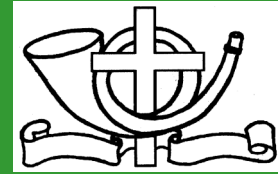


CHURCHPOST

RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH



Minister's Message

An Advent Suggestion

Last week, as Paul and I were preparing to go to work, Paul remarked that it is an interesting turning point for us: six weeks since we came back from sabbatical and six weeks until Christmas. If you don't live in a household of ministers, you might not realize how much pressure the seasons of Advent and Christmas contribute to our stress levels. I am not complaining! It is usually one of the most rewarding seasons of the year. But, as we prepare, it's a bit like standing at the bottom of a mountain and wondering if you will ever make it to the peak.

We try to get all the information about what is going on through Advent and Christmas sent out to the congregation, so that people will have the information they need to plan well ahead of time. We love to plan ahead!



Which is ironic, because so much of the story that we are celebrating in this season is a domino-like series of UNexpected events and UNplanned surprises.

The prophets (Isaiah 9:6, Jeremiah 23:5, Micah 5:2) who foretold the coming of the Christ child were speaking to an audience who had no clue what they were talking about. They could not imagine a saviour who was not a king.

Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25) were a senior couple who thought they would never have a child. Imagine the disruption of their adult lives!

Mary of Nazareth (Luke 1:26-38) was planning to marry, planning to have children someday, but God's timing for her was all wrong.

Joseph, of the House of David (Matthew 1:18-23), also had plans to marry and care for his own children in the future. God's challenge to Joseph was almost more than he could handle.

King Herod (Luke 2:1-2) suddenly decreed that all should be registered according to their home towns, provoking a perilous journey for Mary and Joseph, just as she was about to give birth.

It is, perhaps, a reminder to all of us that we need to remember to leave a little room for the Holy Spirit to work through us in this upcoming season. It is a season when we are often so busy that we forget to prepare our hearts for the UNexpected, UNplanned gift of God.

Continued on page 2



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Nominations	Patricia Whitridge, Chair
Pastoral Care	Brian Neal, Chair
Congregational Dev.	Vacant
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Stewardship	Gavin Currie, Chair
Administration & Comm.	Kristie Marr, Chair

RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH

Worship: 10:00am
Coffee Hour: 11:00am
Sunday School: 10:00am

OUR HEARTS REMEMBER

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

Vida Moore September 16, 2022
Carmen Small September 23, 2022



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)

My suggestion is this: Plan some spiritual time for yourself throughout Advent – a retreat, a long walk, a service, a good, thought-provoking book – write it in your calendar. I am not trying to make you busier. I believe that if we are deeply listening and truly seeking what God is doing with us in this time, then our priorities will be clearer and our commitments will find the right path (even if it is all uphill) to December 25.

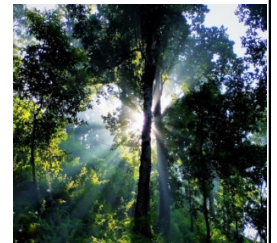
Let the countdown begin!

Elizabeth Bryce

Forest Church

Sunday, November 27 at 4pm

Come and join us as we take time for prayer with all God's creatures in Cunningham Forest. We meet in front of the church – dress warmly!



Harmony Club News

We started welcoming back Harmony Club this fall with two social events – coffee, treats and singing in September and October. Our last event of 2022 will be a Christmas lunch on Wednesday, November 30 at 11:45am.

We will be serving roast pork, rice, squash, peas and gingerbread cake with hot toffee sauce, followed by a Christmas Carol sing-along. Cost is \$8 per person. This event is open to everyone over the age of 60. RSVP to Carolyn Scollick at scollicc@yahoo.ca no later than noon on Thursday, November 23. We hope to see you on November 30!

Watch for information on upcoming Harmony Club events to be held in March, April and May 2023.

Sandra Weedmark and Patricia Whitridge



Next ChurchPost Submission

Due: 12pm, Friday, February 3, 2023
Pick-up: Sunday, February 12, 2023

Submissions to *ChurchPost* should be emailed to:

nmcpherson@rogers.com

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

Christmas Cheer 2022

If you have filled up your gas tank, or been to the grocery store lately, you know prices just keep going up. The grocery industry is reporting record profits, and it is easy to become cynical. With Christmas fast approaching, it should be a time of hope, generosity and kindness. One example of how Rideau Park manifests this is through our Christmas Cheer program.

Rideau Park United Church has a very long history of helping those in our community that need it, and especially at Christmas. As early as the 1970s, the United Church Women (UCW) at Rideau Park, after hearing of a few families in desperate need, prepared three Christmas hampers, which included food and knitted mitts, toques and scarves. By the mid-1980s, the number of hampers being distributed had grown substantially. The Christmas Cheer program was now one of many programs run under the supervision of the Social Action and Outreach Committee. Christmas Cheer had its own Chair and committee to organize and deliver the hampers.

The pandemic has forced us to change the way we run the program. We now provide gift cards to ensure everyone's safety, especially at this busy time of year. Another reason to provide gift cards, rather than groceries, is the evolving nature of our community's demographics. Since the '70s and '80s, our local community has become more diverse. Many households do not necessarily want to sit down to a traditional Christmas turkey dinner. Gift cards allow families the flexibility to decide what groceries suit them best.

These are uncertain times for everyone and, in particular, communities of worship. Despite most activities having to be online over these past two years, last year we had faith that our congregation and, indeed, the larger community, would respond. And respond they did! Even with our decision to increase the dollar amount for each household by \$15, we were overwhelmed by everyone's generosity. This year, the need is even greater, and we have set a goal increasing the number of households from 150 to 175. I encourage anyone reading this article to donate, if you are able. For information on how to donate, please visit the church website at rideaupark.ca.

In the past, we needed many volunteers, but because we are not delivering hampers, our requirement for volunteers is not as great. Personally, volunteering to do something for the Christmas Cheer program was synonymous with Christmas. And I was not alone. Thank you to all who have volunteered in the past. Because of the many people that volunteer their time, all the money raised goes **directly** to buying the gift cards, and to people right here in our community.

For Christians, Christmas should be a time of celebration, a time to see loved ones, maybe share a wonderful meal, and reflect on the birth of the baby Jesus. For me, Christmas Cheer is a wonderful way to remember what Jesus taught us – to love and care for one another.

Drew Presley, Christmas Cheer Committee



Christmas Shoebox Program

Looking to give this Christmas season? The **Christmas Shoebox program** could use your support. Rideau Park hopes to provide **around 140 wrapped shoeboxes or seasonal gift bags**, filled with thoughtful items to the children and youth who use the services of Banff Avenue Community House in the Ledbury community. Shoeboxes and information sheets are available during coffee hour. Monetary donations are also appreciated for those who are unable to fill a physical box. The program runs until Sunday, December 11. Please email Laura Presley (pattiel@rogers.com) for more info.



Advent Happening

Following the service on Sunday, November 27 (sign-up required), we will again be making **Gingerbread Houses** as Advent Happening marks the beginning of the Christmas season. A potluck lunch will follow. Surnames A-H bring desserts and surnames I-Z bring sandwiches or cheese and crackers. An offering of \$10 to cover the costs of the houses, icing and candies will gladly be accepted at the door. Please sign up by e-mail to Meg Steele at lolabooney@hotmail.com to reserve your gingerbread house. For more information, please call the office at 613-733-3156 ext. 228.



Celebrating the Sabbath

Luke 13:14: *But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day."*

What was so special about Shabbat (Hebrew for Sabbath) that it would cause the religious leaders to be upset with Jesus for helping someone who had been in pain for years?

The Jewish Shabbat is considered a gift from God. Ex 20:8-9: *Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work.* The Sabbath is, also, a reminder that we are made in the image of God and therefore holy as God is holy. (Gen 2:1-3.) And Jews, whether followers of Jesus or not, would have known this passage from Deuteronomy (Dt 5:15): *Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.* Shabbat is a sacred blending of remembering that we are made in God's image, respecting divine rest from creation and celebrating freedom from slavery.



Shabbat lasts from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. The preceding Friday is a day of preparation; cooking, lighting lamps, laundry. Shabbat is a time to rest; not to work (work is usually associated with "creating", which includes lighting a lamp – creating light, creating a meal). On the Sabbath, Jews cannot carry a mat, gather firewood, buy or sell, or pluck grain. On Shabbat, people can gather for worship, circumcise, preach/teach. They can join with others for meals, which would have been prepared the previous day. Let me be clear, no Jew, then or now, would have strictly followed Shabbat rules preventing work when a life was in danger.

Before we think badly of the Jewish difficulty defining "work" as being petty, rigid and legalized, how many of you remember the *Lord's Day Act*? It was a federal law, passed in Canada in 1906 and finally repealed in April 1985. Its purpose was to combat the increasing secular nature of the Sabbath. The *Lord's Day Act* made it an offence to transact business on Sunday. The accepted Sunday activity was worship and, as far as humanly possible, everything else was to stop. Some families were so strict that all food to be eaten on Sunday was cooked on Saturday. Sound familiar?

But provincial/municipal laws governing the Lord's Day were in place before the 1906 federal law. Eighteen-forty-five Ontario legislation outlawed "skittles/bowling, football, racket ball, or any other noisy game", plus gambling, racing, billiards, fishing, hunting, and a host of commercial activities.

Many resisted these laws. In 1895, for instance, four men were charged with playing golf on a Sunday. When they were fined five dollars each, the four members of the Toronto Club appealed. Their conviction was overturned when a judge ruled: *This game of golf is not a game within the meaning of the law. It is not noisy. It attracts no crowds. It is not gambling. It is on a parallel, it seems to me, with a gentleman going out for a walk on Sunday, and as he walks, switching off the heads of weeds with his walking stick.*

Druggists were allowed to fill prescriptions on Sunday. If you wanted a ginger ale on a Sunday, you just needed to give the druggist a prescription. But you would probably need to plan ahead of time to get a prescription from the doctor, who was not working on Sunday. Newspapers could not be sold on Sunday, so they imported Sunday newspapers from the US and sold them – illegally – in drugstores. I never realized that drugstores were such a hotbed of illegal activity.

On 24 April 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the *Lord's Day Act* on the grounds that it contravened the freedom of religion and conscience provision in the Canadian [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#). Mr. Justice Dickson concluded that the purpose of the *Lord's Day Act* was sabbatical observance and held that the Act takes religious values rooted in *Christian* morality and, using the force of the state, translates them into a law binding on believers and non-believers alike. And that this type of coercion is contrary to the spirit of the charter and the dignity of all non-Christians. The *Lord's Day Act*, in fact, joined church and state.

And so here we are today – 21st century Christians. No *Lord's Day Act*. We can shop, sell, or go golfing. How can we celebrate the Sabbath and keep it holy? It is not just the activities themselves that honour the Sabbath, it is the attitude we bring to the activities.

Continued on page 5

Celebrating the Sabbath (continued from page 4)

If you attend worship on Sunday but are thinking about the football game you're going to watch in the afternoon or the gardening you still have left to do – are you honouring the Sabbath? If you go to work in a shop, grateful for a job to pay the bills, and you treat each customer as a gift that keeps you employed – you are celebrating the Sabbath. If a pandemic forces you into quarantine and you can't attend worship – not even online – you decide to sit outside and listen to the birds – and you give thanks for creation – you are celebrating the Sabbath. What if a big storm knocks down trees, and out of concern for your elderly neighbour's safety, you spend Sunday helping neighbours clear away debris, instead of going to church– you are celebrating the Sabbath. And if, on Sunday, out of love, you heal a woman crippled for 18 years, you are celebrating the Sabbath. It is not simply the activities themselves that celebrate the Sabbath, it is also the attitude we bring to the activities.

Sharon Sanderson

**A Tale of Two Bazaars in 2022**

In 2022, still feeling the effects of COVID, and after consulting fellow UCW members, we decided to follow the style of bazaar implemented in 2021. Safety first!

As a result, we ran two bazaars – an outdoor one in late September (Books, Crafts, Kids' Korner, General Store and Boutique) and an online one in early November, primarily for food items, with some art prints, quilts and blankets. **In September**, we worked with a very motivated, enthusiastic group of volunteers: Sue Taylor-Davidson (Boutique), John Durkee (General Store), Heather Ingrams (Kids' Korner), Ruth Scobie (Crafts) and Bob Roden (Books). We knew, from last year's outdoor bazaar and the outdoor Nearly New Sale in June, that outdoor events can be extremely labour-intensive, sale items being moved more than once for sorting, selling and disposal. Many boxes of unsold items were given directly to The Haven (a Multifaith Housing Initiative), as they had a give-away to their residents the next week. It was a huge undertaking, helped by those who had done it in 2021, knew what to expect, and returned anyway!

In the end, almost \$4,500 was raised for the UCW in September.



For the online bazaar **in November**, we were again blessed with experienced, energetic volunteers. Many thanks to Nancy Begg-Durkee (Bake Table), Heather Bennett (Jams and Jellies), Lisa Sadler (Deli), Christel Kurz and Cathy Hollands (Tea Room Takeout) and John Durkee, who managed the online system of posting and tabulating during the week. The online system is (almost entirely) very user-friendly, but is a huge task of sorting,

coordinating and packaging. We had Scouts and teen volunteers as runners on pick-up day, and we thank them, too. The online sale brought in another \$6,300, after expenses.

We did our best to reach out – weekly emails, banner on website, RP News, *ChurchPost*, social media postings and flyers to local businesses. Thanks to Lynda Becker for her creativity with the Thought Cloud (advertising the event) and to Lisa Sadler who designed the media posts, flyers, and the sandwich board out front. Our social media posts were kept current by Rev. Steve, and our custodian, Geoff Scollick, moved tables and racks multiple times as we decided how best to set up; we thank both of you.

It takes a village to run these bazaars, and we cannot be more grateful for the support of Rideau Park and our surrounding community – donating, organizing, cooking, baking, purchasing, or all of them! One of the most enjoyable aspects of the sales was seeing our friends and neighbours. Many have not yet returned to the sanctuary Sunday mornings, so this was sometimes the first glimpse of a familiar face (sometimes smiling, sometimes masked!).

We hope we're in a better COVID space next fall and can hold a more traditional indoor bazaar. Pat misses playing the Christmas music! And more buyers could attend an in-person event, although we still ran out of turkey pot pies within the first day...

Patricia Whitridge and Nancy Begg-Durkee, Bazaar Co-conveners, 2022



An Update from the UCW

Our Candlelight service takes place on Monday, December 5 at 1pm in the Sanctuary. Please join us as we read the Nativity story through the familiar words of scripture, accompanied by beloved Christmas carols. Light refreshments of a festive nature will follow in the Parlour. All women of the congregation, whether they belong to a UCW unit or group, or simply worship at Rideau Park, are very welcome to join us.



We have had a successful year of events, some in person and some via Zoom or online. The outdoor Nearly New and Book Sale in June, and the outdoor portion of our annual Bazaar in September were good fundraisers, as well as enjoyable opportunities to volunteer our time together and see members of the congregation. Andrew Rader’s SpaceX presentation, the Easter Card project, and the Merry Dairy fundraiser raised money for the UCC Ukraine Relief Fund, indigenous charities, and our Memorial fund. The perennially popular sales of baked goods, meat pies and frozen soup raised money AND helped us reach out to members of our congregation. What’s that old advertising slogan? “Nothin’ says lovin’ like something from the oven”? And, of course, our online Bazaar earlier this month of deli items, jams, jellies, pickles and preserves, baked goodies and takeout tea boxes, was financially very helpful (see “A Tale of Two Bazaars” on page 5). It was also an excellent provider of delicious, home-made food to those who are in retirement residences, those working long hours with young families, and those who appreciate a break from the kitchen!

As we hold our Finance meeting on November 14, before *ChurchPost* is published, I want to thank all those who have volunteered this year, whether from home or at the church. It’s getting increasingly difficult to accomplish our goals in the familiar ways, with a smaller pool of helpers and the higher cost of groceries, gas and everything else. As with all volunteer organizations, the UCW is feeling the pinch. I suspect things may worsen before they improve, but I do have faith that better times await us. I wish all of you and your families a joyous and healthy Christmas.

Nancy McPherson, UCW President

Calendar of Christmas/Advent Events

- November 27, 11am Advent Happening – Gingerbread Houses
- November 30, 11:45am Harmony Club Christmas Lunch
- December 4, 7pm Christmas Bell and Choir Concert
- December 5, 1pm UCW Candlelight Service
- December 7, 7pm Labyrinth
- December 11, 10am Christmas Pageant
- December 14, 7pm Encarna
- December 21, 7pm Blue Christmas
- December 24, 6:30pm Family Christmas Eve Service
- December 24, 8:30pm Christmas Eve Service with communion
- December 25, 10am Christmas Day/Sunday Worship
- January 1, 10:30am Cluster Service at Riverside United Church



Quilting

Thursdays, 9:30am to 12pm, ladies meet in the Parlour to enjoy fellowship and make beautiful quilts.

Knitting

Join other knitters on Mondays, 1pm to 3:30pm in the Parlour. For information, contact Doreen Hamilton at ucw@rideaupark.ca.



Finance Committee Update



It seems like the challenges that we faced over the last couple of years will never end. However, the year is ending soon and, on that note, here is a brief update on our finances. Revenues to the end of October were \$422,613 (2021 – \$412,819*). Expenses were \$466,528 (2021 – \$441,268). As a result, we have a year-to-date deficit of \$43,915 (2021 same period adjusted deficit \$28,449). While we expected a deficit this year, the extent to which insurance, snow removal and utilities increased was unanticipated.

PAR continues to play an important role in enabling us to provide Sunday worship services, to assist those in need, to pay expenses, and to pay our staff, who continue to work very hard during these extraordinary times. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have provided extra financial support through additional givings. We look forward to your continuing strong support through the end of the year.

Thank you and we hope each one of you has a happy, healthy and safe Christmas season.

Brenda Bethune, Bob Roden, and Joann Roebuck, Finance Committee

**Note: 2021 government subsidies of \$33,347 have been removed for comparative purposes.*