework for both, the Gospel of Matthew and The Gospel of St. Luke. **Imagine the openness and creative imagination as early Christians listened to St Peter's Pentecost Sermon and the letters of St. Paul during the next 20 to 30 years.** As Dr. J.N.D. Kelly reminds us in his book *"Early Christian Doctrines."*

"In the first place, you must not expect to find it characterized by the doctrinal homogeneity which you may have come across at other epochs." ⁽¹⁾

By the end of the second century A.D., the Tradition of the order of the gospels

had been established. Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons writes:

"Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue when Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the Church there. After their departure **Mark**, the disciple and interpreter of Peter himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching. **Luke** the follower of Paul, set down in a Book the Gospel preached by his teacher. Then **John**, the Disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast, himself produced his Gospel while he was living at Ephesus in Asia."⁽²⁾

The Church through its Bishops taught its members the Traditional Teaching of the birth of the Bible. **But this Tradition started to change in the 20TH Century, with the Archeological Discoveries of Ancient Libraries, The Dead Sea Scrolls in Israel, and the Nag Hammadi collection of Manuscripts in Egypt.** Found in this collection of Manuscripts was a book called *"The Gospel of Thomas."* **The "Gospel of Thomas" challenged the Biblical Scholars to review their understanding on how the first four Gospels of "The Christian Bible" were put together. A study of "The Gospel of Thomas" reveals that one-third of its saying had parallels in "The Gospel of Q: The Saying Source". Yes, there are still surprises in Biblical Studies.**

We can look at two illustrations on Prayer. First, the members of the "Q" Communities used the word "Lord" – (Maranatha) "Our Lord, Come." **Second,** Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as "Abba". It was the "Spirit of God" which brought to them "The Adoption as Children of God" which leads to "The Spirit of

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Fellowship". It was through the religious experience of God as Father, being revealed in Jesus through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that lead the Church to form its central beliefs. In the following we look at two samples of the "Q" Gospel", The Heavenly Treasure and The Lord's Prayer (see below).

The Rev. Stan Stanhope

- (1) Early Christian Christian Doctrines – J.N.D. Kelly, Harper & Row, New York: 1978, Page 3

- (2) Documents of the Christian Church – Henry Bettenson (ED) Oxford Paperbacks; OUP – 1963, Page 28
(3) The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament with New Revised Standard Version, BS 4TH (ED) Nestle-Aland 27TH Tyndale House: Carol Stream, IL, 1993
(4) The Lost Gospel Q – Marcus Borg (Ed) Ulysses Press, 1996: Q34 (Page 68); Q 54 (Page 88)
(5) Q Parallels – John S. Kloppenborg – Polebridge Press (1988) S27 (Pages 82-85) and S42 (Pages 134-135)

THE HEAVENLY TREASURE

Matthew 6: 19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrode and where thieves dig through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves

Do not dig through and steal.
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 12:33-34

Sell your possessions, and give alms; providing yourselves with purses that do not wear out, with unfailing treasures in the heavens, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.

The Lost Gospel Version by Marcus Borg

Don't Pile up your treasures here on earth.

They will be destroyed by moths and rust and stolen by thieves. Store your riches in heaven where moths and rust are powerless, and thieves cannot break in.

Wherever your treasure is, your heart will also be. (continued page 8)



For the **Love**
of **Creation**

e-petition For the Love of Creation

The Canadian ecumenical community calls on the Federal Government to faithfully address the climate emergency. Sign the e-petition, by October 6, to:
- commit to reducing Canadian GHG

emissions by 60 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and invest in a just transition;

- honour the rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- commit equal support for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the Global South; and
- respond to the pandemic in the Global South. e-petition at <http://ow.ly/pNPI50ALc3b>

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THE LORD'S PRAYER***

Matthew 6: 713

"When praying do not babble as the Gentiles; for they think by their wordiness they will obtain a hearing. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven,

May your name be holy

May your reign come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts,

As we have forgiven our debtors;

And do not lead us to the test,

But deliver us from the evil one.

Luke 11-4

"And it happened that he was in a certain place praying, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

He said to them, "When you pray,
say:

"Father,

May your name be holy.

May your reign come

Give us each day our daily bread.

and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who
is indebted to us;

and do not lead us to the test.

*** *The underlined words show us the "Q" document in our familiar texts. This is found in UBS 4th Edition of The Greek-English Interlinear New Testament and the underlining in Marcus Borg's work shows us how it is found in a modern translation of the Text.*

The Lost Gospel Q Version by Marcus Borg

One day it happened that Jesus was praying in a particular place. When he finished one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us how to pray just as John the Baptist taught his disciples."

He responded, "Say this when you pray:

"Father, may your name be honored: May your reign begin.

Grant us the food we need for each day.

Forgive our failures,

For we forgive everyone who fails us.

And do not put us to the test."

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<https://arwrcucc.ca/>

Re-entry to Gathered Worship in Buildings

**Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa,
Executive Minister of Antler River
Watershed Region**

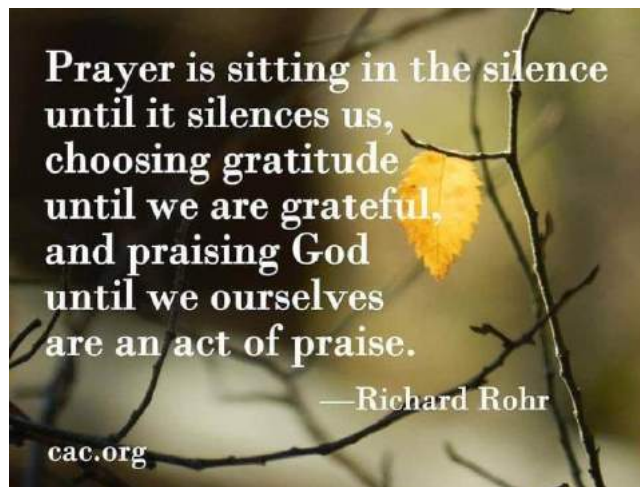
commends this video on

Making Faithful Decisions on Re-entry - Part 1

**by Rev Diane Strickland
a trauma informed specialist**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pelzAQNEcc

During this pandemic, worship in buildings has higher risk than flying. This video has valuable insights of how we are different now, changing our expectations of worship, how today's decisions are fluid, and re-entry as a spiritual practice.



SAVE THE DATES

ARWRC Regional Council Meeting

October 29 - November 1, 2020

For up-to-date information, check
<http://arwrcucc.ca/events1/regional-council-meeting>



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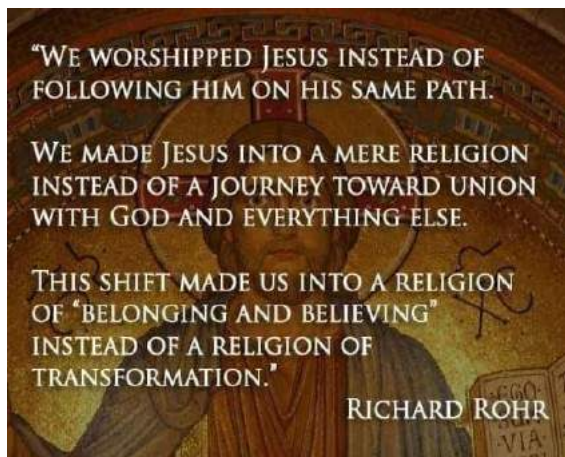
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Me trying to explain how we can focus on covid, BLM and climate change all at once and actually they're all connected and actually everything is interconnected in this complex profound world and



AVAILABLE IN OXFORD Worship Services

check with churches for details of open or on-line streaming etc.

College Ave UC pastorlloyd@collegeave.ca
Dundas St. UC

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

Hebron UC - rsstock@execulink.com

Kintore/Brooksdale UC 9:15 am

<http://www.kintorechurch.com/sunday-morning.html>

Mt Elgin UC website:

<https://mtelginunitedchurch.webs.com/>

Norwich UC:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMplrX3w-f6iEa5dgJmvqbw/featured>

Peace UC, Plattsville at 10:am

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

St. David's UC, Woodstock

stdavidswoodstock@gmail.com,

St. Paul's UC, Tillsonburg

stpaulsunited@execulink.com

Trinity United, Ingersoll

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDcxYbhDAUqxEx2yd4kx0Q>

Westminster UC, Thamesford 10:30 am

<https://makingconnexions.com/live/>

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Next Publication: Wednesday,
September 9, 2020

SUBMISSIONS DUE:

Noon Monday, September 7, 2020

You may share widely.

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

oxfconnections@execulink.com

Submissions and feedback welcome.

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<https://tinyurl.com/Oxford-CONNECTIONS-2019>

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