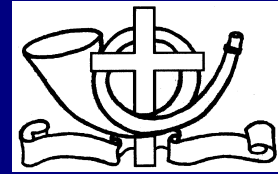


CHURCHPOST

RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH



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Minister's Message

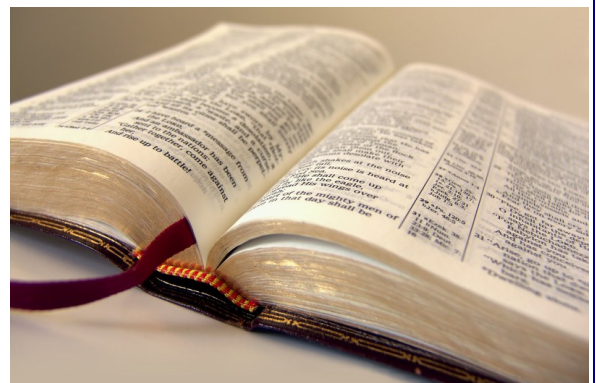
Early this fall, the members of Ottawa Presbytery were invited to participate in a research project by Jane Dawson, a United Church layperson from British Columbia. Jane came across a copy of the Authority and Interpretation of Scripture study, produced by the UCC in the early 1990s. She was intrigued to learn more about biblical interpretation in the United Church of Canada in 2017. My interview with Jane made me think about the Bible, how I use it in my work life, how I approach it in my personal life, and how much impact it has on the church today. One thing I have always said about the Bible is that it is the book I would want with me if I were ever marooned on a desert island. If I were a refugee (who had time to pack), it is the one book I would take with me. The reason is because I am always surprised by what I find in the Bible's pages. There are parts of the Bible I can quote from memory. There are beloved passages I read over and over. Every time I open the Bible with an open mind, however, I find something in the words and passages that I have never encountered before. It might be new understanding in old, familiar words. It might be an obscure passage I have never really studied. While I can claim to have "read" the whole Bible, I confess there are many parts that never really sank in. Then, one day, a word or phrase will leap out at me, and I think "This is why we have faith in a Living Word".

The Living Word is not the word printed on the page. If that were true, I would keep my Bible in a vault. The Living Word is Christ dwelling in the words on the page, and my heart open to God's Spirit through reading and understanding. Reading scripture can be mystical, frustrating, contemplative, pragmatic, or boring. It can be distorted by culture or liberated in music. But it will never be out of date, as long as we read it with a mixture of curiosity and hope.

This fall also marked the death of Eugene Peterson, a renowned biblical scholar, who took the words in their original languages, and paraphrased them into The Message. "Spiritual writing requires spiritual reading," wrote Peterson. And that means "reading that enters our souls as food enters our stomachs, spreads through our blood, and becomes holiness and love and wisdom" (Eat This Book, p.4).

May we have many moments of illumination and inspiration ahead, whether we read the Bible together or alone. And may God meet us there.

Elizabeth Bryce



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RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH

Worship: 10 a.m.
Coffee Hour: 11 - 11:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 10 a.m.

OUR HEARTS REMEMBER

Jean Sprules September 14, 2018
 Marcia Gosse September 22, 2018
 Francis Allan Dosdall
 September 23, 2018
 Collis Ricardo Small
 September 24, 2018

*I am the resurrection
 and the life. Those
 who believe in me,
 even though they die,
 will live, and everyone
 who lives and believes
 in me will never die.*



John 11: 25, 26

Remembering Marcia

Every issue of Churchpost going forward from this fall will probably tug at your heart-strings. Marcia Gosse was its editor, champion, contact person and ghost-writer until her sudden death in September. So the arrival of Churchpost, in church announcements, your email in-box, or as hard copy, will always be a reminder of her commitment to this newsletter. She wanted to share the work of Rideau Park with everyone who counted themselves part of our extended family – and Churchpost was just one of the ways she cared for the congregation. Marcia's attention to detail, gentle reminders to forgetful ministers, and cheerful attitude will be missed.

**"Ringing in Christmas"
 Handbells and Chimes Concert
 December 2nd at 7 p.m.**

Featuring the five bells and chimes choirs of Rideau Park United Church playing the popular and seasonal music of Christmas. Freewill offering.



**Christmas Celebration
 December 9th at 7:30 p.m.**

Rideau Park's Chancel Choir presents Camille Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio, featuring Rideau Park section leads, organist Andrew Ager, harpist Caroline Leonardelli and a string quintet ensemble, led by Kevin James. In addition, audience members can join with the choir and Touch of Brass Bells during the singing of treasured Christmas music and carols. A freewill collection will be taken at this service.



Annual Christmas Pageant

On Sunday, December 16, our children and youth will be offering their musical and theatrical talents at the 10 a.m. service in the presentation of our Annual Christmas Pageant. A cast of 50 or more will present the story of Jesus' birth and its meaning for us today.


Gingerbread Houses
December 2nd at 11:15am

Advent Happening, Sunday, December 2: We will again be making Gingerbread Houses as Advent Happening marks the beginning of the Advent Season. We will gather in Beecroft Hall immediately following the church service to begin construction of the houses. For more information, speak to Tara Lockhart. Sign-up sheets will be available closer to the date.

Exercise

The 50+ Fitness Group meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Get moving, strengthening, and stretching. All levels of fitness (male and female) are encouraged and supported by Faiza, our experienced Seniors' Fitness Instructor. Keep fit for walking, skiing, hiking and biking throughout the year. This semester of classes ends Dec. 6. The winter session begins on January 8, 2019. There will be 20 classes, ending March 14. Fees are \$70, payable at the first class. Drop-in fee is \$8. For more info, call the church office.

Intro to Ghanaian Drumming

Want to try drumming? Want to improve your rhythm, singing, drumming or ensemble skills within a fun-filled, friendly environment? Open to everyone old enough to hold a drum, especially youth, pre-teens, teens, young adults, adults, and all those who are young at heart! Come and see what it's all. Questions? Contact Iain Macpherson, Music Ministry Coordinator, 613-733-3156 ext. 301 or choirdirector@rideaupark.ca

Christmas Cheer Program

Through the generous contributions of our members, 75 families receive hampers and a further 75 families receive grocery gift cards. This effort is coordinated with Sharing and Caring Exchange of Ottawa. For more information, or to help, please contact the church office at 613-733-3156 ext 228.

Carleton Exam Pause Table

We will be supplying volunteers and baked goods to the Pause Table during Christmas exams. The date will be set soon. Sign-up sheets, for baked goods or for volunteering to help at the table, will be on the volunteer board at the end of November.

Old Fashioned Roast Beef Dinner

Come out on November 30 at either 5:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. and enjoy a roast beef dinner along with apple crisp for dessert and tea and coffee. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$10 for children 6-14 years. Tickets available from the church office. Proceeds to the work of the church.

**Euchre Anyone?**

A fun Seniors Group meets every Thursday at 1 p.m. in the Parlour for a rousing and laugh filled afternoon of euchre. The only qualification to join is that you like to laugh, like to talk and playing euchre is optional. For more information please call the church office.

Advent Evening Retreat
Wed., December 5, 7:15 p.m.

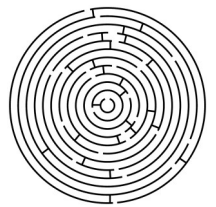
Join us for an evening of readings, prayer and reflection as we turn to God. Led by Spiritual Director Nancy De Kemp.

EnCarna: An Advent Experience
Wed., December 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Prayer, Art, Justice, Creativity: EnCarna is an event for all ages. It is a worshipful experience of the season of Advent, an immersion in the spirit of the Christmas season through multimedia prayer stations set-up around the sanctuary, which you can work through at your pace. Come when you like. Stay for a few minutes or make it an evening.

Walk the Labyrinth
Wed., December 19, 6:30-8:30pm

Relax, reflect, think about the meaning of the Christmas season—at your own pace.

**Winter 2019 Yoga**

Gentle Mat Yoga: "Energize Your Fridays" at 9 a.m., January 11 to March 8, 2019. Cultivate balance, flexibility and strength through mindful movement. Modifications encouraged. All levels: beginner - advanced. Male/Female. 4 or more classes = \$6/class OR \$8 drop-in

Chair Yoga: Fridays at 10:30 a.m. January 11 - March 8, 2019. Nurture balance, flexibility, and strength through mindful movement. Seated and standing poses/stretchers. Modifications always encouraged. Male/Female. 4 or more classes = \$6/class OR \$8 drop-in.

No classes on Friday, February 15. Both yoga classes are led by Lynda Spalding, Certified Yoga Instructor, 4livingyoga@gmail.com or 613-422-3565.

Structural Review Update

On Sunday October 21, 2018, following our Anniversary Service, more than 40 people gathered to hear observations from the Structural Review team and to offer feedback for next steps.

Patricia Whitridge and Elizabeth Bryce presented the findings of the review team. The team interviewed more than 30 respondents, made up of committee chairs, staff, congregational members, as well as ministers from six other UCC congregations. While committees of Session and Council seem to be functioning well and adapting to the needs of their members and workload, there is some frustration with the overlap between Council, Session and Stewards. Many expressed the need to clarify the focus of Council to be more strategic. There was also concern for more consultation and backup for individuals doing significant work.

The whole group divided into table groups to discuss specific questions about Council, Session, Stewards, and other church models. Table groups reported back with feedback for the review team. These include:

- Focus on creating a more strategic Council by decreasing the number of members representing committees, while increasing members at large who bring a variety of perspectives to the Council; this would lead to a more diverse and strategic Council.
- Support committee work with broader use of communication tools;
- Separate two important functions of Session: (1) faith formation and expression (2) contact with the congregation;
- Form two committees of Stewards or nominate vice-chairs to stream the workload on (1) Finance and (2) Property;
- Broaden the Stewardship focus to produce more stability in appeals;
- Follow up on long-range planning, with evaluation.
- Recognize that reorganization may need to be done in steps.

Next steps: The review team will take the feedback and propose a draft model for Council, Session and Stewards in upcoming meetings. A proposal will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting in February 2019, for a vote. General guidelines for implementation will also be presented at that time. Any model will need approval by our regional governing body.



Harmony Club for Seniors 60+

Harmony Club's next meeting is on **Wednesday, November 21**. Registration opens at 11 a.m., as members begin to gather. At noon, volunteers will serve a delicious lunch (cost is \$6.00). From 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., there will be a presentation by **Robert Mady, nurse and a former member of the DART team**, whose role is to respond to large-scale natural disasters in various parts of the world. Harmony Club will meet again on **Wednesday, December 5**, with registration opening at 11 a.m. At noon, Christmas lunch will be served by our volunteers (cost \$6.00). From 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., there will be a Christmas carol sing-along, led by Iain Macpherson, accompanied on the piano by Andrew Ager.



The annual membership fee is \$4.00. Please spread the word that presentations are open to all, without charge or prior notice. Non-members who would like to join us for lunch must register one week in advance by calling Carolyn Scollick, 613-745-1798. Plan to join us again on Wednesday, January 30, 2019!

Grateful Thanks!!

On behalf of everyone who worked so hard to contribute to the success of the Bazaar, thank you so much. The hard work was outshone by the fellowship! We are honored to have been a part of this wonderful event! Heather Ingrams and Judy Paré.



Flu Shots for Seniors

If you haven't had your flu shot yet you should be aware that the FDA has approved a flu vaccine specifically for seniors. The recommended flu vaccine for the 65+ age group is Fluzone High-Dose and it is 24.2% more effective than regular Fluzone. Unfortunately, not all pharmacies or doctors carry it. It might be worthwhile to locate it though. A vaccine with 24.2% greater effectiveness is nothing to sneeze at.

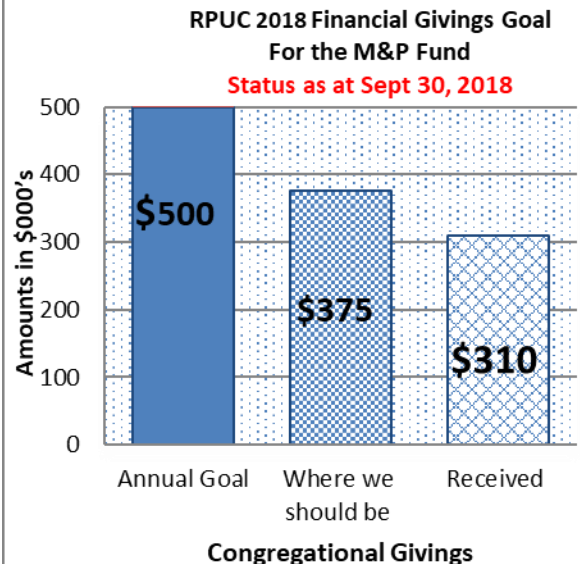
Learn about Yourself and Others

In January, Georgina will lead a series of workshops on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI instrument offers insight into how your personality functions. Such information will help you understand yourself and others better. According to the Myers-Briggs Indicator, there are 16 personality types. These workshops will tell you which type describes you best.

Congregational Update

The 2017 Annual Report highlighted the fact that we have been facing greater financial challenges as a congregation each year for a number of years. This trend shows no sign of changing in the short term as we search for ways to reach a degree of sustainability. Sustainability allows us to pay our church expenses, the salaries of our staff and to maintain our level of visibility in, and support to, the community. Since almost 85% of Revenues comes from givings, it is our congregation that will need to provide the necessary funds. The accompanying chart provides the status of year-to-date givings to the M&P Fund at the end of October 2018.

The financial goal is based on having the M&P fund break even by year end. As we approach year end, please carefully consider what the Church means to you and how your generosity at year end can help make a difference in our community.



80 Environmentally Friendly Produce Bags Sold Out Fast...

I sewed 80 reusable produce bags for the annual bazaar this fall. They sold out fast! I decided this spring to stop using single-use plastic bags after seeing so many stories and images of plastic pollution. So, I found some simple "how to" videos on line to make my own bags and realized I could make a lot more to sell at the bazaar as a way of getting other people to take up the cause and make a bit of money for the church too! They were made with the hopes that many people would use them instead of the single-use plastic bags that we pull off the rolls in the produce section of the grocery store. There was quite the take up, which tells me there is a desire for people to do their part in reducing their plastic pollution.

If you would like to help the environment by reducing your plastic waste, then you too can make some bags. If you're good at sewing, and even if you're not that great (I'm not!) and want to make some, let me know! If there is interest, we could form a sewing bee. Together we could make a lot more and it could become a good fundraiser. If sewing isn't your "bag" (pun intended, ha!), or you just don't have time, check out Terra20 or NuGrocery stores which carry similar produce bags, also known as Nut Milk Bags.

Whether you make your own bags or buy some, it would be good to know what kind of a collective impact we can make. Once you are using your environmentally-friendly produce bags, let me know how many single-use plastic bags you average not using at the grocery store each time you shop. Can you imagine the mound of plastic that won't end up in the landfill or the ocean if we all do our part?

This doesn't have to end with us. We can inspire others to do the same. Think about giving some of your bags to others. Challenge them to make or buy more of their own and pass the challenge on to yet more friends and family. Share your stories in conversation or on social media of using your bags and the positive environmental impact you are making. Can we make this go viral? Christy Harris

Next Churchpost Submission

Due: 12 Noon, Friday, February 8, 2019

Pick-up: Sunday, February 17, 2019

Submissions to Churchpost can be emailed to:

nmcpherson@rogers.com

and should include the name and phone number of the author(s).



Mediterranean Cruise

Join Rideau Park friends for a 16-day deluxe Mediterranean Cruise aboard the Emerald Princess, May 17th to June 1st, 2019. Ports of Call include Barcelona, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Corfu, Mykonos and Athens among others. Visit the Rostad Tours or the Emerald Princess websites for details, or pick up a brochure at the church.

UPCOMING EVENTS



November 2018

16-18 (Fri-Sun)	All day	Ontario Youth Parliament
18 & 25 (Sun)	11:15 a.m.	Christmas Pageant Rehearsals
18 (Sun)	10:00 am	Youth and Young Adult Sunday
21 (Wed)	11:00 am	Harmony Club: A monthly social gathering/lunch/presentation for 60+ seniors

December 2018

2 (Sun)	10:00 am	Advent I worship service with the celebration of Communion
	11:15 am	Advent Happening (following the service): <i>a time of gathering with the family to create your own gingerbread house and share lunch</i>
	7:00 pm	"Ring in Christmas" Handbells and Chimes Concert
3 (Mon)	1:00 pm	UCW Candlelight service and AGM
5 (Wed)	11:00 am	Harmony Club's Christmas Party
	7:15 pm	Advent evening retreat
9 (Sun)	10:00 am	Advent II worship service
	11:15 am	Pageant rehearsal
	7:30 pm	Christmas Celebration Concert: Choirs, handbells, brass
11 (Tues)	4:00 pm	Ottawa Presbytery meets at Rideau Park for its historical last meeting
12 (Wed)	7:15 pm	Advent evening retreat
16 (Sun)	10:00 am	Advent III - White Gift Sunday - Children's Christmas Pageant
19 (Wed)	7:15 pm	Advent evening retreat
20 (Thurs)		Christmas Cheer packing
21 (Fri)		Christmas Cheer delivery
23 (Sun)	10:00 am	Advent IV worship service
		Christmas Eve Services
24 (Mon)	6:30 pm	Family service with the children's music groups participating
	8:30 pm	Candlelight Communion Service
	10:30 pm	Candlelight reflections
25 (Tue)	10:00 am	Christmas Day Service
30 (Sun)	10:00 am	Shared service hosted by Rideau Park
26-31 Dec; Jan 1		<i>Church offices closed for the holidays</i>



Special Dates in 2019

Jan 6 (Sun)	10:00 am	Epiphany
Jan 13 (Sun)	10:00 am	Installation of UCW Executive
Jan 20-27 (Sun)		10:00am "I Have a Dream" service/Black History celebration
Jan 30 (Wed)	11:00 am	Harmony Club: A monthly social gathering/lunch presentation for 60+ seniors
Feb 10 (Sun)	11:15 am	Annual Congregational Meeting
Feb 14 (Thurs)	9:30 am	Valentine Coffee Party
Feb 18 (Mon)		Family Day (<i>office closed</i>)
Feb 27 (Wed)	11:00 am	Harmony Club: A monthly social gathering/lunch for 60+ seniors

LGBTQ Identity: Not a Choice

Most of the world has much to learn about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people, whose sexual orientation or gender identity and gender expression may be different from the usual expectation of a heterosexual (straight) orientation and “cisgender” identity, that is, with a gender identity and expression that conforms to their birth assigned gender. A new word has developed from the many discriminatory actions that the large segment of the LGBTQ population faces: heterosexism, i.e. thinking that heterosexuality is better than being gay, and straight families are better than gay ones. Like racism, it is a discriminatory bias against people whose gender identity does not conform to what much of the world perceives as “normal.” Too many continue to insist that anything except a straight male or female identity is perverted, a position that is effectively as nasty as the perception that African American or Jewish people are somehow lesser beings. It is most likely that history will look back on this era of homophobia as being as horrible and nasty as were slavery and antisemitism.



The neuroscience of sex shows that gender identity and sexual orientation are not a choice. Children’s gender identity is formed by the age of three, when they may begin to exhibit a gender identity and expression that does not conform to their assigned sex. Studies and literature on this subject show how gender identity is on a spectrum—everything from cisgender male or female to transgender male or female, as well as people who identify as non-binary, gender-queer, gender non-conforming, intersex, and two-spirited (among Aboriginal people). The time at which gender identity is formed, quite apart from biological sex, is also in utero. Various genes and hormones begin to affect the fetus, which can receive a mix of hormones hitting in different proportions, thereby showing the fluidity of gender, resulting in a gender identity spectrum. Gender expression, how a person demonstrates who they are, is also very varied, as is sexual attraction, which similarly, is on a spectrum, including heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, asexual, and others. This description is a vastly oversimplified version of very complex facts, so further research on this subject is recommended.

There is much historical baggage remaining to this day in religion about these issues but some elements of society have fortunately changed. In 1973, the weight of empirical data, coupled with changing social norms and the development of a politically active gay community in the United States, led the Board of Directors of the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Gender Identity Disorder has also been removed from the latest version of the DSM.

The Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) has taken a strong position in advocating for decreasing stigma and discrimination, albeit, mostly with a focus on people with mental illness. While doing so, however, the CPA has recognized the ongoing stigma and discrimination in society, based on sex, race, sexual orientation and religion. Unfortunately, psychiatry has a history of conflating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and (or) queer (LGBTQ) identities with mental illness. It has, therefore, historically contributed to the stigma and discrimination faced by people who identify as LGBTQ, affecting not only their mental health but also their access to appropriate mental health care. It has, however, addressed the need for psychiatrists to increase their understanding of the mental health needs of people who identify themselves as LGBTQ. All major professional mental health organizations have since gone on record to affirm that homosexuality is not a mental disorder.¹

Society, generally, is still far behind in learning about the complexities of lesser known LGBTQ conditions. For example, “intersex” is the general term for a condition where a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit the typical definition of female or male; some intersex conditions do not manifest until the onset of puberty. We are now also learning about transgender – the umbrella term that can be used to describe people whose gender expression is non-conforming, and/or whose gender identity is different from their birth-assigned gender. These are very difficult conditions to address and to understand. One has to tread very carefully, in order not to invade the privacy of trans people, but at the same time, to obtain information and understand the condition. Some time ago, Rideau Park United Church, Carleton University and other venues around Ottawa, were presented with a play called Trans Script about a trans person who was in the process of transitioning from male to female gender. The many gender preferences were each illustrated by an actual person, including someone assigned male at birth who has come out as a trans woman. Once a person has transitioned to their identified gender, one refers to her by her preferred pronouns and name. In this play, there was an upset mother who

Continued on page 8

¹Albina Veltman, MD, FRCPC, Gary Chaimowitz, MB, ChB, FRCPC, 2014 Mental Health Care for People Who Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and (or) Queer, The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, Vol.59, No.11.

LGBTQ Identity (continued from page 7)

summed up the complexities by directing one question to her “son”, now a trans woman: “Why can’t you just be gay?” Today, it seems that transphobia, despite more emerging information about the trans identity, may be as prevalent as homophobia was some years ago.

And of course, it was only in 1967 that Pierre Trudeau, then Justice Minister, declared that the state had no business in the bedrooms of the nation, and the Criminal Code was amended in 1969 so that homosexuality was no longer illegal. Before then, the treatment of LGBTQ people was horrendous---not to be forgotten, when we think of countries in which homosexuality is still illegal and punishable by execution. Given the pace of change, which sometimes comes with great difficulty, we should be grateful for our forward-leaning country and spread the real facts about the many oppressed LGBTQ people around the world whose biology is not a choice. It is nobody’s business if you are gay or straight, just be who you are and follow your heart. Apparently, school is the hardest to survive, so let us support the many people, young and old, who are trying to find the courage to be themselves.

Nadia A. Senyk, September 2018

Thanks to Professor Elaine Waddington Lamont, Carleton University, course Neuroscience of Sex for her helpful comments.

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