

# CHURCHPOST

## RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH



### Minister's Message

Rideau Park's website:  
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### OUR MINISTRY TEAM

#### Ministers

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#### Music Ministry Coordinator

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#### Church Administrator

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*"A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome the light."*

In normal times when we begin in worship together, we light candles. In our worship webcast, candle lighting still opens our time together. Jesus is the light of the world. We are to be light to one another. Jesus shines on us. In us, God's light shines.



In Advent, worship candles have even more prominence. We light more and more candles as we move deeper into December's darkness. And perhaps this December will be somewhat darker than most. Many of our familiar seasonal celebrations cannot happen as they usually do. Anticipated church events and beloved family traditions may not happen this year and that is hard. December in a pandemic may be more dark and difficult.

So we can remember, as we move towards what may be darker days, that in darkness, as in light, God is with us. Darkness can be a place of holy encounter. In her book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, Barbara Brown Taylor lists all the many good things that happen in the dark in Scripture. Abraham is led out into the dark night so that he can see the stars and hear God's promise, that he will have as many descendants as stars in the sky. Jacob wrestles with an angel in the darkness of the wilderness, and has a vision of a ladder that climbs to God. Jacob's son Joseph dreams such dreams at night that he catches a pharaoh's attention. The exodus from Egypt happens at night; God parts the Red Sea at night; manna falls from the sky in the wilderness at night...and that is just the beginning of Scripture's story.

In Christian tradition, there are those who remind us that God is often cloaked in darkness, that the Holiness of God is clouded in a deep dark mystery. *"This darkness and cloud is always between you and God no matter what you do"*, writes the anonymous fourteenth-century author of the spiritual classic: *The Cloud of Unknowing*. *"...So set yourself to rest in this darkness as long as you can for if you are to experience God, it must be in this cloud and in this darkness."* Gregory of Nyssa wrote of *"the opaque splendor of God."* The pinnacle of the spiritual journey toward God, Gregory says, exists in complete and dazzling darkness. In light and darkness God is with us.

And in the darkness there is light...

Christ's light will still shine on us and in us. We will still reach out to our community through Christmas Cheer, just in a different way. We will still share with our community's children as our children's shoebox program reinvents itself this year. We still light candles in Advent and gather in worship in this holy

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EDITOR: Nancy McPherson, [nmcperson@rogers.com](mailto:nmcperson@rogers.com)


<b>Council</b>	<b>DIRECTORY OF CHAIRS</b> Patricia Whitridge, Chair      council@rideaupark.ca Ken Tong, Vice-Chair
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<b>United Church Women</b>	Nancy Begg-Durkee, President      ucw@rideaupark.ca
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<b>RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH</b>	
<b>Worship (online):</b>	<b>10 a.m.</b>
<b>Coffee Hour:</b>	<b>Suspended</b>
<b>Sunday School:</b>	<b>Online</b>

**OUR HEARTS REMEMBER**

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

Joan Adamson	September 10
Colleen Holmes	September 21
Nora Christie	October 23
Eunice Dawson	October 23
Ronald Bedford	November 3
Katherine McKinnerey	November 8



*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)**

season, but online. We still gather in community and will celebrate Christ's birth in the ways that we can in this strange December. Christ will still be born to us. Christmas will still be good news.

In a darker December, we celebrate the coming of light. A holy child is born in Bethlehem's dark night. And even in our deepest darkness God is there.

Blessings, health and peace be yours.

*Steve Clifton*



**Treasurer's Note**

**W**hile the challenges of 2020 continue, here is a brief update on our finances. Revenues to the end of October were \$406,535 (2019: \$398,744). Expenses were \$383,931 (2019: \$472,236). As a result, we have a year-to-date surplus of \$22,604 (2019 – same period deficit \$73,492). There are three primary reasons for this improvement. We have had large donations from some members, operating expenses are down because the church has been closed for most of the year, and we have received approximately \$41,000 in government wage subsidies.

PAR continues to play an important role in enabling us to provide Sunday worship service, to continue assisting those in need and to pay all our staff, who are working very hard during this difficult time. We are also fulfilling our obligations to the National Church for both M&S and the National Assessment. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have provided extra financial support through additional givings. If you wish to make a donation to the church, please refer to the "Donate" page on the RPUC website.

Thank you, and I hope each one of you remains happy, healthy and safe over the coming winter months.

*Bob Roden, Treasurer*



**Next ChurchPost Submission**

**Due: 12 Noon,**      Friday, February 5, 2021  
**Pick-up:**              Sunday, February 14, 2021

**S**ubmissions to ChurchPost can be emailed to:  
**[nmcpherson@rogers.com](mailto:nmcpherson@rogers.com)**  
 and should include the name and phone number of the author(s).

**Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI)**



The Multifaith Housing Initiative, which our church supports, is working on a Veterans' House project. Using the former CFB Rockcliffe Airbase land in Ottawa, the proposed building will comprise three floors of living space, one floor of communal space and a basement for administrative purposes. All this housing is for veterans: 40 homeless or at-risk veterans will have immediate access to support services from a variety of partner agencies. "This supportive 'Housing First' model will give our veterans on-site recovery from health, mental health and addiction-related issues. Not only does the supported housing model improve the overall quality of life, but it does so in recognition of crucial and unbreakable experience of military bonds that exist for all in the military community from veterans to their families."

The [#WeSaluteYourService Challenge for Veterans' House](https://www.multifaithhousing.ca/) invites people to make a donation in honour of a veteran that they would like to remember.

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

**Wishing You a Merry Christmas Videos**

It's hard to be apart during this time of celebration. We invite you to send Christmas greetings to one another by video. Using a phone or tablet, record a brief video Christmas greeting using whatever words you choose, and send it to Steve at [sclifton@rideaupark.ca](mailto:sclifton@rideaupark.ca). We will take all the submissions and make a big video to share in our worship webcast. It will be good to see one another! Please record the video in landscape rather than in portrait if possible.



**Twenty Minutes of Sacred Stillness**

Our meditation group meets every Thursday morning at 10am on Zoom. Message Steve Clifton at [sclifton@rideaupark.ca](mailto:sclifton@rideaupark.ca) to get the Zoom meeting information or visit our website to find a recorded session and "how to meditate" videos.



**Wednesday Nights in Advent**

Rideau Park and Kitchissippi share a tradition of evening gatherings in Advent. Jenni, Elizabeth, Georgina and Steve will be offering 30-minute online gatherings on the four Wednesdays of Advent – December 2,9,16 and 23. December 16 will be the Blue Christmas service, with an opportunity to remember those we miss in the Christmas season. More details will be coming as Advent draws nearer.



**Sunday School Online**

Our Sunday School has been meeting online on Sundays since September. There are four age groups: JK/SK at 10am, Grades 1-3 at 10am, Grades 4-6 at 10:30am and our youth class at 11:30am. All these groups are meeting on Zoom. A huge thank you to our teachers for making this possible! If you would like to join in, message Steve Clifton at [sclifton@rideaupark.ca](mailto:sclifton@rideaupark.ca) for the Zoom coordinates.



**2021 Stewardship Campaign Update**

As of November 6, the Stewardship campaign has received a pledge total of \$334,504. Two hundred and six pledges have been received with:

- \$106,467 for the Ministries and Programs Fund
- \$21,584 for the Mission and Service Fund
- \$18,861 for the Property Renewal Fund
- \$181,592 for the Greatest Need
- \$6,000 for the Refugee Fund



In addition, there are 76 persons on PAR totaling \$127,380 that have not yet indicated their pledge and it would be greatly appreciated if those pledge forms could be returned.





### News from Rideau Park UCW

The UCW Executive meets monthly. In an effort to keep in touch with all our members, e-buddies and members-at-large, we have initiated a UCW Newsletter. The newsletter can be found on the UCW page under the Programs portion of the Rideau Park website. We hope the newsletter will become a regular way to share UCW news and events to members. Information on how to donate to the UCW is also there.

We will continue to receive replies to the UCW Finance Survey until November 20.

On November 30 at 1:00pm, the UCW Finance meeting will be held prior to the monthly Executive meeting, which will begin at 2:15pm. Both meetings will be via Zoom. Please contact Lisa Sadler or Nancy Begg-Durkee for further information.

Depending on the responses received to our survey, a decision will be made on how the UCW Christmas Candlelight service and Annual General Meeting will be managed. Clearly, there will be no in-person service and meeting for year-end 2020. UCW members will be advised of decisions made after the November meeting.

Donations for Masks has been successful, with approximately 75 masks snapped up, as well as a number of jams, jellies, and pickles. Close to \$800 has been raised.

2020 is indeed a strange year, and it is a challenge to keep everyone informed and up-to-date. The UCW thanks all of Rideau Park for its continued support.

One thing remains certain: no matter how this year has affected each us or how much we must change our Christmas celebrations, the Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace of the birth of Christ will be ours this year – just the same as always. Surround yourself with the comfort of knowing this truth. The UCW wishes one and all the very best of the Advent and Christmas Season.

*Nancy Begg-Durkee, UCW President*

### Christmas Cheer 2020 Update

As many of you will have heard when I made my initial announcement during the church service on November 1 (and rebroadcast for your listening pleasure on November 8, the decision has been made to proceed with Christmas Cheer this year.

In my message, I referred to the impact of COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions in many areas of our personal lives. This has also had a huge impact on our church community. We no longer worship together in person. Our Ministry team has done a wonderful job of keeping us together, sustaining our spirits and maintaining the message of hope, but many are missing our church community, our Rideau Park Family. Music programs, Harmony Club, Quilters' Group, Bible Study, Meditation and so many other activities stopped. Abruptly. The UCW has, I think appropriately, nicknamed COVID-19 as the Grinch who stole the Christmas Bazaar.

With Thanksgiving, Halloween, and Remembrance Day having passed, we now turn our thoughts to Christmas, a season of hope and joy, of light and love. Christmas may look very different this year – the children's pageant will be virtual and there will be no gingerbread houses – and we may be celebrating differently. But it will come with its wonderful message, the Christmas story of which we never tire.



The Christmas Cheer committee anticipates the need for support at Christmas will be great this year, and the decision has been made to support 150 families, requiring an estimated budget of \$12,000. There will be no actual food hampers this year; Beecroft will not be filled with rows of paper bags and stacks of food. This year, we will be providing gift cards, reducing risk and concerns associated with the pandemic.

The Rideau Park congregation has been tremendously generous in its support of this initiative, and I hope this year will be no different. Until we can meet again in person, stay safe, stay well and God Bless.

Donations can be made by e-transfer to "[accounting@rideaupark.ca](mailto:accounting@rideaupark.ca)"; by credit card or Interac through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org), or by cheque payable to "Rideau Park United Church". Please indicate that the donation is for Christmas Cheer.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 613-744-7344 or [lgilconrad@gmail.com](mailto:lgilconrad@gmail.com).

*Gretchen Conrad*





### Advent Occasions – Christmas 2020

**W**e will continue our webcast services on Sundays at 10am.  
**Special Events and Dates**

- November 29: Webcast of the 2019 Bell Concert at 7:00pm
- December 13: 21st Annual Christmas Pageant – Virtual Edition at 10:00am
- December 20: Webcast of 2019 Christmas Concert at 7:00pm
- December 24 : Christmas Eve Service webcast at 8:30pm
- December 27: Webcast of the 2019 Christmas Pageant at 10:00am
- January 3: Shared service with Emmanuel and Riverside churches

**Wednesday Advent evening online retreats:** December 2, 9, 16 and 23 at 7:00pm

The Wednesday, December 16 service will be a *Blue Christmas* service: loss, healing and hope.

### Christmas Giving 2020

**A**s with many aspects of 2020, we will be taking a different approach to this year's Christmas Shoebox Program. What will remain the same is that we will continue to support the women living at Minwaashin Lodge and the children and youth who use the services of the Banff Avenue Community House this holiday season.



What will differ is how and what we give. To ensure everyone's health and safety, we are asking for cash donations only. In consultation with our community partners, both have highlighted what would be most helpful to those that they support.

Should you choose to donate to the Minwaashin Lodge, your funds will go towards purchasing gift cards for retailers that the women frequent in their neighborhood. Our goal is to collect \$600.

If you plan to donate for the youngsters in the Banff-Ledbury community, our goal is to collect \$2,600. Your funds will be used to fill a Christmas stocking. The staff of the community house noted that many of the children look forward to opening our shoeboxes; they see the act of opening a gift as a Canadian tradition. We would still like to provide them with something to open, so the plan is to fill 130 stockings with toothpaste, toothbrushes, a package of crayons or pens, a hat, mittens or gloves, and a candy cane. The items for the stockings will be purchased online in a bulk order.

As with any Christmas season, the caring and generosity that you show our neighbours is greatly appreciated.

Donations can be made by e-transfer to "[accounting@rideaupark.ca](mailto:accounting@rideaupark.ca)"; by credit card or Interac through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org), or by cheque payable to "Rideau Park United Church" (mail or place in mailbox outside Cunningham door). Please put "Shoeboxes" in the message/comment area.

Thank you to the Hopkin family for organizing this outreach again this year.



### "Homes for the Holidays" Christmas 2020

**S**everal UCW members also offer their volunteer hours to the Maycourt Hospice. Hospice Care Ottawa is doing a virtual tour this year for their biggest fundraiser.



It is smaller than usual, but they have still managed to get four houses on the tour, and some of the same shops that have had a spot in the Irish Ambassador's residence. Below is a link in case you are interested. Please feel free to share with anyone else you think may be interested – the pandemic has made fundraising more difficult this year.

<https://www.hospicecareottawa.ca/virtual-homes-for-the-holidays.html>

Lisa Sadler

## The Day that Nothing Happened to Me

By Len McPherson (1923-2007)

**I**t was the day before Easter Sunday in April 1945. World War II was coming to an end. I was stationed at a Royal Canadian Air Force airfield near a small town called Linton-on-Ouse in Yorkshire, England. The Ouse was a small river about 15 miles from the historic city of York.

There were seven Canadian bases in Yorkshire that formed the bomber group. Each base had two squadrons, usually composed of twenty-five aircraft each. Since some aircraft might be shot down on air raids over Germany, the number could vary on a daily basis.

On this particular day, we had been briefed to go to Hamburg, a major city in Germany. After the briefing, about fifty aircraft from our two squadrons assembled around the perimeter of the airfield, waiting for our instructions to take off in sequence.

My responsibility, as Flight Engineer, was to move up the throttles of the four engines on the command of the pilot. We always had to wait until the preceding aircraft had become safely airborne before moving into the take-off position. Just before our take-off, I looked back and noticed that my best friend's aircraft was one of the two remaining to follow us.

We had a routine take-off and the five other members of our crew came out of the centre section of the airplane to get into their positions. The navigator, bomb aimer and the wireless operator came to the front section, the mid upper gunner to his turret, and the tail gunner to the rear turret.



As the tail gunner reached his position, he called out in shock over the intercom. A plane on the ground just had blown up! Knowing that my best friend's crew was in one of the planes on the ground, I was very worried.

We continued on our flight to Hamburg.

We did not fly in tight formation like the American Air Force. We flew in what was referred to as a gaggle. A gaggle was designed so that a 1,000 plane raid was not at all the same height. This prevented the German gunners on the ground from establishing our exact height and shooting us down in short order. Our altitudes varied, staggered at 300-foot variations, in four levels.

About one hour after take-off, we were over the North Sea. I was looking to starboard and saw another plane from our squadron flying past us. The pilot waved at us, as he decided to go at a greater speed than seemed necessary. Moments later, I saw two planes, with obvious damage to their wings, spiralling down to the Sea, like leaves falling from a tree in autumn. For a moment, it was fascinating to see this unusual motion. I quickly realized, however, that the pilot who had passed us had collided with another plane, and both were crashing into the Sea. Worse still, fourteen men were about to die as the tragic result of one pilot's error.

We proceeded onto Hamburg. About a half hour later, as we approached the target area, I was horrified to see one of our planes, which had been flying at one of the higher designated altitudes, burst into flames. It instantly went into a nose-dive, passing a few yards to our starboard. I advised our pilot to avoid it, but he had seen it already. We were very fortunate that we did not hit it as it zoomed down in flames, from wingtip to wingtip.

As we flew on, our rear gunner shouted that two of the crew had managed to get out. Then he groaned, as he realized their parachutes were on fire. They were falling to their deaths with the rest of their crew.

We reached the target a few minutes later, dropped our bombs and headed back to England. As we approached the coastline and were nearing our base in Yorkshire, it became increasingly foggy. The landing tower personnel advised us to continue to circle the field at an altitude of 6,000 feet, which they thought was above the clouds.

We were still in the clouds and after a few minutes, my pilot decided that it was too dangerous to go on, with the lack of visibility. He ordered me to give the engines more "boost". I immediately pushed the four throttles forward. We had just got into our climbing angle when, through the fog, we saw another plane headed our way. Fortunately, their pilot put their plane in a declining angle. As a result, we missed having a mid-air collision by a few seconds. We stayed above the clouds until we received orders to go to another base that was out of the clouded area.

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***The Day that Nothing Happened to Me (continued from page 6)***

In due course, we were instructed to land. We did so safely and went to the debriefing room. After doing this, we went to another room to await instructions to return to base. While we waited, I looked around the room to see if my best friend and his crew were there. They were not to be seen.

I wondered if they had been in the plane that had exploded on the field at take-off, had been involved in the mid-air collision, or had been shot down over Hamburg. I was very concerned.

Eventually, the weather cleared and we flew back to our base. When we got back to the mess hall, I saw that my friend was there, and said, "Am I glad to see you!" He replied "I'm glad that you can see me, too!"

He then told me that while they had waited as the last plane to take off, the plane ahead of them started down the runway. It veered off onto the unpaved field, causing the undercarriage to collapse. Since the plane was loaded with 4,000 pounds of bombs, there was great danger to the crew. They all got out and ran as fast as they could. Fortunately, they were all at a safe distance when the bombs exploded, causing the plane to shatter all over the field. My friend's take-off was cancelled.

I still had to feel sorry for the fourteen members of the two planes that collided due to the error of the pilot, and for the seven that were lost when they went down in flames. However, seeing my friend was a huge relief.

I have never forgotten "the day that nothing happened to me" and particularly, the split-second timing that saved fourteen lives when my pilot instructed me to increase the power so that our plane could climb over the clouds, while the other plane went into a dive.

**Congregational Christmas Carol Sing-Along Recording**

**T**his year, for the first time ever, our Christmas service(s) may be 99% virtual! We may not be able to gather as a congregation, a community, or potentially even as friends or with family. This breaks my heart, and those of many others, I'm sure. Both at home and at church, music has been part of the Christmas holiday season for centuries. This year, we can still make music happen! I cannot imagine a Christmas season without singing, so let's make some noise!!! From within the safety of your bubble, if you have the ability to make a recording (audio or video: cell phone, tablet, laptop, cassette tape, voice recorder, etc.) then PLEASE gather your kids, get your partner, or sing your heart out all on your own! This year, we need to sing – "sing loud, sing proud, sing strong, sing wrong", but please, just sing! If you have a voice, use it! It might feel strange at first, even overwhelming, but God gave us each a voice and, in the end, once the audio and images have been put "in sync" (THAT'S MY JOB), it will be AWESOME! One big, happy Christmas Eve Congregational Carol. I suggest a rousing rendition of "Joy to the World".

**Details**

Who: Volunteer members of the congregation.

What: **Three (3) verses of Joy to the World**, specifically 1, 2 and 4, sung to a recorded accompaniment.

Where: At home, using whatever recording equipment you have (no 8 tracks, please). **Recordings** are to be sent electronically, using Dropbox, WeTransfer...

When: Recordings are to be submitted by **Tuesday, December 1, 2020**.

Why: Though we may be apart, our voices and words of praise and adoration can still be heard together!

How: **Email** Iain Macpherson ([choirdirector@rideaupark.ca](mailto:choirdirector@rideaupark.ca)) to **receive** the lyrics, music and accompaniment track; **listen** to the accompaniment track; **learn** the 3 verses, **practise** singing along with it, **record** your part(s), and **submit** your recording to Iain Macpherson **by December 1, 2020**.

While the **December 1 deadline** should provide me with just enough time for compiling, editing, splicing and arranging (requires approximately 3 weeks), **feel free to submit your recording of "Joy to the World" earlier**. The more time I have for editing, the better the result!

*Iain Macpherson*







*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year!*



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