

# CHURCHPOST

## RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH



### Minister's Message

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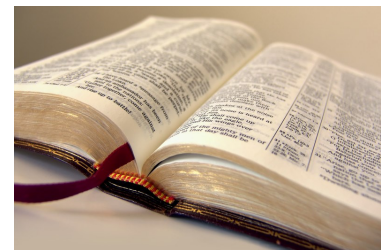
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Paul Sorg  
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A few months ago, I started to re-read a book first published in 1963 by a British cleric named John A.T. Robinson. At the time *Honest to God* was written, it caused quite a stir in the church. In the ensuing 56 years, some of the ideas Robinson presented in *Honest to God* and in *But That I Can't Believe*, published a few years later, have become widely accepted in mainline Christian denominations.

Today, few active members of the United Church would say that the Bible is to be taken literally. They would not agree with the fundamentalist churches that say the Bible isn't a smorgasbord from which you can pick and choose what suits you. A United Church member would likely reply that the Bible was written by humans, all of whom were products of their time and culture. And some of its many authors were more inspired than others when it came to understanding the nature and will of God. The level of violence, vengeance and sheer pettiness they attribute to God testifies to that.



Robinson questioned the validity of beliefs such as original sin, the virgin birth, eternal punishment and the substitutionary theory of the atonement. Many Christians today do the same. They wonder how the Christian religion can survive if beliefs that no longer make sense continue to be proclaimed within the church.

One such belief is original sin, which says that humans enter the world tainted with sin because of an incident that happened with a man, a woman, a snake, and a piece of fruit millennia ago. They point out that when you view the Adam and Eve story as a myth created to explain our origins, all support for the fall of creation and the concept of original sin goes by the wayside.

Another belief that cannot withstand scrutiny is the idea of hell and damnation. Once a mainstay of the Christian Church, it stipulated that people who did evil without repenting or who did not profess a belief in Jesus, even if they were good people, were condemned to eternal punishment. Said punishment was often described graphically as "burning in hell".

People today find this idea repugnant. They also point out that it is contrary to the depiction of God by Jesus. In Matthew 5, Jesus says that God makes the sun to shine on the good and the evil and sends rain on the just and the unjust. If God doesn't seek vengeance on the living who have gone astray, why would God torture them when they are dead and can no longer do any harm?

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<b>RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH</b>	
<b>Worship:</b>	<b>10 a.m.</b>
<b>Coffee Hour:</b>	<b>11 - 11:45 a.m.</b>
<b>Sunday School:</b>	<b>10 a.m.</b>

**OUR HEARTS REMEMBER**

Helen Groeneweg	March 10, 2019
Isabel Hobson	March 14, 2019
Frances Norkett	April 3, 2019
Fay Armstrong	April 12, 2019
Irene Plummer	April 15, 2019
Goldie Smith	April 16, 2019
Earl Bryenton	April 29, 2019

*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*

**Minister's Message (continued from page 1)**

As for the Virgin Birth, Christians of the 21st c. hold a more sophisticated view of human sexuality than was the case centuries, or even decades, ago. They no longer see a need for Jesus' mother to be a virgin, turning his birth into a miracle rather than a natural event. The idea that humans are born in sin and with sin just doesn't work anymore.

The Substitutionary Theory of the Atonement is also losing ground. According to this theory, God's justice demanded that humanity pay the penalty of death for its sin but Jesus stepped in to pay the penalty for us. The church went so far as to name Jesus' death as the central purpose for his life. In doing so, the whole of Jesus' life before the crucifixion became less significant. Over the centuries, the Moral Theory of the Atonement always challenged the Substitutionary Theory. In more liberal denominations, the latter has gained substantial ground. It says that, because of sin, we lost sight of how to live according to God's will, but God sent Jesus to rectify that situation. Through his lifestyle, teaching and death, Jesus exemplified what it is to be a loving human being. Follow his way and your brokenness, in whatever form it takes, will be made whole. Which of these explanations resonates most with you?

Thank you, John A.T. Robinson, for your insight and bravery. We're just catching up with you now.

*Georgina Fitzgerald*

**Meditation**

**P**ace. Awareness. Mindfulness. Groundedness. Meditation is good for you: mind, body and spirit. A small group meets for silent meditation from 9:10 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on Sundays, in a dedicated meditation space, and everyone is welcome. It's not hard to do; it's as easy as breathing. Why not give it a try? And if you would like to know more about meditation in the Christian tradition, visit: <http://rideauparkspirituality.blogspot.ca>.



### Supporting Ubah

On April 16, 2015 a young woman arrived at the Ottawa Airport all by herself, having flown from Kenya. She very bravely came down the escalator at the airport, looking a little bewildered and apprehensive. Kathy Mayes, Francis Dawson, Norma McCord and myself were anxiously looking for her. Of course, we had been waiting for Ubah Ali, whom we had sponsored through the Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) program initiated by the government. This program selected refugees who are at risk where they are living and, if a sponsor could be found for them, the government would expedite their coming to Canada and provide six months funding. Ubah was just such a person. She had escaped Mogadishu, Somalia, with an aunt when she was three years old, and they ended up in a refugee camp in Kenya. Ubah's aunt died, and Ubah lived with someone else for a time, but this person was abusive and, as a result, she ended up on her own. When Ubah left Somalia, she left behind her mother and siblings. Why they did not escape is not known. Her father had been killed in the fighting and her mother eventually remarried, had two girls and then divorced.

On her arrival in Ottawa, Ubah called all of us Mom and, to this day, continues to do so. We located her one suitcase and headed to the condo of Norma McCord, where Ubah lived for the first two weeks. We looked at several apartments and finally settled on a bachelor apartment on Gladstone Avenue. It was located close to me, buses and grocery stores, so was very convenient for her. The rent was approximately \$750 and the government funding was approximately \$650 a month, so we subsidized the rent and provided her with funds for food, school, etc. She started English classes right away, entered the adult high school in fall 2015 and in November 2015 found a part-time job at the Independent Grocery Store on Bank Street. Not bad for a newcomer.



One day, she mentioned to me that she would like to find her mother and her siblings and asked if I could help. I suggested that we contact the Red Cross as they might be able to assist. The Red Cross provided a form to fill out about her family; unfortunately, we didn't have a lot to go on. We did the best we could and sent the

forms to Toronto. There was not enough information and they were not able to locate her mother. Several months later, she learned of a program run by the BBC in Africa that might be able to help. This program was run through the Red Cross, so more forms were filled out and sent off to Toronto. This was in fall 2016 and, in March 2017, I received a call from the Red Cross in Toronto telling me they had located Ubah's mother and family. They were in a refugee camp in Kampala, Uganda. Needless to say, I was thrilled; the Red Cross wanted to inform Ubah, so I arranged to meet with her the next afternoon and, in case she was overcome by the news, Francis Dawson and Norma McCord joined me. We made the call, she talked to the Red Cross, hung up the phone and very quietly said "My mother has been located." It was a little anticlimatic; Francis, Norma and I were all excited and she was so calm. We had tea and stayed for about an hour to ensure she was okay. She now had her mother's phone number and made the call. She learned that her brother was with her mother and that she now had two half-sisters. It seemed one of her sisters might be in Australia but the rest of her siblings had died. A few months later, she told me she wanted to bring her family to Canada and when her mother got here we could do a blood test to ensure she was, in fact, her mother. I indicated we would do this before she came and arranged for DNA testing. In January 2018, the testing confirmed they were 99% mother and daughter.

Through all this, Ubah has continued her schooling, working at the Independent on a part-time basis, and met Mohammad Ahmad, whom she married in late 2017. On September 4, 2018, she gave birth to Said and, in August of this year, she is expecting another child. We continued to subsidize Ubah's rent until February 2018, when she moved to a two-bedroom apartment with Mohammad.

We have undertaken to sponsor Ubah's family and the documents have been forwarded to the United Church in Toronto, who will forward them to Immigration. The Refugee Committee is now in the process of fundraising. There will be a series of events taking place over the next couple of years to raise funds to assist the family when they arrive. We expect that it will be three to four years before their arrival. Ubah's brother speaks English, therefore he will be able to find a job without too much difficulty. Her half sisters are teenagers who also speak English so they should be able to find part-time work fairly quickly. If you would like to donate to this project, please indicate on the envelope or cheque that it is for the Refugee Fund. A tax receipt will be issued.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### May 2019

<b>1-29</b> (Wednesdays)	10:00 a.m.	Coffee Time!
<b>12</b> (Sun)	10:00 a.m.	Mother's Day/Christian Family Sunday
	11:00 a.m.	Congregational Vote re Affirming Ministry
<b>17</b> (Fri)	7:00 p.m.	International Day to end Homophobia and Transphobia – film night: "A Kid Called Jake"
<b>20</b> (Mon)	All day	Victoria Day (offices closed)
<b>29</b> (Wed)	11:00 a.m.	Harmony Club: A monthly social gathering/lunch/presentation for 60+ seniors; final session of season



### June 2019

<b>3</b> (Mon)	6:00 p.m.	UCW AGM and Dinner
<b>3-21</b> (Mon-Fri)	8:30 a.m. to 5:00p.m.	Rideau Park Café (during RCM exams)
<b>7</b> (Fri)	7:00 p.m.	Event in support of Andrew Ager's opera "Frankenstein"
<b>9</b> (Sun)	10:00 a.m.	Pentecost – Communion

### August 2019

<b>19-23</b> (Mon-Fri)	10 a.m. to 3 p.m.	CAMP AWESOME!
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### September 2019

<b>8</b> (Sun)	11:00 a.m.	Open House (TBC)
<b>20</b> (Fri)	5:30 p.m.	Lobster Dinner (TBC)
<b>27</b> (Fri)	6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	Nearly New Sale/Book Sale
<b>28</b> (Sat)	9:00am to 11:30 a.m.	Nearly New Sale/Book Sale
<b>29</b> (Sun)	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Lunch and Learn – SAOC (TBC)

### Supporting Ubah (continued from page 3)



One last piece of very good news – On Friday, April 26, 2019, Ubah became a Canadian citizen. It was wonderful to be there with her and Said, who was the best little guy there. We had received strict instructions that crying babies had to leave, but not Said – he slept through most of it, and when he was awake he smiled.

Thank you for your support.

*Submitted by Marilyn Law*

### Next Churchpost Submission

**Due: 12 Noon,** Friday, September 6, 2019

**Pick-up:** Sunday, September 15, 2019

**S**ubmissions to Churchpost can be emailed to:

nmcpherson@rogers.com

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



## HEALING PATHWAY

**F**ull sessions are offered most Thursdays, by appointment between 12:30 and 4:00 p.m., and once a month on Sunday evening between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. To book an appointment, please email [healingpathway@rideaupark.ca](mailto:healingpathway@rideaupark.ca), or speak to Sharon Sanderson or Brian Neal. Healing prayer is also offered in the Chapel, immediately following the service, every Sunday of the month. No appointment is needed for these shorter, 3-5 minute sessions.



### Camp Awesome

Summer is coming. And with summer comes Camp Awesome. Our annual VBS runs from August 19-23 and is a week-long Christian day camp program sponsored by the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council of the United Church of Canada. Camp Awesome! is hosted by various congregations across the Ottawa area and serves kids aged 4-12 years old. Led by trained staff, activities include games, crafts, drama, singing, water fun and learning about important topics. The day starts at 10:00am and goes to 3:00pm. Optional childcare is available each day before and after camp, for a fee. Children bring their own lunch. Cost per camper is \$80 if you register on or before June 16, and \$90 after June 16. To register online, click on Camp Awesome on the homepage of the church website, [www.rideaupark.ca](http://www.rideaupark.ca), and follow the links. Early registration is strongly encouraged. Youth volunteers are also needed. For more information call: 613-733-3156 ext. 229.



### Passion Play 2020

Once every ten years, the Passion Play is performed by local residents in the German town of Oberammergau. Rev. Kim Vidal is hosting a 14-day tour (July 31 to August 13, 2020), which includes Oberammergau, Berlin, Prague, Munich and Wittenberg, the cradle of the Reformation. A discount of \$300 is available until June 30. Ask Georgina for a brochure, if you are interested.

### Worship Services at Retirement Homes

Our Pastoral Care Minister, Georgina Fitzgerald, conducts services at many of the retirement homes on a rotational basis. If friends or family members would like to come to these services, they are more than welcome!

**Oakpark:** 1:30 p.m., 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month.

**Hunt Club Manor:** 11 a.m., 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month.

**Billings Lodge:** 10:45 a.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

**Maplewood:** 11 a.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

**Perley-Rideau Veterans:** 2 p.m., Sunday, every couple of months.

### Rideau Park Prayer Chain

Pastoral Visiting. Prayer Shawls. Prayer requests on Sunday morning. These are a few of the ways that Rideau Park people offer prayerful care. A prayer chain is a group of people who are committed to pray each day for concerns that are brought to them. Concerns for people can be sent to the chain. The prayer request will be forwarded through the chain by email or phone. Prayers will be offered; names and circumstances need not be included with prayer requests and all information that is provided will be kept confidential within the chain. If you would like to access our prayer chain, please send requests to Doreen Hamilton at [hamilton.doreen@gmail.com](mailto:hamilton.doreen@gmail.com) or phone the church 613-733-3156 and press 5 to leave a voicemail request. If you would like to join the prayer chain, please contact Doreen.

### UCW Annual Dinner

Rideau Park United Church Women are having their annual June dinner and meeting on Monday, June 3, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and are available after Sunday services and from the church office until Wednesday, May 29. Dinner will be a buffet of assorted cold meats, salads and desserts. Any proceeds will go to the UCW. We'll enjoy dinner, worship, and have some fun, as we celebrate our accomplishments together. Donations, such as toiletries and feminine hygiene products for the Banff/Ledbury Women's Health Cupboard, will be greatly appreciated. For additional information, please contact Nancy Begg-Durkee at 613-521-2051 or [ucw@rideaupark.ca](mailto:ucw@rideaupark.ca). We hope to see you there!

### UCW Recycles...

The UCW is recycling:

- Used eyeglasses for the Third World eye clinics,
- Used postage stamps for Oxfam,
- Aluminum pop can tabs for Clifford Bowey Public School.
- **Please NO plastic bread tabs and NO Campbell Soup labels.**



All are gratefully accepted with thanks. For more info, call Lynda Coombe at 613-733-9982.

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