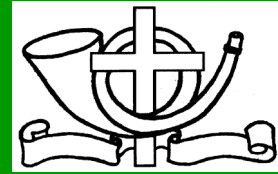


CHURCHPOST

RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH



Minister's Message

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When our faith challenges us, "Grow It! Don't Mow It!"

The [Canadian Wildlife Federation](http://www.canadianwildlife.org) (CWF) posted an article on their website telling us to think twice before we get the lawn mower out this spring. "Grow it! Don't Mow it!" was their advice. I confess, we haven't mowed our lawn yet; I am waiting for a patch of late tulips to make their appearance. And the forest of dandelions in the back lawn is not causing me to lose sleep at night.



The CWF's interest is in preserving the habitats and spring food sources for a variety of pollinators: bees, flies, butterflies, moths, beetles and hummingbirds. These unsung heroes of the natural world are declining, both in numbers of species and in numbers of individual animals. Multiple threats appear to be causing these declines, including habitat loss, pesticide use, climate change and disease. The article suggests that because our eyes have gotten used to wide green expanses, we label those mown lawns "good" and we label fields of natural unmown grasses as "undesirable weeds".

But the CWF sees those fields as beautiful, helping pollinator populations recover their numbers and the work they do – which ultimately beautifies our environment. They aren't denying the beauty of the lawns and gardens we enjoy, but they do want us to open our eyes to the possibility that there is beauty in the untamed as well. Every week we delay mowing makes a difference, and letting grass grow longer between mowings also benefits the pollinators.

I think we can apply that motto to our life of faith as well. Sometimes we are too quick to "mow down" the things that have stopped working for us. We don't have the patience to "grow" something new that has been hibernating in a faith concept or Bible story, and only needs a bit of time to mature into something that is beautiful and meaningful.

For example, many people stop reading the Bible when they discover that the creation story or Jesus' birth narratives are full of contradictions and improbable names and places. So they mow it down. Some people stop praying when they believe that God didn't answer their prayer because they didn't get the desired result. Mow it down! Some people leave a community of faith when they discover real human beings there, with all their conflicts and weaknesses and mistakes. Yet those same flawed people, with God's grace, are like pollinators who feed and enrich our faith.

Continued on page 2

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 Kristie Marr, Interim Chair

RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH

Worship (online): 10 a.m.
Coffee Hour: Suspended
Sunday School: Resumes in Sept.

OUR HEARTS REMEMBER

We hold in our thoughts and prayers the families and loved ones of these Rideau Park friends who have passed away:

Kenneth Nicoll March 19, 2021
 John (Jack) Ellacott April 23, 2021



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)**

Instead of mowing down those aspects of spirituality and faith, we need patience. We must take the time for new growth to awaken beneath what seems dead or unruly or less desirable – not just in the backyard, but in the landscape of our faith as well. We need to look for new life in unexpected places with the same passion that we invest in green lawns and trimmed flowerbeds.

When our faith challenges us, we need to remember the motto: "Grow It! Don't Mow It!"

Elizabeth Bryce

Some Handy Contact information

healingpathway@rideaupark.ca Brian Neal and Sharon Sanderson
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webmaster@rideaupark.ca Webmaster, Lynda Becker
xmascheer@rideaupark.ca Christmas Cheer, Debi Brown

Finance Committee Update

While the pandemic continues to have a significant impact on our lives, here is a brief status report on our finances. At the end of March, we had a deficit of approximately \$18,000 (budgeted deficit for the same period was \$23,000; last year's deficit for the same period was \$26,000). The good news is that we have received \$18,000 in government subsidies in 2021, which off-sets our deficit. We continue to pay our staff and meet our obligations to suppliers and to the National Church for both M&S and the National Assessment. Our cash position continues to be good. As always, PAR has played a key role in enabling us to provide Sunday worship services and to continue assisting those in need. The Finance Committee would like to thank those of you who have provided extra financial support through additional givings by cheque, through the [Donate Now](#) button on our website, via e-transfer or through [CanadaHelps](#). In the meantime, we hope that you and your families continue to stay healthy and safe.



Your Finance Committee: Brenda Bethune, Joann Roebuck, Debi Brown and Bob Roden

Next ChurchPost Submission

Due: 12 Noon, Friday, September 3, 2021

Pick-up: Sunday, September 12, 2021

Submissions to ChurchPost can be emailed to:

nmcperson@rogers.com

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



Children's and Youth Ministry News

Sunday School: A big "thank you" to our teachers who have offered online Sunday School through this year: Kindergarten, Meg Steele and Allison Van Diepen; Grades 1-3, Heidi Hopkin; Grades 4-6, Allyson Hopkin; and Grades 7-12, Ben Presley. We so appreciate the time and effort given to make Sunday School happen in a strange time. Our current plan is to continue to meet online in the fall, moving to in-person classes when everyone is vaccinated and it is safe for everyone to attend.

Confirmation Class: We have had 12 young people participating in online Confirmation gatherings since October. We look forward to meeting for a social gathering in person when we can in the fall. Confirmation will be a great celebration to look forward to, when we are able to gather with our congregations in the sanctuary.



Camp Awesome: Camp Awesome will be offered online again this summer, but with an expanded program. Stay tuned for more details in June.



Foster Farm Fruit and Vegetable Stand

When strawberry season starts (mid-June), Fosters will be open to sell their succulent strawberries once more! A blessed sign of normalcy for Rideau Parkers and the neighbourhood, we welcome the stand as it operates through mid-October. Open hours will be Monday to Saturday, with approximate hours of 10am to 5pm weekdays, and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays.



An OASIS in the Pandemic

We received an update from OASIS recently, through the local AA public information office. OASIS is the name of the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group that normally meets at the church on Monday evenings. When the closing orders first arrived, and it was clear we needed to close the building, OASIS was one of our first concerns: in a stressful time, we wanted to make OASIS more accessible, not shut the doors to them!

They made the decision to stop in-person meetings and to go online with their program. However, they know that many people who might need their support don't always know where to turn.

Here is the information OASIS sent us...

Recent news articles have highlighted an increase in alcohol sales and use during this COVID-19 environment in which we all find ourselves. It has prompted our Committee to reach out to professionals who may interact with people who have a problem with alcohol to offer information about AA and the resources that are available during this pandemic.

Alcoholics Anonymous can complement virtually any treatment offered to a problem drinker. In fact, in a recent Stanford University study, AA was shown to work as well as or better than traditional therapies in helping people recover. Watch [Does Alcoholics Anonymous Work? – YouTube](#). And, there are no dues or fees for AA membership. Alcoholics Anonymous is free to join. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.

Referring someone to AA is as simple as suggesting they **call our help line at 613-237-6000** and speak to a member of Alcoholics Anonymous right here in the city. When volunteer members are unavailable (e.g. after 10:00pm), individuals can leave a confidential message and a volunteer will return their call.

During COVID-19, the majority of our daily meetings are taking place online. Our searchable meeting list may be found at <https://ottawaaa.org/meetings/>. There you will find information on how to access the over 120 online meetings that are held every week. Newcomers to AA are welcome to attend any of these meetings.

If you wish to attend a meeting, you are welcome to attend any of the "open" meetings. These are meetings where a member shares their experience before coming into the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and how they recovered using the twelve steps.

Perhaps you would consider including the Alcoholics Anonymous telephone number and website (<http://ottawaaa.org>) in an upcoming bulletin or mail-out to parishioners. By doing so, you may be planting a seed of hope for someone in your community who may be concerned about their drinking.



An Update from the UCW President

I'm writing this on Mother's Day/Christian Family Sunday 2021. I hope everyone managed some enjoyable family or close friend contact to celebrate the occasion. Zoom and FaceTime, plus long distance calls, are some consolation as we endure this latest pandemic lockdown. I texted my closest friends, each of whom is a wonderful mom, and we called my sister-in-law in Toronto. They were preparing for a Zoom call this afternoon with my brother-in-law's siblings and partners, celebrating the addition of a new baby girl on Friday to their wing of the family. Hannah Rose – what a beautiful name for a wee harbinger of new life and new hope.

These days, we have to find optimism in our faith and the small blessings that still abound. They just seem harder to notice at times, when all forms of media are writing or talking about COVID-19 vaccinations, COVID-19 outbreaks, COVID-19 restrictions and, worst of all, COVID-19 in India. When you toss in other disturbing news, a cup of coffee and the morning news aren't the relaxing start to the day that they used to be.

So, as I spend time daily weeding our front lawn, I'm forcing myself to notice and enjoy the cool spring air, the robin bob-bobbing along on the grass, looking for newly available worms, the chipmunk hiding sunflower seeds under the forsythia, and to appreciate the violets in bloom in the lawn, even though they migrated unasked to our property. They're still pretty.

I would really much prefer to be overseeing plans for a lovely dinner with the UCW members in Beecroft at our Annual General Meeting on Monday, June 7th! (I think this is called "burying the lead" in journalism parlance. I figured we're all so bored these days you're still reading the update.)

This year, as last year during COVID-19, we cannot gather in person. But this year, we will **hold our AGM on Zoom**, just as the Annual Congregational Meeting was held earlier this year. Please join us **on Monday, June 7th at 7:30pm via Zoom. The Zoom call details will be emailed from me shortly, and will be included in the congregational email the week of May 31st. I would appreciate an RSVP, closer to the day, at nmcpherson@rogers.com.** The meeting will contain brief devotions, a short business discussion, and a very interesting program delivered by Liz Ballantyne-Jackson, talking about the [Guatemala Stove Project](#). This charitable project is supported by the UCW and I assure you that the story of how this project is positively changing lives of girls and women in Guatemala and other central American countries will interest and please you.

As with 2020, we again suggest a donation of \$20.00 to the UCW to help our fundraising efforts. We haven't done too badly this year, considering we couldn't hold the Spring Nearly New and Book Sales. The small fundraisers we've carried out this spring have raised over \$3,000, via Easter cards, soup sales, bake sales, and donations from members. For your participation in cooking, baking, eating and memorializing, we thank you very sincerely. We hope to do more fundraisers when public health guidelines permit.

My best wishes to all, as we remember the many blessings we still share.

Nancy McPherson, UCW President



Events of Note

Coffee break on Wednesday, May 19 from 10am to 11:30am. Join us for the final scheduled coffee break on Zoom. If you don't have the Zoom coordinates, contact administrator@rideaupark.ca.

Thursday morning meditations at 10am – 20 minutes of peace and mindfulness. Contact [Steve Clifton](#) for the Zoom invite.

Choir practices on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm with Iain Macpherson. Contact choirdirector@rideaupark.ca for details.

Georgina's weekly 40-minute cyber chats – stay connected with other women of the congregation. Let Georgina know at gfitzgerald@rideaupark.ca if you'd like an invite.



Sunday, May 30th – Multifaith Housing Initiative hosts its annual **Tulipathon**, held virtually. For more information, go to <https://www.multifaithhousing.ca/tulipathon.html>

Broadview magazine – contact administrator@rideaupark.ca if you are interested in receiving this publication with articles about spirituality, social issues and the life of the church.



New Distance Healing Circle at Rideau Park

If you are wondering what a distance healing circle is, please read on. Inspired by First United Church, Rideau Park's Healing Pathway group recently launched a distance healing circle. It went live on March 14th, and is offered every Sunday now, shortly after the livestream worship service, at 11:15am. This is a new program that is open and available to anyone who is seeking healing, and it is a wonderful way to connect with people while we are still unable to meet and offer healing prayer in person.

Trained Healing Pathway practitioners conduct the Healing Circle using a technique called "distance healing". Distance healing is a form of prayer which recognizes that we are all One in the Spirit, the Source of All Life, and do not actually need to be in the same room. We can be physically distant from each other, and still share the gift of healing. Both the receiver and practitioner, wherever they may be physically, set their intention to be open to the Sacred Spirit and to allow the healing energy of the Spirit to flow in and through them – while imagining they are all in a circle in the church sanctuary.

The associated **YouTube videos** on the [Rideau Park YouTube channel](#) are getting lots of views, although not always during our scheduled healing circle time of 11:15am on Sundays. Based on the YouTube analytics data, we have anywhere from three to a dozen people joining the circle on Sundays to receive healing prayer. Everyone is encouraged to spread the news that this ministry is available and open to all. You don't need to belong to our congregation to participate; you don't even need to be in the city. Technically, you don't even need an internet connection, although it is helpful to have the YouTube video playing in the background to hear the introduction and the music, and to let you know when the healing circle time is finished.

If you have an internet connection, you are invited to read more about how it works on Rideau Park's website at <https://www.rideaupark.ca/programs/spirituality/rideau-park-healing-circle/>, and at 11:15am Sunday, in the comfort of your own home, you are invited to play either one of the Healing Circle videos on our YouTube channel to guide you through this healing time. The links are on our webpage and below.

[Distance Healing Circle \(Classical music\) – YouTube video](#)

[Distance Healing Circle \(New Age music\) – YouTube video](#)

If you don't have an internet connection, here is an alternative way to participate:

Before 11:15am:

- ♦ Find a quiet place in your home, where you are not likely to be interrupted. If you wish, you may light a candle for the duration.
- ♦ You may want to play some quiet inspirational music.

At 11:15am:

- ♦ Imagine yourself sitting in the church sanctuary in a circle with others waiting to receive God's blessing and healing. Trained Healing Pathway practitioners will join you in spirit around the circle to help you attune with God's unconditional love and receive the healing that you seek this day.
- ♦ Take a moment to relax with some deep breathing, letting go of the thoughts and cares of the day.
- ♦ Take a moment to focus on the reason you are here today, and set your intention to receive healing – knowing that God is always with us and wants us to receive healing on all levels of being: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.
- ♦ For the next 10 minutes or so, try to stay open to feel God's healing presence and be receptive to the spiritual healing energies that are even now flowing in you and around you.
- ♦ After about 10 minutes, you may want to say a short prayer of gratitude for the healing.
- ♦ If you wish, you may stay in the circle after the prayer or you may return to your daily activities.

If you would like information about individual distance healing sessions, please contact us at healingpathway@rideaupark.ca.

Blessings from the Rideau Park Healing Pathway team.

