

This Family Story

Written By: Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz Dear Friends.

As I write, we are coming closer and closer to launching into a season of worship celebrations. That might seem a bit silly to say, still very much in the Season of Easter, but around here there's an unofficial progression of extra joyful days -Sundays in particular - that begins part way into May, and carries us right through to the end of June. From the Lawn Sale to Christian Family Sunday, rolled in with Music Sunday, and Pentecost soon after (with a Guest Preacher in between), followed by June's long list of plans, it is no wonder some folks start to name this time of year as Junevember. 'June is the new December', I remember a friend proclaiming to me, when our kids were still in elementary school and we could barely come up for scheduled air. It's fairly accurate for this presummer life in our church family, too. I know that all requires loads of time, energy, and cont'd

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MAY 27, 2023 ISSUE 2

volunteers, but truth is, I wouldn't have it any other way. I love that this church family is so alive and coursing with ideas, and I love that this current stretch coincides with when I first joined you, this time last year. Of course, these beautiful happy markers also coincide with the new life exploding in the trees and gardens. Maybe it's the latter that has spilled over into us. We seem drawn forward, collectively, into the hope and promise of seeds planted now. I mean that literally, thinking about everything from early-sown peas to sweet white onions. I also mean that figuratively, watching this congregation scatter great works of hope into new generations, new projects, and renewed dreams.

As I'm getting ready for another kind of stretch, unfurling my limbs and my ever-swirling brain in ten days of Study Leave, I am so thankful for the privilege of intentional learning. The annual Festival of Homiletics will take most of my time, but so too will I absorb the written wisdom of teachers like Julia Samuel. Her most recent work is one that I hope to finish while I'm away from email and the phone. I am already thinking continuously on her opening line, mirrored in the book's title: "Every family has a story. A story of love and loss, joy and pain." Samuel's invitation is for us to think about all that we inherit, and how we can make choices to grow within it. It is layered and complicated work, and yet in the end it offers hope and possibility.

Through all this – through the calendar management, the service planning, the community caring, the reading, the reflecting and then caring some more – I know myself exceedingly blessed to be part of this congregational story. I know that everything we schedule and do, especially the Sunday morning worship, is part of breathing together as a whole family of Jesus-followers. I believe that there is a greater purpose to it all, for neighbours, households, and generations we have yet to meet. They, too, are part of God's story already. What a gift to plan for their arrival in this place. With love to you all.

Sunday June 25th

This will be the final service before we break for the Summer.

Some highlights include:



- Communion
- Youth Led Service
- Pride Sunday
- Lunch on the Lawn





A Letter from Chair of Council

Hello friends of Christ First

A lot has happened since our last Summer Congregational meeting. We have much to be thankful for as we continue to explore ways to be spiritually engaged, community focused and caring and connected.

COVID is still around but is now just another part of our new normal and we continue to adapt. Most groups can now meet in person, and we have welcomed more people back to our in-person services. Once again, we were able to have our annual Fall BBQ. It seemed like forever that we had been able to sit together at table as a congregation.

Youth Ministry and Spiritual Development have been busy. Twenty-five children were registered for Summer Band Camp, and 15 attended our Vacation Bible School program. The Explorer program for ages five to 12 was restarted and a new Junior Youth Group introduced. A steady increase in the number of children at the 9:02 service is testament to Victoria's hard work in expanding our youth programs.

Outreach has also had a successful year. With the help of the Christ First United We Walk team over \$70,000 was raised for the Compass at their September walk. Christ First assisted Clarkson Community Church with its Inn From the Cold program with the rental of Peter Jones Hall at the Lakeshore campus. Outreach was also notified that Christ First had received confirmation of Edge grants for years two and three for the Community Hub Ministry program. After two test services in October, Faith United in Milton has signed up for the delivery of three services per month for February to June under the UCC Hub and Spoke project.

In September, our Exploratory Committee recommended that a Christ First Amalgamation Committee be formed to meet with a St. Stephen's on-the-Hill Amalgamation Committee and formal amalgamation talks started. In March, it was announced that talks were in temporary hiatus, but we would continue to build relationships between our two congregations.

The past year also brought some important staffing changes. Rev. Heather joined us last May and we have been grateful for her ministry. Ashley Fanourgiakis joined us last summer as our new Administration and Program Support Manager. Recently, it was announced that Evan Hoffman will be leaving us for an opportunity cont'd



A Letter from Chair of Council - continued

in the film industry. We wish Evan well and welcome Emily Adamson in her new role as our Director of Audio Visual Production.

We are thankful for the work of the Worship and music teams and our choir and 9:02 band who keep our services spiritually engaging and filled with beautiful music. Our office staff and sextons keep our church and church building humming as it buzzes with activity during the week. If you had any doubt we are a community hub, simply drop by to see what is going on during any weekday.

We can be proud of everything our church has accomplished this year. There are many more good things to come.

Grateful thanks to you all,

Richard Cranston Chair of Council.

Lawn Sale 2023

Thank you to all those involved in making our Lawn Sale this year a huge success! After eight consecutive days of rain, the sun came out for us and it was a beautiful day! We hosted five departments, welcomed 12 Trunk Sale



vendors into our parking lot, relied on over 50 volunteers, and were able to raise over \$4,150 for Christ First! #





Calendar Highlights



May 2023 28

Day of Pentecost & Communion

June 2023

Pride Month & Indigenous History Month

4
Semi-Annual Meeting &
Senior Sunday School &
Blended Service

9 Outreach Breakfast

18
Father's Day &
Indigenous Day of Prayer

25
Blended Service &
Communion & Lunch on
the Lawn



July 2023

l Canada Day

2 - 30 Services at St. Stephen's on-the-Hill

3 - 7 Music Camp

August 2023

6 - 27 Blended Services at Christ First 10am



7 Civic Holiday - Office Closed

8 - 11 VBS Camp



September 2023

Indigenous Month

4 Labour Day 10 Creation Time Begins 17 Chicken BBQ

5



A New Interpretation of "Sanctuary"

-At Christ First

Written by: David Wheeler

Sanctuary, by definition, is a term used to designate a place used for safety. Derived from the Latin, santarium, words ending in "arium" mean a container keeping something in, and in this case, holy things or perhaps cherished people. We, as a congregation, are truly blessed to have two sanctuaries; one being located at 1700 Mazo Crescent (referred to as the Clarkson Campus) comprising 30,000 square feet of building space and the second, being located at 151 Lakeshore Road West (referred to as the Port Credit Campus) comprising 15,000 square feet of building space.

If we were to think of these buildings from the perspective of a landlord maximizing your rental revenues, the retail commercial rental revenues on these buildings totaling 45,000 in rentable area should be generating, in round figures, \$600,000 in revenues per year. Why then are we only receiving revenues of approximately \$200,000 per year? How cont'd





A New Interpretation of "Sanctuary" - Cont'd

does one explain the disparity?

To answer this question, one only has to look at the Mission Statement of our church as stated by the three pillars – SPIRITUALLY ENGAGED, COMMUNITY FOCUSED, CARING & CONNECTED.

Our "rent" has now been redefined as "community tenancies" when referring to revenue items on our financial statements. At the moment we have 70 tenants renting our space. Nearly 100 percent of our present tenants are not-for-profit community groups requiring "sanctuary". These community groups would not exist in most cases without the discounted rental rates being offered by our congregation. The benefit to these groups can, in essence, be quantified by the difference between retail market rents of \$600,000 and what is collected of \$200,000 representing an implicit value of \$400,000 per year put back into the community.

Let us put money aside for a moment. Ask yourself, "what is the value of a life?" You cannot ever quantify this, and it is the most precious thing God has given us. The reason in bringing this up is to explain how one of our "sanctuaries" saved a life in March of this year.

Our newest community tenant has been "Inn from the Cold", which commenced January II and ended March 3I of this year. Inn from the Cold is a program, funded by the Region of Peel, sponsored by the Clarkson Community Church and in partnership with The Compass. This program is meant to shelter "people of no fixed address" in the warmth of our Port Credit Campus auditorium every evening during the winter months. We have been supplying shelter for up to 30 people per night and could do more since as many as 44 persons in Port Credit have been identified as "people of no fixed address". Because of this "sanctuary", many overnight residents have been saved from the bodily pain and loss from frostbite, and in one case, their actual life!

As stated at one of our Council meetings, "Would we as inn keepers have turned Joseph and Mary away looking for refuge on the night Jesus was born?"

Ending on this note, you can answer this question on your own. Clearly stated, these buildings are an ongoing important and integral part in achieving God's intention for us to act out our Mission as stated by the three pillars. 🕆







Concerts

A Poem By: Grace Vandermale

Concerts for music are intense It raises one up and off the fence.

Music...

You cannot sit and just stare into space
A smile will inevitably appear on your face.

Music...

Especially in a cathedral

Where the sounds cover us all.

Music...

Such a performance to hear Brings the joys of heaven so near.

Music...

The inner spirit of the listening person
Is lifted whether it's Evensong, Bach, or Gershwin.
Music...

Many pandemic days have been so dreary It made our eyes smart and become teary.

Music...

We no longer need to be so greyly sorrowful

Bright musical color in our souls becomes helpful.

Music...

Concerts, theater, visual arts, book readings
All of these are offering their pleadings.
For Music!

Above is a picture of Faith Amour in the Port Credit Sanctuary, performing at the October 29, 2022 fundraising concert.

Summer Hours



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July 3 -September 1, 2023

Monday 9am—12pm
Tuesday 9am—12pm
Wednesday closed
Thursday 9am—12pm
Friday 9am—12pm
Saturday closed
Sunday closed

Regular office hours resume Tuesday September 5, 2023

> The office will be closed on: June 30 August 7 September 4

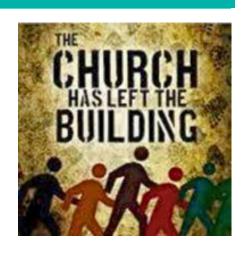


On Being Church in the 21st Century Living The Christian Ethos

What If ...

Written by: Mike Giguere

Dr Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas: (We can find the Bible anywhere we look)



"He puzzled and puzzled till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. Maybe Christmas, he thought ... doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps ... means a little bit more!".

When I wrote the first article in this series, for the newly launched "Joyful Noise", we were actively engaged with SSOTH in merger discussions. We have since put those discussions on pause. Both congregations learned that each must do a lot more discernment in defining what it means to each of us to be church in the 21st century. We must know ourselves before we can get "married". We live in complex times with a multitude of distractions that compete for our attention to our spiritual development. How does a faith community live out the gospel in the times of dwindling church attendance? As I ponder this I think of the above "reading". Can

church be "just a little bit more" ---more than buildings and property and pews and offices? Maybe church is a state of mind where we collectively advocate for and support the vulnerable in our midst to the best we can until we know better. When we know better, we do better. (Channeling Maya Angelou)

In the previous article I left you with the following questions that were posed after a brief dissertation on the good work we are already doing:

Are we efficient at all the above? Are we using the resources we are responsible for as effectively as we ought to be? Can we do more for the greater good in the direction we are already headed with the foregoing?

What if... ...We dream big... cont'd





On Being Church in the 21st Century Living The Christian Ethos - Cont'd



- ...We have enough faith in ourselves, as a faith community, to take bold steps and unshackle ourselves from our current configuration of real estate assets.
- ...What if our dreams, plans and desires, to be a community church, in the broader sense of community, were like other area congregations of other denominations.
- ...What if we worked collectively.
- ...What if we had control over a property, located on a major transit corridor, in a densely populated part of the city where there is a lack of support for persons of no fixed address and a few dollars were needed

to turn the property into a community outreach centre.

...What if there was a nearby community church that has been in discussion with Indwell to build 140 deeply affordable housing units on the church's property BUT there was one big stumbling block that could be solved with a paltry six million dollars.

All these "what ifs" are within our grasp. What is your dream for our future? What shall be our legacy? How shall your years of financial, volunteer, and spiritual commitment to our church be reflected in the community? What mark shall we collectively make?

In light teal are some links you may find illuminating as you ponder the foregoing questions: Written and produced by our own Kent Hoffman, <u>"Kendra Fry Creative Collisions"</u>

"New Leaf Ministries" had a ZOOM series on Affordable Housing featuring Indwell this past winter. I have provided links below to all 4 in the series. They are compelling and thought provoking. The last one covers the myriad of ways that Indwell works with faith communities. Week 1, Week 2, Week 3, and Week 4. From this video series, one learns that Indwell has spun off an organization called "Flourish" a social purpose real estate development services company.

https://flourish.ca/

Let's "DREAM BIG". Better yet, let's "DO BIG".

Affirming Ministries

The Future Planning Group is resurrecting a pre-COVID project to investigate becoming an Affirming Community of Faith. The Affirming Ministries Program is a network of United Church of Canada ministries of all kinds that strive to be fully inclusive of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The program encourages all United Church bodies, and other Christian traditions, to study and discern what it means to be publicly welcoming and inclusive in their context. At Christ First, we do our best to be welcoming! But being an Affirming Community of Faith goes deeper - it is a public, intentional, and explicit commitment to diversity and inclusion. The Future Planning Group is currently gathering requirements and resources to present at a future Council meeting. Stay tuned!



As another school year is winding down, our children's ministry is still as active as ever! We are excited to celebrate Pride month with a month of Sunday School learning about Joseph and the Amazing Dreamcoat! Joseph faced many challenges because he was different - he had big dreams for his life, and his uniqueness made some people uncomfortable. Despite Joseph's challenges, he remained true to himself. Being different is what makes us great! Our Pride month will come to an end with a special worship service on Sunday, June 25 as our children and youth take leadership in a combined service celebrating the rainbow and all of God's people.



FAMILY



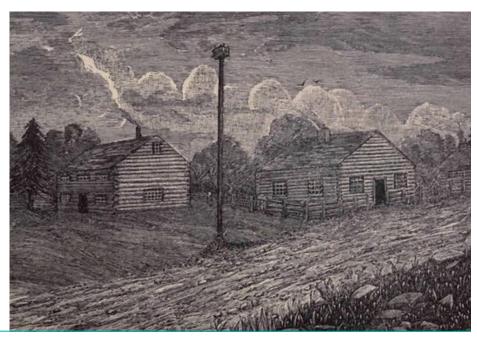
The fun continues through the summer, as we look forward to two weeks of summer camp! Music Camp will run from July 3-7. Throughout the week, campers will explore music through drumming, singing, dancing, and more! The following month, our VBS camp will run from August 8-11. This year's theme is Compassion Camp, and we will explore what it means to have compassion for others, ourselves, and the world!

We Acknowledge...

Part 1

Written by: Charlie Black

In each service the Land
Acknowledgement reminds us
in broad terms of the
relationship between the
Indigenous people and the
territory where we now reside.
As we approach the
National Indigenous Day on
June 21 it is timely to look in
more detail at the relationships



Sketch of the Old Credit Mission showing School and Council House at left, Church in centre, and Peter Jones' first house at right. Atop the flagpole is a small house where martins could nest. From Egerton Ryerson's The Story of My Life (W. Briggs, 1883)

of Indigenous people with both our community and our church.

Different Indigenous tribes have been present on the northern shore of Lake Ontario since prehistoric times, but by the 17th century the Mississaugas, a branch of the Chippewa (Ojibway) tribe of the Algonquin (Algonkian) nation had defeated the Iroquois and Huron tribes and become dominant in this area. Like most Indigenous peoples, the Mississaugas were nomadic in nature, moving their camps and all their belongings frequently, often from season to season, in search of fish and game, wild berries and grains, etc. They had a high regard for the land and the sustenance it provided, but approached it on a communal, custodial basis, not as owners. The concept of an individual laying claim to a specific piece of land to the exclusion of others was, quite literally, foreign to them.

The lowlands near the mouth of the Credit River were favourite camping grounds, particularly in the fall when the salmon were spawning. Though there was constant coming and going, these lowlands were so popular that they became known as an Indian village, and a French explorer's map from the 18th century shows a village on the current site of the Mississauga Golf Club. The mouth of the Credit was also a key site for their first interactions with Europeans.

Among the European powers, the French had control of the area since the early years of the 17th century but made no attempt to settle it, considering the area almost exclusively as a resource for the fur trade. For many years traders from Quebec came to the cont'd

We Acknowledge ...

Continued

village on the Credit each spring, with their freight canoes packed with cotton fabric, clothing, shoes, hats, guns, cooking utensils, mirrors, beads and other articles. On the shore the Mississaugas offered to trade fine furs of various animals, handmade snowshoes and moccasins, woven grass baskets, bead covered jackets and belts. This trade was so well established that the traders sometimes provided goods "on credit" when the supply of furs and other articles was exhausted, and the Indigenous people would bring enough furs the next year to repay their debts. Thus the area became known as "the river of credit" as well as by the Indian name of Messinnike which means "trusting river".

In 1763 the English defeated the French and took over almost all French territorial claims in North America. They continued the fur trade as before and initially there was no impact on the Mississaugas. However, some small settlements began to be established, especially after the loss of the American colonies in 1783 which resulted in a significant influx of United Empire Loyalists to Eastern Canada. Though the immediate impact in this area was slight, the die was cast.

Sir John Graves Simcoe was appointed as Governor of the new territory of Upper Canada in 1791, and shortly thereafter he commissioned the building of a military road from Etobicoke Creek to Burlington Bay (the current Dundas Street/Highway#5), appointing a Welshman, Augustus Jones, as surveyor. Jones met and married Tuhbenahneequay, the daughter of a Mississauga chief, and together they had ten children, including their oldest sons, Peter and John. Since Augustus was away much of the time on survey work the family was largely brought up by his wife, living with the Mississauga band in the Grand River area. The children were raised in a Christian home and attended school to learn English, mathematics and religion. With this background, Peter and John were well prepared to play key roles in the village on the Credit and surrounding area and in the establishment of our church, roles which will be explored in the second part of this article in the next issue. 🕆



The history of our community and the history of our church are closely interwoven, and the congregational records maintained by the United Church Archives are a very important source of information for researchers.

For further information readers may wish to consult some publications in Christ First's library such as:

- "The Chapel's 100 Years--- 1894-1994"; FirstUnited Church, 1994
- "Our Heritage"; Stanley A Holling, 1975
- "Clarkson and its Many Corners"; Kathleen Hicks, 2002

Thank You, Evan!





"Working with Evan has been a nonstop adventure, for which we are eternally grateful! 5 stars!"

-VICTORIA



"Problem solver,
tech genius,
magician - Evan
was always patient
explaining
technology and
making magic
happen in our
services."

-JANIS



"Forever patient,
and willing to roll
with any new
challenge, Evan
made the tech
desk look easy;
and he made
worship possible
for so many, many
lives."

-HEATHER



"Resourceful, respectful, and kind; Evan should wear a cape, because he's a superhero!"

-GREG

A year in Review













Volunteer to Improve Your Health?

Written By: Andy Choles

You must have experienced the sitting down to check a couple of emails only to get distracted by some interesting online "news" articles. They appear informative but usually require sifting through a multitude of pages -- often chock full of ads -- only to leave you feeling rather





unsatisfied that you haven't learned anything useful and you wasted a lot of time doing it. I believe the vernacular for these items is "click bait" – a very appropriate name.

Nevertheless, once while engaging in this guilty pastime, I came upon an article that declared, "Canada ranks as the 13th happiest country in the world in annual report".

The article went on to describe that we've moved up slightly from 15th place in the last "World Happiness Report". It seems the Scandinavian countries continue to hold the top spots with Finland finishing number

one for the sixth year in a row.

That got me wondering why they might be considered the happiest countries in the world. The cost of living in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark is quite a bit higher when compared to Canada. They certainly pay more taxes. The climate has some



similarities to ours but is likely more severe than Canada. Finland, in particular, lives next to a much more belligerent neighbour than us. There must be more to creating happiness in one's life other than having invented the sauna, producing fine hockey players or cornering the market on furniture that must be assembled using an Allen key. cont'd

Thank You

"The entire Gittings family is deeply thankful for the kindness and support we received from our church community after the passing of our beloved Ted, and for the comfort we found in Rev Heather's Pastoral care. We are also very grateful for the team of friends who. under the leadership of Nancy Hori, provided a lovely post funeral luncheon, allowing us time to share stories and memories of Joyce and Ted. Our church volunteers are such a blessing."

Sandra Gittings-Keane



Volunteering... continued

A characteristic that was reported as very common in all the Scandinavian countries was altruism. Altruism, in this case, included any act that is aimed at improving another's wellbeing. It was reported that not just in these countries, but a trend worldwide noted more people reported they had donated to charity, volunteered, or helped a stranger during the previous month. However, it was particularly pronounced in Finland and its Nordic neighbours. It's easy to see that the people in need benefited from these acts of kindness, but also the person providing the help or the donation also experienced measurable health benefits. The "warm glow" people experienced after helping another led to reports of higher life satisfaction, fewer symptoms of depression and higher job satisfaction lasting up to two months following the acts of kindness. Engaging in altruistic behaviours promoted happiness in both the giver and receiver. It would seem that this is a hidden, personal, benefit of helping out your neighbour and wider community. I urge you to continue volunteering in your community as well as your church. That time you spend helping out at The Compass, ushering on a Sunday morning, or helping out at the Christ First Lawn and Trunk Sale not only helps out your community, but also provides you with personal psychological enrichments in your own life. And that's a good thing! 🕆

News from the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council

Redevelopments

A large redevelopment has been undertaken at Westminster United Church in Mississauga, in partnership with the United Property Resource Corporation ("UPRC"). The project will span multiple years and see the site transformed for the congregation's future use in worship and mission.

Communities of Faith - News

Horseshoe Falls has completed three amalgamations in the past year and has one underway. At least eight communities of faith are in shared ecumenical ministry and another two are coming together this month.

Spring Gathering

June 8 and June 10 will be the Horseshoe Falls Regional Spring Gathering. The gathering will be both online and in person.

Hub & Spoke

Christ First's and Faith United's status as the first Hub & Spoke Ministry in the Horseshoe Falls Region has been confirmed by the Congregational Support Commission, with gratitude for our work.

Submitted By: Shawn Bausch

United Church of Canada National News

Strategic Plan

In January, the United Church of Canada launched a three-year strategic plan. The plan includes a "new call" for the church that is articulated in the following way:

"Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice."

The intent of the strategic plan is to position the national church for long-term sustainability. This will include support for congregations whose energies are declining as well as the opening of more than 100 churches nationwide. New churches will primarily be opened in communities which have not previously had a United Church.

The plan seeks to return to core values for which the United Church has become known worldwide: embolding justice and invigorating individual leadership, with a clear focus on the common good. For more information, please find a copy of the plan summary here, or reach out to Shawn Bausch for more information.



Click here for the United Church of Canada's Strategic Plan document. If you are reading a paper copy, please scan the QR code above and you will be directed to a PDF copy of the document on the United Church of Canada's website.

Indigenous Church - Remit 1

Based on decisions of the 44th General Council, the United Church is holding a remit to approve the question and educational resources for an amendment to the Basis of Union that would establish an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada. The proposal is that an Indigenous Church Organization will have its own mechanisms for process and structure, enabled to make changes itself rather than return to a remit process. It is intended to acknowledge the autonomy of Indigenous church as a group. The remit was made available in March, and the period of study will be 12 months. During this period, the governing councils of all churches nation-wide will submit the results of their community's response to the General Council, for announcement of the results in 2024.

Christ First Register

February 20 through May 12, 2023



Deaths

As is true for any family, this chosen bond we call a church is forever changing in who we see and know. Missing those who have left before us in death, and welcoming those who have just started their journey here, we give great thanks to God for the gift, the honour, to be in this life, together.



'In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not alone.

Thanks be to God.'

Joe Macri - February 17, 2023

Doris Baker - March 26, 2023

Fred Gotzmann - May 1, 2023

Room Usage

All room usage must be approved by the office. For available dates, and to book your event or meeting, please call or email.

Christ First Clarkson

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