

Tidings

Vol 29, No 4

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2019

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
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Tidings

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David Wardlaw

The tag line 'Food for Thought' on the front cover was inspired by the feature article 'Upstairs, Downstairs: Re-thinking communion, food, and sharing at church.' The fullness of the connection between this intriguing title and the tag line will become apparent when reading the article. You will notice that the author is Robin Wardlaw. Since Robin is my brother, I feel it is important to explain how this contribution arose. The article's by-line reveals that it is based on the theme of his recently completed D.Min. thesis. Robin sent me a copy which I read in the summer. This led me to think that a feature article on the thesis topic would be appropriate for *Tidings*. In early October I took this idea to the *Tidings* Committee which unanimously endorsed it. Then I invited Robin to prepare such an article and he kindly agreed.

This is the last of the four issues of *Tidings* published in the calendar year. The time is right to thank and acknowledge the many people who contributed their time and talent or their fiscal resources in 2019 to make this magazine vibrant and sustainable. There are far too many individuals to list by name, so I'll recognize the myriad of contributors in groupings. First, there is the *Tidings* Team as listed on the inside of the front cover. Next, the authors of the articles and reports. In 2019: there were regular reports from the chairs or designate reporters of 12 committees and groups, and a regular message from our minister; 34 articles by members and adherents of FSA; and five articles by guest authors from outside FSA. Finally, there are the fiscal contributions which make possible the high quality hard copy printing of each issue, namely our 16 paid advertisers and the congregation as a whole by virtue of approving an annual budget that includes a supplement to the advertising revenue. To all of you, I express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation for your varied and valued contributions to *Tidings*.

The *Tidings* Team wishes you a peaceful, joyful, and restorative holiday season. May Advent provide opportunities for reflection and worshipful moments. †

On Sunday Nov. 17th FSA's beloved Director of Music, Terry Head, tragically passed away. At that time this issue of *Tidings* was in the final stage of preparation for printing. It was decided to proceed with publication of the issue without modification. A tribute to Terry will be a focus of a future issue; this will allow time for thoughtfully considered and broadly based contributions.

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Rev. Michelle Down

The seasons are always changing. The leaves turn colour and fall off the trees. The first snowfall drifts gently down to the ground to blanket the earth and brighten the darkness with new promise.

We too are in a time of great transformation in our faith, as we anticipate the Christmas season that is about to be upon us. The season when new life comes to us, and wraps us in the swaddling clothes of Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness and Hope.

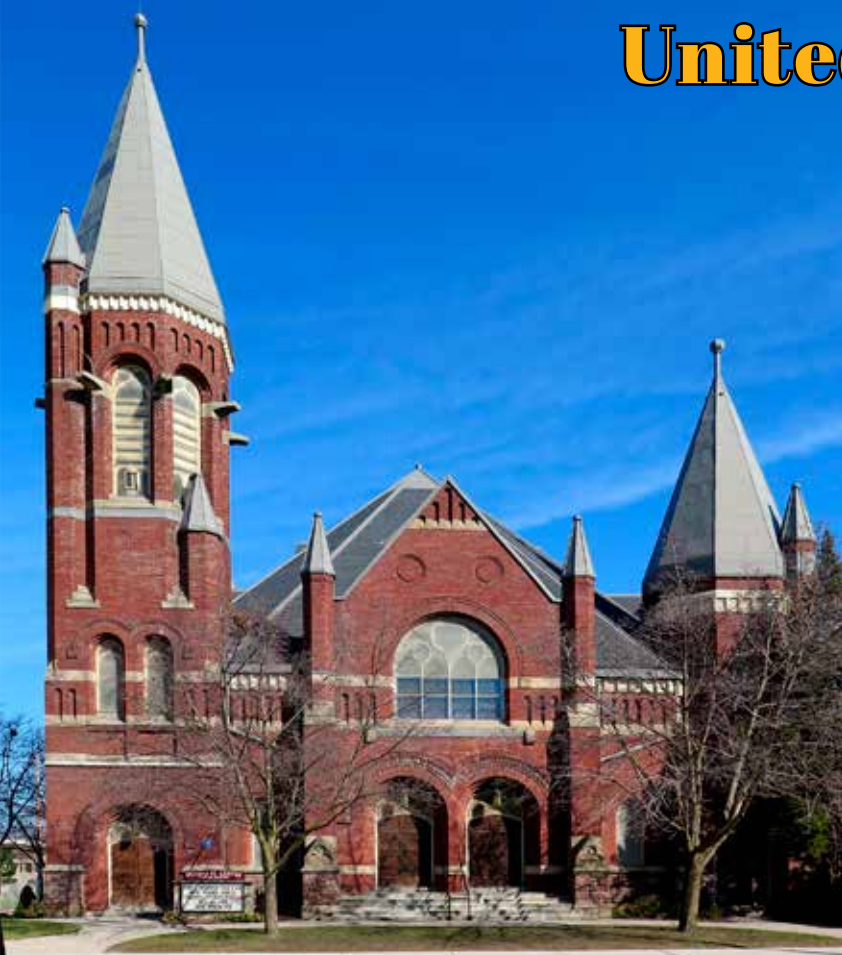
We are being invited into the majesty of the Holy Night even when it feels at times like we are lost in the Bleak Mid-Winter. Can we, in those dark moments, still hear The Herald Angels Sing, and find the courage to journey to the Little Town of Bethlehem? We are being called to Come All Ye Faithful, to share Joy to the World and find refuge with the Three Kings, Away in a Manger. May we, with the Angels from the Realms of Glory find peace on this First Nowell, so that the Silent Night might proclaim the Good News and enable US to Go Tell it On the Mountain, that Jesus Christ is Born!

But none of this comes without preparation, discipline and training. The confirmation class at FSA has been studying the gospel of Luke this year. As part of our vows to these young people, and also to our own faith development, I am offering you an invitation. Beginning on December 1st, I invite each of you to begin your own study of the Gospel of Luke. There are 24 chapters, and so by Christmas Eve, having read one chapter every day, you will have experienced the telling of Jesus' birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection. You will journey with both the Herald Angels, and the common folk; the Marys and the Marthas; the Jameses and the Judases.

This voyage through the gospel is an opportunity for inspiration with self, conversation with others, and reformation with God. I am asking you to hear the words of the historic Christian message, and to find our own stories living within it. I am asking you to invite your Spirit on a journey to explore how you are living the Gospel message in your everyday life. I am asking you: Are you ready for new life to be born within you and around you?

The Season of Advent is about preparation. Let's prepare our hearts and our minds, our bodies and our souls to exclaim: What Child is This, who laid to rest; on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet, while Shepherds watch are keeping. This, this is Christ the King. The Babe, the Son of Mary. People of First-St. Andrew's United Church ... O Come, Let Us Adore Him. †

Celebrating Dundas Street Centre United Church



Main Entrance

Photo by Diane Cuppels



Nancy Quinn

The church began in 1846 with a dedicated group of Methodists meeting in a small cottage. After several church building incarnations, location moves, and a fire, the present red brick, Romanesque church arose at the corner of Dundas and Maitland. The Sanctuary was dedicated in 1896. With church union in 1925, the name became *Dundas Street Centre United Church*, affectionately known to some as *DCUC* (pronounced “D-C-U-C”). A designated historic site, the building is recognized for its beautiful, acoustically renowned Sanctuary, which features a semi-circular free-standing balcony, Victorian stained glass windows, and a dome. The celebrated three manual *Casavant* organ was recently refurbished and upgraded with an electronic console. It now has more than 75 ranks, with the addition of electronically sampled voicings via a musical-instrument-digital-interface connection to the organ.

The Rev. Wendy Noble has served for four years as Minister for both *DCUC* and *Rowntree United*. With an average of fifty people at the 11:00am service, a core of committed congregants cheerfully work to keep things humming. The church’s newsletter, *The Centre Spoke*, keeps people tuned in, with a mix of church news, photographs, poetry, book reviews, humour, and member experiences. Rev. Noble says *DCUC*’s vision of Christianity is to provide “a welcoming community of faith, serving the community in which we are located.” The church practices “radical hospitality,” being present with and welcoming people in need. “Saints are people doing what they can in the midst of where they are called to be God’s light.”

Overseeing the church’s life, the Unified Board membership comes from the six committees: Spirituality; Stewardship; Property (Rentals); Ministry and Personnel; Outreach and Social Justice; and Trustees. *DCUC* member, Fred Faas has organized the church’s weekly Wednesday *Out of the Cold Hospitality Meal*, since its inception 22 years ago. He reports that nearly 70 church and community volunteers, divided into four teams, cook for and serve 70 to 90 guests. By appointment, social agencies access *The Good Samaritan’s Cupboard*, a clothing and housewares storehouse, which includes colourful, handmade quilts. A number of social outreach agencies use space, including *Quentin Warner House* and *Alcoholics Anonymous*. *DCUC* is a member of *LIFT*, which oversees 75 affordable housing units.

Dundas Street Centre has long been known for the excellence of its music programme. Directed by Norm Abbott, this programme celebrates the beauty of diverse sacred music, with a focus on the traditional. The senior choir has 12 choristers, including four paid choral scholars, supported by the *Brown and Cote Choral Funds*. Providing excellent performance opportunities, repertoire for solos,

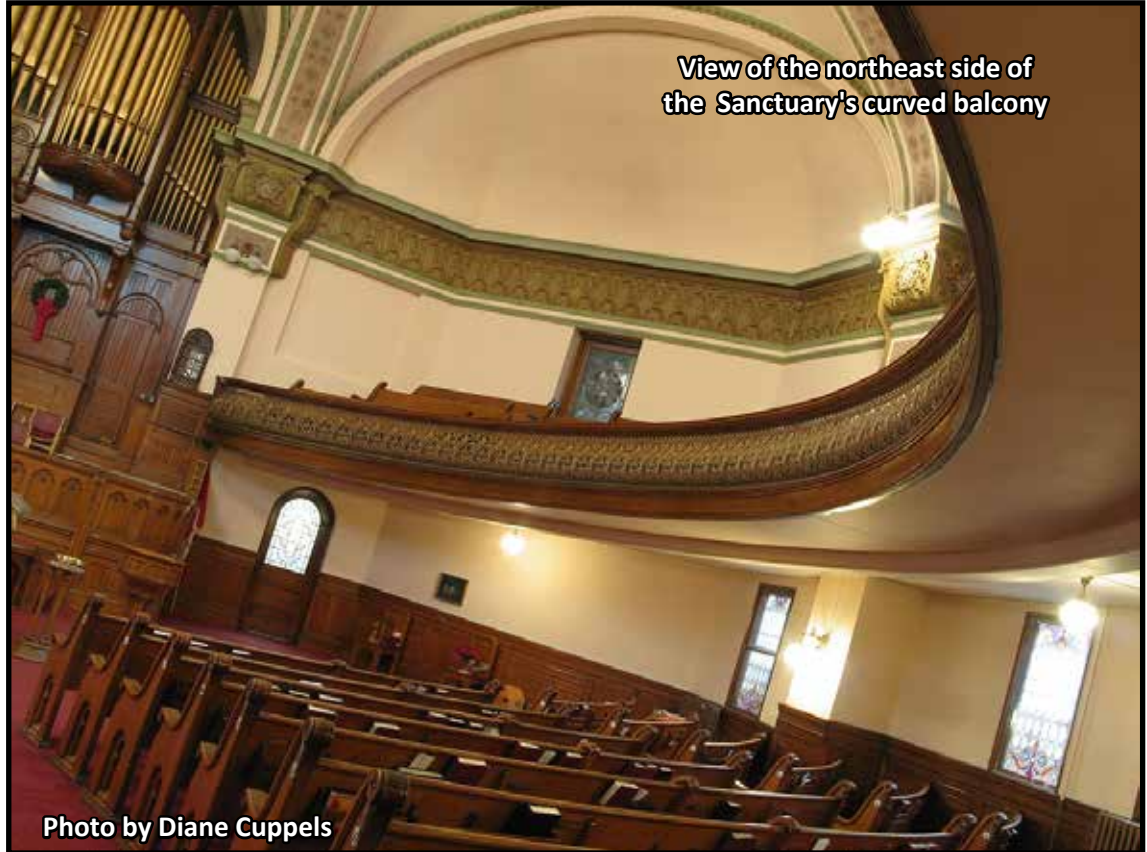
duets, trios and quartets comes from an extensive library. Now in his 22nd year as music director, Norm also arranges and composes for worship services and special events. Memorable DCUC initiated concerts include the past *Out of the Cold* annual Fall fundraising concerts, the recent *Spring Concert* organ fundraiser (guest organist: Paul Merritt), and *DCUC Choral Scholar concerts*. With their central location and coveted Sanctuary acoustics, DCUC is home to the *London Community Orchestra* and the *London Youth Symphony*. The sanctuary has been the venue for many *London Singers* and *London Pro Musica Choir* concerts.

Many decades ago a children's orchestra and a brass band would perform from the stage of the beautiful Sunday School auditorium, a miniature of the glass-domed main sanctuary. It is now a welcoming church reception area. The recently retired UCW sponsored luncheon concerts on this historic stage included *Remember—A Sentimental Journey*, *O Valiant Hearts: A Salute to the End of the Great War* and the annual *St. Patrick's Day Potato Bash* (now church organized). In Norm Abbott's words, DCUC is "small but mighty" in its talented and enthusiastic music endeavours.

DCUC supports many church and community-based activities. Please see www.dundasunited.com for more information. The accompanying photographs

are as referenced in *A Pictorial Guide to Dundas Street Centre United Church ... A Special Beauty* by member Diane Cuppels. †

Editor's note: Much of the content of this article is based on interviews with: the minister at DCUC, Rev. Wendy Noble; the music director, Norm Abbott; and the organizer of the Out of the Cold program, Fred Faas. Their co-operation in the preparation of this article is greatly appreciated.



View of the northeast side of the Sanctuary's curved balcony

Photo by Diane Cuppels

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Barb Luft



Laura Wood

If you ask Barb Luft about her fondest memories, they usually involve family. It seems natural then, that family is what led her to First-St. Andrew's. Her daughter and son-in-law, Laura and Chris Wood, are long-time members and were thrilled to have Barb recently join the congregation.

Barb grew up in Oxford County near Bright and Drumbo on a farm that backs onto the now Walters Family Farm. She is childhood friends with another long-time FSA member, Margo Christodoulou. Barb recalls that she and Margo would walk together to catch the school bus to go to Waterloo Oxford High School. In the spring the road they walked on was flooded so they had to wear rubber boots to get through the water. They didn't want to be seen on the bus with the "city kids" in these big boots so they would take them off, put their shoes on and leave the boots behind some evergreen trees until they returned on the bus. They would then change back into the boots to go home. She has no idea if their parents ever caught on.

Barb grew up attending Windfall United Church (south of Bright and west of Drumbo) and was confirmed and married there.

Barb began her family in Kitchener but moved to London in 1980 where she worked for Cuddy Foods and Ellis Don Construction. Barb retired from Ellis Don in 2007. She enjoys spending time with friends, going out for lunch with them and attending theatre. She loves to keep in touch with relatives and organizes an annual Family Reunion. As she gets older she feels like her relatives are more important to her, or perhaps just more interesting! She also takes yoga at the Kiwanis Centre and has recently taken up a class in journaling. She is always open to trying something new!

Barb formally became a member of FSA in September of 2019. She describes FSA as a beautiful, friendly church filled with inspiring music. Every Sunday is a chance for her to connect with new and old friends and family and we are happy to see her smiling face in the congregation! †



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A Look Back and a Look Ahead to "Joining the Church"



Jean Wright

Generations now have names: Generation X, Generation Y, all with specific characteristics. For those of us at First-St. Andrew's who were born in the 30's and 40's, what are we? Generation O (O for Old)? And what was our history of going to church? Well, it was routine. On Sunday we went to church, to Sunday School, and Teen Group. We went to Confirmation Class and "joined the church" when we were sixteen or so.

As parents we brought our children for Baptism, and took them to church on Sunday and to Sunday School, and then they attended Confirmation Classes and shortly thereafter "joined the church." Now, for many of us, our adult children don't go to church, and their children don't go through the routine that led Generation O to confirmation. When we talk to our children about going to church we get a variety of responses.

- "We have many commitments all week, and like to be free on Sunday."
- "It's fine for you to go, but I don't have any interest in going."

So it is of interest to consider the current Confirmation process at FSA and touch base with some of the members of the 2019 class. How do the classes work? What is the experience of the confirmands?

One of the important aspects of the class is that each student has a "mentor," a person who works with the student to provide opportunities for reflection, and questions. This is a bit different from their parents' class, and was unknown in their grandparents' class. These mentors have a significant influence on these young people. We know from research that an older, established person influences a young person's life path, more than his/her studies or textbooks. The FSA mentors have devoted their time to guide the young people, preparing them for church membership by talking about their faith, and the role of a church member, and studying the Gospel of Luke.

When we talk to individual students, it is interesting to hear their thoughts on the process. There are the structured Sunday classes under the dedicated leadership of Allyson Watson, plus every second Friday night they have a social gathering. For some of them, this is the introduction to church fellowship, which, for many of us in Generation O, is so precious.

For those in the class who haven't had the experience of Sunday school, and growing up in the church, all this is a learning process: Bible stories, teachings of Jesus, understanding the worship service, the Christian life. This background is covered in the Sunday classes. One influential lesson mentioned was Rev. Dr. David McKane talking to the class about the stories depicted in the stained glass windows in the sanctuary. And finally "you learn to talk to people about church stuff."

These young people are truly the "Next Generation" in First-St. Andrew's. How do they see the future of our church, the future of their church? Some of them mentioned things like the Labyrinth, the music programmes, and speakers.

When we think about these young people, their leaders, their mentors, what a blessing they are to all of us at First-St. Andrew's. †

Student members of the 2019 confirmation class will become members of First-St. Andrew's at a special service early in 2020 in the presence of their mentors and the congregation. We trust in God's continued blessing of these young people as they explore and grow in their faith here at FSA.



Steve Elson

MEALS ON WHEELS LONDON: MORE THAN TENANTS TO FIRST-ST. AND

We are privileged to serve the London Community and take pride in listening to the needs of those we serve to improve our programs to meet the dynamic needs in our community. Meals on Wheels London

Meals on Wheels London (or MOWL) is a volunteer-driven organization that helps people maintain their independence and remain in their own homes and communities. Their services are particularly important today when patients are discharged earlier from hospital, coming home for much of their recovery period.

Meals on Wheels London has been operating in London since 1969, celebrating its 50th anniversary in September 2019, and has been a major tenant at FSA since 1997 when it began renting Farquhar House (the former manse) following a \$100,000 renovation to add a new furnace, air conditioning, lighting and other features. As of June 2019 it has also been using a former Sunday School room next to the Fireside Room for the assembly of meals prior to their distribution. You may have noticed a sign on the outside of the door next to the parking lot that reads “East Depot”—this refers to the food assembly site within.

“For over 20 years we have been proud to share space with First-St. Andrew’s United Church. Thank you for helping us to fulfill our mission of helping people remain independent in their homes by delivering nutritional meals and providing transportation rides to wellness-related appointments.” Susan Edginton, Manager of Client Services for MOWL.

Meals on Wheels London provides service to seniors (55+) and adults (18+) with disabilities in need of nutritional support. MOWL assists those who need short- or long-term assistance. Fresh (delivered daily on weekdays over the lunch hour) or frozen (delivered weekly on Thursdays), the meal service is designed to meet all types of meal support needs, from meals every day, to meals only as needed.

Meal deliveries provide not only nutritious meals, but also regular check-ins and social contact with Meals on Wheels delivery volunteers from our community.

Meals on Wheels started out as a seniors-focused service, but has expanded to include adults living with disabilities. Recently they are seeing more people living in poverty who need to use their services.

Wheels for Wellness, MOWL’s transportation service, provides clients with a door-to-door service from their home to any wellness-related appointment. The cost is \$22 for a round trip within the city of London to appointments three hours or less. Volunteers can accommodate foldable walkers and canes; however, this is not a wheelchair accessible service.

Wheels for Wellness clients are also invited to join in on Lunch Bunch. This monthly group lunch provides the opportunity for a social outing to a restaurant in our community. Clients get a ride to the restaurant, eat with others, and are driven home. The meal is at the client’s expense.

Meals on Wheels London operates with a small dedicated staff team consisting of people who are committed to the values of the organization, namely: Respect, Support, Excellence and Connectivity. MOWL currently has a group of eight full-time staff in its administrative office (at Farquhar House) and approximately twelve part-time/casual staff working at their three heating depot locations throughout London (one of which is the East Depot) and on the Meals on Wheels van (which is often parked near the door to the church parking lot). Over 400 dedicated volunteers deliver the meals, provide the rides,

and support the operations of this vital community service. Corporate Meals on Wheels volunteer delivery teams come from 3M and the City of London.

In 2018 Meals on Wheels London provided 130,335 meals, served 2,257 clients, provided 8,464 rides to Wellness-related appointments, and had 19,500 hours provided by volunteers.

Clients pay for meals they receive based on their financial situation. In 2018 over 60,000 meals (out of 130,335 or 54%) were provided at subsidized rates, and MOWL received \$116,362 to reduce the cost to those in need. Funding sources for MOWL include: the United Way Elgin Middlesex, City of London, London Community Foundation, Westminster College Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Health, and the Government of Canada. Meal suppliers are: You Made It Café; and Apetito.

"I've been volunteering with MOWL for over 20 years and it brings me such joy delivering meals to those in need!" Volunteer

In order to plan for the future MOWL is currently undertaking a strategic planning process. "We are always looking to modernize and change to fit with changing community needs," says Executive Director, Chad Callander.

The relationship between MOWL and FSA is concisely expressed by the executive director of MOWL and the minister of FSA:

"FSA is wonderful to us—we have never had a complaint—FSA treats us well and hears our concerns—we love FSA." Executive Director Chad Callander

In Matthew's Gospel we hear Jesus preach the motto of Meals on Wheels London—to Feed the Hungry! First-St. Andrew's is blessed to be in partnership with such a community agency that is faithfully living this biblical story. As we gather at our tables for communion and family connection, lets GIVE THANKS for MOWL who deliver to people's doors not just food, but communion and family connection too. Thank you God, for the kind souls and faithful disciples at Meals on Wheels London.
Rev. Michelle Down

For more information about Meals on Wheels London, visit their website at www.Mealsonwheelslondon.ca

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UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS: RE-THINKING COMMUNION, FOOD, AND SHARED MEALS AT CHURCH



Robin Wardlaw



Scenario: A church decides to start up a community meal for low-income neighbours. Or rather, a small group within a congregation gets permission to start it. The food ministry first meets needs

then grows. The only homeless shelter in town moves in for a couple of winters while waiting for a building of its own. The result? Tension within the congregation. How could that be, if our central ritual is all about sharing bread and a cup?

This scenario in a United Church I served got me interested in the dynamics of food, community, and justice in a congregation. My curiosity led me to an intensive study. Both communion upstairs every month and the community lunch downstairs every week involved sharing food. Did people in either place connect them? What did worshippers really think about communion?

My own perspective is one of liberation theology—the recognition from two big stories of the bible that God is fiercely interested in people’s freedom and dignity. Those big stories? The Exodus of Hebrew slaves from Egypt, and Jesus’ prophetic ministry among descendants of those same freed slaves, now imprisoned in their own land by another ruthless empire, Rome. Jesus’ recipe is for people to live as freed people, people of the God who liberates, and not as victims of Rome’s oppressive propaganda and not by violent resistance.

Jesus re-imagines Passover, the liberation meal of the Hebrews, as a way to remember him, and his radical vision. No lamb, only bread and wine, as symbols of freed life. No blood shed as people come into communion with each other, the Christ, and the Holy Mystery that yearns for an end to slavery and oppression, a highly political—and non-violent—agenda.

Interviews, surveys, and group sessions involving people

in this Toronto congregation and people who received food from the meal programme and the associated food bank provided the primary basis of my thesis research. These interactions revealed a wide variety of views about Jesus and communion, but with one notable exception: there was not a sense that either communion or the meal programme is political. I was not surprised. We are taught that the ceremonial meal is the culmination of the process of atoning for sins: the sacrament re-unites us with the Holy. We are taught that lifting up the bread and cup while giving thanks makes Christ present. Most of us have not been taught that communion is political theatre that challenges inequality: eating together across class lines where everyone gets equal portions of bread and cup.

For one person interviewed, Jesus was a revolutionary, “challenging the status quo and challenging authorities,” “... going up against the very powerful people [who] ran the temples ... He was looking for a way that was more fair.” Most others saw him as a source of inspiration but apolitical—“Jesus as God’s child coming to bring the message of God. And offering us the salvation through belief in God. So, as the sort of messenger mixed in with that to me.”

One research participant loved the challenge of communion:

“I am sometimes confused over communion. I, sometimes am very moved over communion. I have questions about communion. But I think it’s all very healthy, it’s not a negative feeling about communion. Because there are many aspects that, that I really enjoy and celebrate and then things that I feel challenged about and maybe hypocritical about.... I think communion does have many meanings.”

Others were lukewarm about it, or worse: “The shared meal can be ‘sacramentalized’ to the point that it has little meaning in lived experience ... either past or present.”

And the monthly meal downstairs? “... in my mind the community dinner is my most significant communion experience.



I partake in it and I work at it. When I go home from a community dinner I am enlivened with the spirit of God. That's the way I feel." Another called it "magic." It made some impatient for a society where low-income people did not have to depend on food handouts in church basements: "[I feel] sad for them and I sometimes am frustrated. And [I] feel helpless. And I sometimes feel like it's some kind of Santa Claus thing. And so I think it's a Band-Aid thing that we do...."

How we think about Jesus, bread, sharing, and liberation matters. If the goal of communion is to offer worshippers a renewed or healed relationship with the holy, it may be we are missing an equally important meaning. Clearly, inequality and oppression are still with us, and getting steadily worse for many, many people. Sadness and Band-Aids need to be joined to other thoughts, feelings and actions. The sacrament, like a pearl lying buried in a field, holds the potential to be an energizing event in a world of vast and growing inequality. The answer to widespread injustice is not more churches offering more meals and groceries, good though these actions are. The bread and cup we share upstairs offers the chance to give thanks, build bridges across gulfs of income, rejoice, and yearn and work for a world more just. †

*Robin Wardlaw was ordained in 1980 and served as a United Church minister for the next 37 years. After his retirement he completed a Doctor of Ministry at the University of Toronto and graduated in May 2019 upon acceptance of his thesis: *Upstairs, Downstairs; Breaking Bread in an Urban United Church*. This thesis is available online at <http://fsaunited.com/PDFs/Posters/wardlaw-thesis.pdf>*

Prepared Communion Table in the upstairs sanctuary of the urban United Church in which the research study took place.



Food preparation for the community meal served in the downstairs hall of the same church.

Poetry from our Writer-in-Residence



Robyn Marie Butt

In 2019 Robyn became FSA's first Writer-in-Residence. These two poems appear in her published book of poetry titled "A Hundred Poems About Flowers—the final twenty-five" (Boularderie Island Press, Cape Breton, editor Colin Smith, 2019). "In the pollen who we are" was recited by Robyn during the worship service on Sunday September 22nd, 2019.

Forget-me-not

These banks of blue
for an unfamiliar saint
Christ's Mum
would You smile
to own this flower, too?
I have known eyes blue as this
I would take you over them
what you reflect
only pure
whole
as the self I bring. If sky
fell in sheets
to be bundled by the steps
they'd look like that: gathered linens
where there weren't any
proof of good clean springy
loam beneath the show. There, anyone
could remember without rancour
could lie down in peace.

In the pollen who we are

Here's where Christ lives:
in the pollen grain
solitary, adrift
safely
on air current

in the breeze, breath,
carrying
eternity to pistil
unerringly

in its arrival
softly on the sap
of purpose, in how
these are made for each other
despite distance
or no distance at all
to be crossed

unchecked tenderness
of that bright shape fashioned
in three dimensions
for their concourse

mere fact of colour,
intricate flesh singing it
from sepal

in this soul bent close
and her companion
both of us inhaling
gratitude reminder

fragrant reassurance
the offered cup
of who we are
in who You are.



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Jan Hendry

Muriel was a woman before her time and an inspiration to those whose lives she touched. She had a spirit that wouldn't be kept down. As early as her university days in Glasgow, she was constantly pushing boundaries and was even involved in the planning to return the Stone of Scone to Scotland.

Muriel and Stan were married in Glasgow and were an outstanding couple until Stan's death. They sometimes voiced strong differing opinions, but talked everything through to an amicable conclusion. Life definitely wasn't nearly as rich for Muriel without Stan around. I'm sure the reunion of their spirits was cause for great celebration.

Teaching and counselling were Muriel's passions. She began her teaching career in Glasgow, lectured at Sir George Williams University in Montreal, then moved to London and taught English at Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS where I met her 50 years ago. Many at FSA can attest to her skills in guiding students and problem-solving, which made her very successful as a teacher, counsellor and London's first female vice-principal. She managed to find her place in the 'administrative boys' club' within the London Board of Education at that time.

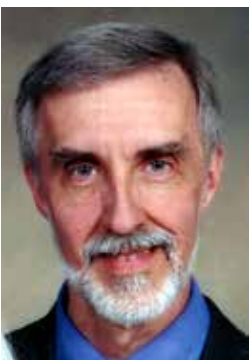


Muriel Hill

Muriel retired to travel around the world with Stan on his sabbatical but, upon returning, continued to contribute in many ways. She was chair of Council at Robinson United, on the Ministry and Personnel Committee at FSA, on the Board of the Retired Teachers of Ontario, as well as volunteering on government committees and Partners in Research. Reading, politics and tennis were strong interests. She had a very special place in her heart for her children and grandchildren, doing all in her power to see that they had good starts in their lives.

Muriel was a wonderful friend to many, and talking things over with her was always helpful. She was remarkably kind and understanding and would not hesitate to express her opinions. She loved a good discussion whether it be on politics, guns, faith, or church happenings. Being restricted by physical problems and not driving were very difficult for her in her last years, so I surmise that she would consider death a blessing. However, those of us left behind miss her cheery voice, good conversation and true friendship. She will not be forgotten. †

NOTEWORTHY



Congratulations to our **Dave Wake** for winning the Ontario Land Trust Alliance Vision Award. The Vision Award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the land trust community at the local and/or provincial level in a professional capacity. Dave has been a member/volunteer since 2000 and served as president of TTLT from 2016-2018. Dave still consistently volunteers with

us and we couldn't be more grateful for this. The TTLT would not be what it is today without the dedicated efforts of Dave Wake and all of our volunteers. Thank you.



Also we pass a tip of the FSA hat to **Ken Wright**, recently lauded in the London Free Press. He has been working tirelessly on behalf of those 70,000 Londoners living below the poverty line who cannot afford dental care. His aspiration is to secure the funding to establish a new non-profit dental clinic that would treat up to 3500 patients a year, providing more than \$440,000 a year in services. Those

of us who know Ken know of his commitment and wish him every success in his mission. †

The 2019-20 Eberhard Vocal Scholars

Camila Montefusco and Natalie Nelson



Merran Neville

The Eberhard Memorial Music Scholarship Fund was established in 1988 by the Eberhard family in recognition of the many years of service to First-St. Andrew's by their father Rudy Eberhard. Part of the fund resulted from the "Barbara Eberhard" Trust which was amalgamated with the Eberhard Scholarship Fund. Details about the Fund are on the FSA website in the Music Ministry section. Since 1988, the scholarship has enabled the director of music to bring vocal scholars from the Don Wright Faculty of Music to join the senior choir. Their musical contribution has been of great value to us and this year, for the very first time, we are blessed to have two vocal scholars, Camila Montefusco from Brazil and Natalie Nelson from River Falls, Wisconsin.

Camila and Natalie are both in the first year of their Masters programme in Music Literature and Performance (Voice) at Western, and both are studying voice with Professor Patricia Green. We are blessed to have these two very talented performers in the choir and welcome them both. We are indebted to Professor Green for assisting us by sending Camila and Natalie to audition for Terry Head, our director of music, in September.



CAMILA MONTEFUSCO

Camila is a mezzo-soprano and sings in the alto section of the choir. She began her musical studies on the violin when she was six years old and played for sixteen years. Camila grew up in a musical family; her father is a pianist. After eleven years of private lessons on the violin, Camila went to the University of Sao Paulo (USP) to continue

her violin studies, and in 2017, she graduated with a Bachelor degree in Violin Performance. In 2016, Camila joined the Young Symphony Orchestra of Sao Paulo in which she played in for two years.

However, this was not the end of the story, for it was during her programme at USP that Camila discovered a passion for singing. She had the opportunity to participate in several music festivals in Brazil both as a violinist and a singer, taking solo parts and singing in the chorus, as well as playing the violin for opera and ballet.

Camila and her partner, Vinicius Faina, formed their group

"Duo Teresa" to perform Brazilian popular music (Bossa Nova). They arranged and performed Brazilian songs for voice, violin and guitar. **Duo Teresa** won first prize in a regional music competition, which resulted in invitations to perform in many cities around Brazil.

Camila came to Canada in 2017 to continue her studies and is now focusing on operatic studies. For over a year prior to coming to Western, she trained with voice teacher Neil Semer and vocal coach Peter Tiefenbach.

NATALIE NELSON

Natalie, a soprano, sings in the soprano section of the choir. Natalie grew up in a musical family and recalls that she has been singing all her life. She attended the United Church of Christ in River Falls and sang in the choir with her mother for many years. She still sings there on holidays.



Natalie first joined a choir and started taking private singing lessons when she was in the sixth grade at Meyer Middle School in River Falls. At high school she performed as Larkin in *Once Upon a Mattress*, Anna in *The King and I*, and Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Natalie discovered opera when her high school accompanist, Mr. Dennis Aflveby, paid for her to see *The Magic Flute* at Minnesota Opera (in the beautiful Ordway Theatre). This experience set her on the path to studying opera. Coincidentally, Natalie's cousin, tenor Jack Swanson, is an opera singer.

Natalie recently completed her undergraduate degree at Luther College in Iowa, majoring in both Music and English. At Luther College, she sang Fjordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and acted as dramaturge for Copland's *The Tender Land*. She wrote her first song cycle, *Virago*, with colleague John Kuntz, which interprets the voiceless and monstrous women of Greek myth. In addition to performing, Natalie hopes to become a librettist and write contemporary operas which reflect and explore modern society.

On Sunday October 6th, Natalie stepped in at the last minute, 10:15am to be exact, to take the soprano solo in the anthem that morning. Natalie recently sang the role of Arminida in *La finta giardiniera*, performed by Opera at Western†.

faith in Action



David McKane

The Mission and Service (M&S) fund of the United Church is the life blood for countless mission projects that stretch across the country and around the world. Fred Pratt Green's hymn captures why M&S is so important: *"In the just reward of labour, God's will is done. In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done. In our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done...."*

Most FSA ministers have been educated at The Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax or Emmanuel College in Toronto, two of the nine theological colleges supported in part by the M&S fund. Los Quinchos in Nicaragua and many other schools, mission hospitals, nursing programmes, agricultural projects and community support groups across Canada and in 21 countries around the world receive M&S funding. Chaplains in prisons, universities and hospitals provide a real ministry for students, those in difficulty with the law, and those in hospitals. When I was settled on a seven point charge in rural Nova Scotia in the mid-seventies each

of those little churches received financial support from the M&S fund. In 1990, as president of Toronto Conference, I led a group of Conference presidents to visit the Church of Northern India and Nepal to see our mission dollars at work in rural churches, schools, hospitals and in contraceptive and agricultural programmes.

While many folk seldom ask or question where their mission dollars go, I know from personal experience the critical importance of our gifts. Small offerings by local congregations, when added to all the other congregations across the country, become a virtual river of aid providing incredible assistance to those in need.

Let me close with another hymn: *"Give thanks my soul for harvest, for store of fruit and grain, but know the owner gives so that we may share again ... show forth, O God, your purpose; direct our will and hand to share your love and bounty with all in every land...."* Local givings to the M&S fund are a statement of our faith in action. For more information google: M&S At a Glance (www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/mission_service-at-a-glance.pdf). †

COMMITTEE REPORTS



COUNCIL
George Jolink

Years ago William Proudfoot had a calling from God to start a congregation in the city of London. Since that time we have grown and changed into who we are now: an inclusive Christian family encouraging spiritual growth through worship, friendship, learning and action.

As you may be aware we are exploring our future and discerning our way forward. The role of church in the daily lives of people is changing and we are looking at how First-St. Andrew's can fill that role for our congregation and the community beyond through faith, service, and the arts. Council has been actively engaged in this process. Our Ad Hoc Planning Committee has been hard at work with a current focus on how to use/repurpose our spaces for more efficient use and possible revenue generation. These and other activities this fall, such as the UCW Bazaar, Outreach projects, and the Music Concert series, help to build community inside First-St. Andrew's and outside our walls. FSA continues to be alive and well in the heart of our city.

As a council we are charged with running the business of the church and charting the way forward. We do this on behalf of the congregation and in collaboration with our staff team. Nonetheless it is you the members and adherents of

First-St. Andrew's who are the foundation. Your dedication and support through contributions of time, talent and financial resources will determine what we are able to do as we move forward. Personally I would like to thank you for all of the ways you continue to make FSA one of your charities of choice.

My term as Council Chair is drawing to conclusion. I am so grateful for the support I have had over the years and I am constantly impressed by the efforts of our Council committees to undertake the work of this church. I am also very optimistic as we head into the future with Steve Elson as incoming Chair.

We are strong, and we are changing. On behalf of Council I wish each of you all the best during this advent time of reflection. †



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Our Attitude



MUSIC
Merran Neville

At this time of year, the Music Committee is in budget-preparation mode and we are mindful of the generosity of our FSA members, who through each year's Music budget continue to foster a rich heritage of sacred music. You have our heartfelt thanks for you making it possible for Terry Head, our director of music, and all the FSA music groups— Senior Choir, Junior Joyfuls, Joyful Singers, Joyful Ringers, Laudamus Bells and FSA Strings—to bring beautiful music to our weekly church services and in concert.

As we begin the season of Advent, we have many concerts and performances to offer, and we hope you can attend some of them. The Friday Advent Noon Recitals, followed by lunch (\$8) are: Nov. 29th, Terry Head, piano; Dec. 6th, Beal Singers with Director David Weaver; Dec. 13th, Laudamus Bells, Terry directing. There will be three performances of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Dec. 6th at 7:30pm and Dec. 7th at 2:00pm and 7:30pm. The cast for *Amahl* includes Andrew Richardson as Amahl, Sonja Gustafson as Amahl's mother, and Jordan Baldwin, Chris Wood and Alastair Smyth as the three wisemen. After a first very successful *Sing-along Mes-*

siah last year, the second annual Sing-along is on Sunday, December 22nd at 2:00pm.

Musical highlights in November included the second Woodfield Jazz concert November 8th with the Jeremy Price Quartet, and the FSA Strings' concert on November 20th with new conductor Igor Saika-Voivod. Music Sunday on October 27th and Remembrance Sunday on November 11th once more included beautiful music that goes straight to the heart. Jazz Sunday on November 3rd was an absolute hit! The combination of Sonja Gustafson, voice, Nevin Campbell, piano, Barry Usher, saxophone, Joe Phillips, bass and guitar, and Greg Mainprize, drums, absolutely wowed the congregation. Steve Elson shared the leadership that morning and was right in step with the jazz combo. His well-chosen "Story Telling" excerpts brought it all together.

The children will be performing a Christmas play on December 15th. We always look forward to enjoying the singing and acting of our delightful young people. We thank Martha Elliott for her leadership in preparing this play.

Looking ahead, the Chamber concert with performers Mary-Elizabeth Brown, violin and Marion Miller, piano, is on Sunday, January 19th, 2020 at 2:00pm. Their programme includes some Beethoven as 2020 is the 250th anniversary of the birth of Beethoven. †



PROPERTY
George Jolink

As you might expect, a large property downtown, with an historic building and an aging infrastructure presents ongoing challenges for the Property Committee. Our mandate is to address issues as they arise, and to plan for future sustainability to ensure the long-term viability of First-St. Andrew's for generations to come. Three areas of need determine our work:

- Ongoing/regular maintenance both expected and unexpected;
- Avis Report deficiencies;
- Building improvements.

Based on these priorities and professional recommendations, projects are undertaken in a timely manner and with available funds. A wish list is developed and projects are selected for the coming year. Indeed it is a balancing act between what can we afford and what has to be done. Since we have finite resources, we find that each year we have to cancel projects, or move them to the following year. At the same time it is imperative that we continue to invest in our building and property since we use it to generate income (close to \$90,000 in 2019)

Occasionally the unexpected happens which needs immediate attention. This past year saw several unexpected issues:

- Break-in resulting in minor theft and the need to permanently close some exterior basement windows;
- theft from our garden shed resulting in replacement of some tools;
- water heater replacement due to age and leaking;
- furnace replacement for Atrium due to cracked heat exchanger (25 years old).

Much work is being done and there is still much to do. As always we are grateful for support from the Trustees for larger projects and to the Finance Committee for managing the Operating budget so diligently. We are also greatly indebted to Tim Meidema for his quiet expertise and management of our facility.

The Property Committee consists of George Jolink (Chair), Heather Vouvalidis (ex officio), Bill Guthrie (secretary), Peter Ross, Ron Bradley, Sandra Black Evans, and Tim Meidema (Facilities Manager). Please feel free to speak to anyone of us regarding your concerns, or questions you may have. Together we are the current caretakers for a legacy which was handed to us by our past and which we will preserve for our future. †



MEMBERSHIP & NURTURE

Heather Locking-Cusolito

One of the highlights of our Autumn work has been the scheduling of our second Newcomers' Friendship Group, where seven long-standing members of our congregation (including Rev. Michelle) welcomed six newcomers at an informal reception held in the Chapel. We plan on having at least two of these gatherings each year to ensure newcomers feel welcomed at FSA and to make certain that we can establish connections by receiving contact information, offering name badges and mail slots, and asking them whether they wish to have their name added to the weekly e-blast. We were equally delighted to welcome the following new members to our congregation: Robyn Marie Butt, Barbara Luft, and Virginia Robinson, at our new members' service on Sunday September 22nd. Leadership for both events was ably provided by Glenna Hall. Deanne Pederson also led us in a "getting to know you" exercise at the group gathering.

Volunteer Appreciation Sunday followed on September 29th. When the congregation was asked to stand if they had participated in various ways in the life and work and worship

of FSA, over ¾ of the people attending were on their feet. Special thanks goes to Deanne Pederson for arranging the reception of cookies and squares after the service.

We are thankful to Gerry Meacham who has taken on the role of writing notes, on behalf of our committee, to people who are ill or bereaved. While we know that there are many ways that the congregation as a whole reaches out to people in need, we consider this ministry to be a very important part of our committee's mandate.

Our dedicated Lay Visitation team met on October 6th after church to review the people being visited and to plan the delivery of copies of *Tidings* and a small gift at Christmas. The team visits over 35 people, complementing the important pastoral care role carried out ably by Rev. Dr. David McKane and Jo Ann Silcox.

Sincere thanks goes to Kathryn Skelly who has developed a draft programme directory that has been shared with Council for feedback. The draft was shared with people at our Friendship Group and should be ready soon for general use by any member of the congregation. We think it will be of particular value to share with people who are new to the congregation so that they can identify groups and activities that appeal to them. †



TRUSTEES

Doug Jones and Bill Peel

The Trust Funds have contributed over \$100,000 so far this year to assist in covering operating expenses of the church. This is from the earn-



ings (interest, dividends, capital gains) on the Proudfoot Legacy Restricted Trust Fund, an endowed fund which has been generously provided by many members over previous years. Look for an update arising from the workshop of the Long-Term Giving Sub-committee last spring, hosted by the Board of Trustees on Effective Estate Planning.

Trust Funds were also used for capital projects for the memorial garden and repairs to the stained glass windows of the sanctuary. Also, an additional \$10,000 was provided as an interest-free loan to increase the inventory of the Shopping

Card programme, and \$3,000 as a one-year trial of GivePoint for online donations.

In addition, there are several restricted trust funds which contribute additional money to cover specific costs, such as the Jean Brown Fund for Christian Development, the Butt, Eberhard, and Wilson Funds for Music, and The Bass Fund for Operations.

The Board of Trustees is losing two very valuable members in 2020. June McKay has served for 10 years, and has been a dedicated member of the Memorials sub-committee. Our longest-serving member, Bob Schram, has been on the Board since 1995 and has been on numerous sub-committees over those many years. Their contributions will be greatly missed. We are actively recruiting nominations to strengthen our Board. If you have an interest, please contact any member of the Trustees. †



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MISSION AND OUTREACH

Barb Dalrymple

The Mission & Outreach Committee continues to be a presence both locally and globally. We encourage the congregation to support the United Church Mission and Service Fund as part of your weekly givings.

Thanks to those who supported the Grow-a-Row project for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), which is a partnership of 15 churches and agencies, including the United Church, supporting those dealing with hunger and poor nutrition in 40 countries around the world.

We had another successful year under the leadership of Linda Badke and Cynthia Simpson. First-St. Andrew's members donated \$5,340.29 which will be matched 4:1 by the Canadian government through Global Affairs Canada. The corn roast on Sunday September 8th was successful and well-attended. It's an effective way to welcome people back after the summer. Rather than having a speaker during lunch, Musu Taylor-Lewis from CFGB was our guest preacher.

East London United Church Outreach (ELUCO) update:

"Poverty impacts our society because it excludes. Individuals living in poverty are more likely to experience social isolation and disconnection from others in the community"...

from London for All from The London Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty (March 2016).

ELUCO's Community Outreach Worker, Nancy Howard, continues to support children, individuals and families within the low-income housing community of Marconi. This year, she has partnered with the *London Public Library Outreach Team* offering weekly Family Storytime workshops (for caregivers and children 1-4 yrs) and Themed Book, Craft, Activity workshops. Plus a partnership with the *Middlesex Health Unit* offering a weekly programme focused on the selection, purchase, and preparation of nutritious family meals by caregivers and their children. These combined caregiver/children programmes are key to effective behavioral change.

ELUCO's annual Walk & Roll Fund Raiser in Sept, 2019 raised \$6,888 of which approximately one half was contributed by the FSA congregation. Thank you for your generous and continued support, including buying gift cards through our Christmas Share programme.

As well as supporting ELUCO, FSA collects food each week for St. Paul's Social Services and running shoes for London Intercommunity Health Centre at the Dundas Street site. We would appreciate more individuals to help us deliver the food collection each week. †



FINANCE

Kerry Hill

As we approach the end of 2019, we can better forecast our year-end position. It appears that our deficit will be somewhat more than budgeted. One reason for this is that we faced emergency repairs to our building too late in the year to adjust our non-urgent maintenance expenditures; i.e., we had already used up the discretionary portion of the Property budget. As always, you can help by making that special, extra gift during our annual Christmas Appeal. Envelopes will be available in the pews in December. An alternative is to use our donation kiosk ("GivePoint") immediately outside the sanctuary atrium doors—debit and credit cards accepted.

FSA faces the same financial challenges as other churches; the same challenges that many of us face personally. Costs keep rising. The obvious consequence is that we need to increase our revenue. I'm pleased to note that rental income is currently very strong. Meals on Wheels has increased its use of our facilities and several groups/individuals are regular renters. And, as you may know, we also have another church congregation using the sanctuary on Sunday afternoons. (Perhaps there will also be opportunities for some shared activities!)

We are now embarking on discussions regarding modifications to our building to better accommodate our own and outside use, and to increase our rental income—I'm very excited by the possibilities. Please make your voice heard in the coming discussions, steered by the Planning Committee.

We have launched our 2020 Stewardship Campaign. It is time to reflect on what First-St. Andrew's means to you. Each of us takes away something unique from our FSA experience. For some, it's our awe-inspiring sanctuary; for others, it's the music programme or the preaching, or the sense of community and caring for each other. It all adds up to making a difference in your own life and the lives of others.

As you reflect on your 2020 pledge, please also consider participating regularly in our Shopping Card programme. It's an easy way to contribute to FSA.

The leadership at FSA is extremely grateful for the generosity of time, talent and treasure that our members and friends donate to help the congregation achieve its missional objectives in Faith, Service and the Arts. The truth is, we don't express our thanks often enough. Whether you sit on a committee, help with the upkeep of the building or our new meditation garden, or volunteer for events like the Holly Boutique Bazaar, your time and financial support make First-St. Andrew's possible. Thank you. †



UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Nancy Quinn

Retrospective:

Wednesday, September 18th: Sarah Collins, Programme Director for the *Salvation Army*, detailed how *The Centre of Hope* is turning a portion

of the agency's private rooms into much-needed transitional, supportive housing for recovering drug users. Counselling and activities give support to people on their recovery journey, so that they do not relapse.

Wednesday, October 16th: We enjoyed a cozy potluck luncheon in the elegant home of Annabelle Logan. Thank you to all who brought women's hygiene items for the annual UCW women's charity drive.

Saturday, November 16th: Once again high spirits, hard-working hands, and warm hearts have made the *Boutique Bazaar* a great success. Coordinator Glenda Robinson, with over one hundred volunteers, twenty convenors, and thirty community artists welcomed the London community with artful and socially responsible delights. Bazaar sales totalled \$14,433, which does not include Sunday sales and outstanding expenses. The final net profit will be available within a few weeks. L'Arche London received \$350 from the *Drop and Draw* and 113 people took sanctuary tours with David McKane. Many thanks to our volunteers, our donors,

and our enthusiastic shoppers. Proceeds from the Bazaar are distributed among local and international charities.

In gratitude to our FSA Bazaar volunteers and our FSA community (and friends) we held a wine and cheese reception, with an opportunity for early-bird shopping in *Artisans' Alley*. This event, held the evening before the Bazaar, was enthusiastically received.

We remember: the scent of baking, the polished treasures, the beautiful sewing creations, the taste of home-made condiments, the artistic delights and vintage jewellery, the sounds of happy children and of music in the air. Together, in grace, we created this ... and we'll do it all again, next year!

Up-coming:

- Tuesday, December 10th, at 12 noon, in the Chapel. *The UCW Christmas meeting*. Programme: *Reflections on the El Camino*, presented by Linda Badke and Ann MacPhail. All are invited for lunch, Christmas goodies, and an interesting programme. Please RSVP to Helen Guthrie at 519-672-0625, or email at hguthrie@rogers.com. Freewill lunch donation.
- Saturday, April 25th, 2020. Save the Date for our annual, not-to-be missed, *Rummage Sale*, with Jan and Jim Hendry as co-coordinators.
- Please, watch the *Church Announcements* for more 2020 UCW programme details. †



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COALITION (ESC)

Mary Ann Hodge

London declared a climate emergency in May 2019, and by the time you read this article the City's staff should have just presented their report on actions the city can take. Our top priority is to respond to this report.

Since its inception in June, the ESC has targeted the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as its primary objective. Less is more. Can we embrace the Marie Kondo less-is-more revolution for more than just our closets? Consume less but enjoy more?

Since our inception in June, the ESC has:

- Provided weekly environment messages through the FSA e-blast and Sunday bulletin;
- launched an anti-idling campaign;
- helped the students organize and march in the Global Climate Strike on October 27th;
- rallied at City Hall in support of the Cycling Master Plan Review;
- proposed a composter and rain barrel give-a-way

through the Neighbourhood Decision-Making project.

Change is hard. We are often seduced by convenience and our busy schedules. How often have we heard that we should exercise more? Eat better? Have more balance in our life? Sometimes we are only motivated to change our lifestyles after a health scare. On Nov 5th, 2019, 11,000 scientists again gave us a planetary health scare. We can ignore the warnings, or we can choose to act. We are already paying the price for every ton of greenhouse gas emissions we produce through the increasing costs of severe weather such as floods and snowstorms.

Personal vehicles are the largest source of emissions for Londoners. Therefore, the single biggest action we can take is to buy a hybrid or electric vehicle. Small actions are also important. We can also:

- eat less meat (start with one meatless meal a week);
- plant more trees;
- try taking the bus once a week or take a long walk to church;
- take fewer aeroplane trips (vacation closer to home).

Goals are reached through action. Please join us as we seek out ways that our actions can make a difference. The ESC meets on the third Monday of every month in the Fireside Room—all are welcome. †

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MILESTONES

NEW MEMBERS

Robyn Marie Butt, Sept. 22nd
Barbara Luft, Sept. 22nd
Virginia Robinson, Sept. 22nd

DEATHS

John Nuttall, Oct. 6th
Douglas Russell, Oct. 26th
Joan McDonald, Nov. 16th

WEDDINGS

Janie Johnston & Peter Farrell,
Nov. 2nd

CHURCH STAFF

<p>Minister, Worship & Congregational Life The Rev. Michelle Down (Ext. 1)</p> <p>Minister Emeritus & Minister of Visitation The Rev. Dr. David McKane</p> <p>Designated Pastoral Care Volunteer Jo Ann Silcox</p>	<p>Director of Music Terry Head (Ext. 3)</p> <p>Church Administrator Heather Vouvalidis (Ext. 5)</p> <p>Youth & Young Family Coordinator Jane Dockrill (Ext. 4)</p> <p>Administrative Assistant Kathryn Skelly (Ext. 0)</p>	<p>Facility & Maintenance Coordinator Tim Miedema (Ext. 6)</p> <p>Part-Time Custodian George Jolink</p> <p>Nursery Care Riley Langley</p> <p>Organist Emeritus Paul Merritt</p>
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