

the Messenger

PARKDALE UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER



Parkdale United Church

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We are always looking for new ideas, for submissions and for “Messenger roving reporters”. If you and a friend like to chat, face to face or by phone, perhaps you could make a few notes and let us know what you chat about during these strange and challenging times. Or please send photos that touch you. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject submissions but always try to find space for all.

Next issue: March 2021

Send submissions to:
messenger@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca

by Sunday, February 21, 2021,
please.

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In Brief

Isolation and social distancing gets more and more “normal” but if you are feeling in need of support/help, please do not hesitate to reach out. Call the church or our ministers.

Rev. Bailey, Rev. Limongi and members of the Pastoral Care team stand ready to come alongside you.

Reach Rev. Bailey at the church (613) 728-8656 ext. 222 or by cell phone (613) 292-5152. E-mail address is abailey@trytel.com

Rev. Limongi (613) 728-8656 ext. 224 or by email alcris@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca,

Huda Kandalaft (613) 728-8656 ext. 226 or by email huda@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca

Mary McLeod (Chairperson of the Pastoral Care Team) can be reached by email mcleod.mm@gmail.com

We would like to hear from you.

The Messenger has been in existence for over 20 years. Perhaps it is time for a change...

We are sending a survey out electronically and on paper for those who receive paper copies of the newsletter. Please let us know what you think. It should not take very long to complete and will help us make decisions about the Messenger's future.

Thank you to this month's contributors: Anthony Bailey, Kate Dunn, John Harewood, Huda Kandalaft, Alcris Limongi, Susan Mailer, Garth McLeod, Peter and Kathryn Meerburg, Kathleen Stephenson, Alexandra Stockwell, Elaine West.

The photo on the cover is by Seen on Unsplash

IMPORTANT: When submitting photos to The Messenger, please ensure you have asked permission of the individuals if faces are clearly recognizable. They should know that an electronic PDF version of the Messenger is posted to the Parkdale website. See <http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/connections/photos/permissions>

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



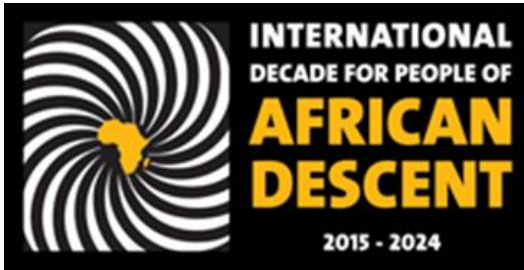
International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)



As many people know, the UN General Assembly proclaimed **2015-2024** as the International Decade for People of African Descent (resolution 68/237), thereby emphasizing the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African Descent.

“In proclaiming this Decade, the international community is recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected. Under the theme “Recognition, Justice and Development”, the Decade provides an operational framework to encourage States to eradicate social injustices inherited from history and to fight against racism, prejudice and racial discrimination to which people of African descent are still subjected.”

But how far have we come? What has changed? This declaration was a call out to member states to mount a concerted engagement in strengthening national actions and regional and international cooperation for the benefit of people of African descent in relation to their full enjoyment of economic, cultural, social, civil and political rights, their participation and integration in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of



society, and the promotion of a greater knowledge of and respect for their diverse heritage and culture.

The United Nations has recognized the disproportionate impact that the Pandemic is having on People of African Descent. One UN report reveals "clear racial disparities" in the application of COVID-19 related restrictions. The harm suffered by people of African descent has been exacerbated because their condition has not been sufficiently taken into account when addressing the impact of the pandemic. In too many jurisdictions, "policymakers are minimizing the needs of and risks to people of African descent in the current crisis". Our countries, our governments, our citizenries have to do better.

Our Scriptures bear witness against the narratives of the hierarchy of human value that fund the scourge of systemic racism. I believe that God is angry about this. The Bible bears witness to what God intended for relations among humankind.

In antiquity, before negative race prejudice, Black peoples from Cush, Ethiopia, Egypt and elsewhere were described in matter of fact ways by territory and features. Egypt was a mighty and feared world power with Menes, the originator of its dynastic legacy (around 3,200 BCE) coming from Ethiopia. So many of the extraordinary firsts we have read about in history books such as: the first written records, the first significant architecture, the first use of beds, table and chairs, the first copper mines, the first systematic removal of metals from

the earth, as well as the indescribable wonder of the pyramids, were accomplished by Black peoples.

In scripture we read of the great leader Nimrod the son of Cush. As well, we hear the appropriate pride of identity in the voice and cadence of the Shulamite woman in the Song of Songs who says: “I am black and beautiful”. Isaiah referred to the people of Cush (i.e. Hebrew word for **Black**) as a mighty and powerful nation, with a “*people tall and smooth-skinned*” (18:2). Amos, with inimical prophetic rhetoric states that Ethiopia, like Israel and other nations receive favour from God: “*Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Ethiopians?*” declares the Lord (9:7)

Would it surprise you to learn that a prophetic book of the Bible was written by a Black person? “*The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi... (1:1)*” (in other words, a Cushite – black person). Later on in the book of Zephaniah, the prophet declares on behalf of God, “*From beyond the rivers of Ethi-*

opia (or Cush) my worshipers, my scattered people, will bring me offerings” (3:10). There are many other references to the presence, leadership and contributions of Black peoples in the Bible.

The First and Second Testaments bear witness to God’s enduring commitment to the diverse nations and peoples of the world. Abraham and Sarah are chosen and blessed in order to be a blessing to the nations of the world. In addition to the Israelites, a multi-ethnic “mixed multitude” of captured people went forth from Egypt at the time of the Exodus (12:38). Jesus commissions his disciples to go to the nations of the world with the good news of the gospel.

Even early on in the Church’s infancy, Luke chronicles in the book of Acts how the Spirit of God animated a broadening of the vision of who is in receipt of God’s favour. Luke illustrates God’s commitment to have the mighty acts of God demonstrated and communicated to diverse peoples in their own language

and idiom. At Pentecost (Acts 2), the Spirit of God gave the apostles the ability to communicate to those of foreign languages and enabled those who spoke these languages to understand.

Further, in Antioch, the headquarters of the mission to the Gentiles, members of the diverse community of followers of Jesus including Jews and people from many nations, are the first to be called ‘Christian’ (Acts 11:26). The intriguing thing about this community of Christians at Antioch, is that not only were the members learning to love and serve and live together in all of their cultural and ethnic diversity, the senior leadership of the community was ethnically and culturally diverse. They consisted of Paul – from Asia Minor, Barnabas – from Cyprus, Simeon – a black man from the sub-saharan African country of Niger, Lucius – from the North African city of Cyrene, and Manaen – from Judea.

May I invite us all to take time to participate in the virtual events

celebrating Black History Month here in Ottawa and beyond.

Check out

www.blackhistoryottawa.org
for a comprehensive list of virtual events and activities.

*...For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see
it.
If only we're brave enough to be
it.*



Amanda Gorman

the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history, performing at President Biden's Inauguration

Anthony



PARKDALE PANDEMIC BUDDIES

If you would like to join in prayer with another, we would be happy to find a prayer buddy for you. Together you will decide how and when to pray. In this time of social isolation, it is also important to check in with each other on a regular basis.

To find a buddy for prayer or check-in, please email Alcris at alcris@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca or phone her (613) 728-8656 ext 224.

Confidential phone counselling is also available from Dr. Bailey. Contact him at abailey@trytel.com or (613) 728-8656 ext. 222.

Coffee Klatch is on the last Tuesday of the month. February 23rd and March 30th. One hour to say Hi and to catch up with other Parkdalers in informal conversation. Join for a few minutes or for an hour.

Alcris Limongi is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. The Link for this meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5637388533>

**Passcode: Coffee
All are welcome!!!**

Lenten Virtual Study Words of Life (The Ten Commandments)

Beginning February 16, Anthony will be leading a six-week study based on Adam Hamilton's new resource entitled "Words of Life". In this study, Adam Hamilton "brings modern eyes to the most important set of ethics in history". He considers the commandments in their historical context, considering the meaning of each commandment in Hebrew, unpacking how Jesus reinterpreted them, and showing how every thou-shalt-not was intended to point to a life-giving "thou shalt."

The sessions will take place by zoom on Tuesdays from noon to 1:15pm (February 16, 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23).

Please register by email to pdale@trytel.com.

Zoom sign-in information will be sent to you by email.

Our Office Manager Don Mockett is retiring

After 9 years as our faithful and devoted Office Manager, Don Mockett is retiring from Parkdale on February 26, 2021. We are very sad to lose Don; he has been a wonderful and helpful presence to all who come to our church's door and to the office and to our staff. But we are happy for him as he looks forward to retirement, and having the time to relax and do what he wants when he wants, and pursue his passions in retirement with his family.

Our church office is such a hub of activity and Don handles everything so well, with a smile, and is always willing to help in so many ways.

It is difficult to find the words to express our thanks, since he's touched so many people. Because in these times we cannot meet in person to express our gratitude and provide a proper send-off, we are thinking of some of the ways that we can honour Don and let him know how much we'll miss him.

You can consider sending a personal note or card to the church office (attention Chair of Council) or an email to **chair@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca** to express your appreciation,

thoughts and well wishes. These expressions will be collected and presented together to Don upon his leaving.

If you wish, you can make a financial contribution toward Don's retirement gift (this would be a non-receiptable amount) by:

1) Mailing a cheque (made out to Parkdale United Church), noting that it's for Don's retirement and mail it to the church office (marked attention Chair of Council) OR

2) Sending an e-transfer to **chair@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca**

Any monies collected through cheque or e-transfer will be presented to Don before his last day, February 26.

You can also attend the ZOOM farewell for Don during our Coffee Klatch on Tuesday, February 23, 2021. Hopefully many of us will be able to join the call to wish him well. (See link on page 8)

Thank you for your help in giving Don a great send-off and expressing our heartfelt gratitude and blessings on his retirement.

Garth McLeod
Council Chair
Parkdale United Church



Don Mockett, Parkdale's office manager since 2012, is starting his much-deserved retirement at the end of February. Kate Dunn spoke to him about his nine-year experience at the heart of the smooth-running machine that is Parkdale administration.

Tell me a bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in Ottawa, which is maybe surprising as this is, or at least was a kind of transitory town with government people coming and going. I'm married to Sandra, and just over two years ago she retired from her job with a high tech manufacturer. We are blessed with three children, two living.

How did you end up in this job?

I was working for Help the Aged Canada, and Pierre Barbeau was

our executive director. He was also on Parkdale's Ministry and Personnel Committee. When he left Help the Aged Canada, there was a re-organization and down-sizing and I was laid off. Pierre mentioned the position of office manager was open at Parkdale and he thought I would be a good fit—and the rest is history! Each person on staff at Parkdale has a member of that committee as their "liaison" and Pierre's been mine the whole time.

I think I've been a good fit for this job and it for me.

What does your job entail?

There's a lot of procedures and details to be attended to. A wide variety of tasks. You certainly can't pick it up from a manual. What I love to do is being the first point of contact at Parkdale for many people.

Mondays and Tuesdays are usually slow, so I do admin work then. I'm also one of the church trustees because I handle the contractors for things like building repairs. That gives me direct input into some important things underway at Parkdale.

Things ramp up toward the end

of the week as we get closer to Sunday service—things like getting the Bulletin finished and printed. I also manage all the rentals: building a schedule with the client, issuing a contract, making sure we had insurance in place and custodians available for those times. I also manage parking rentals.

And we issue vouchers to people in need. Mostly it's \$20 Giant Tiger vouchers. We have to track the recipients, they can have a voucher every two months, and get the vouchers to them. They used to come to the church door. Since COVID, Giant Tiger has been distributing them for us, but we still manage tracking etcetera. I miss having personal contact with the recipients; I built a rapport with many of them.

Answering the door—that's a constant! Sometimes you can just buzz someone in if you recognize their name when they buzz. Or you have to go down to the door. Sometimes it's people in need and we may give them a gift card for Loblaws or Metro.

You're said to be quite unflappable, a cool head when people are swirling in and out of the office, with demands on your time and attention.

Finding my focus despite distraction was just something that I took to be part of my job. There could be four or five people in the office; staying on track was what I was there to do, so I just kind of rounded it up into all being part of the job. I chose not to see these things as distractions, rather they were just part of the job.

The atmosphere at Parkdale certainly helped. You can get caught up in having so many things coming at you. Just take a deep breath and get through it.

One thing I did was I deliberately got out of the office in the summer. If I didn't, for sure someone would be ringing and ringing the doorbell during my lunch hour.

Who are some people you got to know best?

I had a very good rapport with the daycare staff. They're very easygoing, always ready to turn something into a laugh. And I've enjoyed heartwarming friendship with Anthony and Alcris, and I'm getting to know Huda, too, although we have only met via the internet because she arrived during COVID. Anthony is a wealth of information, a good guy to

work for and with. His office is beside mine and we'd be back and forth to talk about things. I'll miss that. I've gotten to know most of the committee members and many others in the congregation.

Any particularly sweet memories?

It was all the kindness I'll remember best. I'm not a member of the Parkdale congregation but I never felt apart. For example, prior to COVID we had Tuesday morning Bible study in the Ladies Parlour and it was followed by coffee and cookies there. Some of the ladies would zip into the office and bring me into the parlour for a snack. If I was too busy to go, someone would bring me a plate of cookies.

*Remind us why are you leaving.
We're sad to see you go.*

I have to say it was a bit of a struggle to finally make the decision to retire but I'm feeling increasingly comfortable that it was the right decision. Sandra and I have a trailer on a lake where my son also has a house. It's our sanctuary and we'll be spending a lot of time there. I also have a lot of home projects I want to do, like painting and fixing things. And we want to travel, particularly to Nova Scotia where I have a sister and brother-in-law.

But it is hard to leave. I only have good memories of Parkdale and the people here.

Any advice for your successor?

Take time for yourself during the day, like I did at lunch time. And remember, it's about serving.

**PARKDALE'S SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE
AVAILABLE ON THE PHONE FOR THOSE WITH
NO INTERNET.**

If you know people who are not able to watch the services online, please let them know that they can call 343 882 1920 and enter 343 882 4663# on Sundays at 10:30am to listen to the service. (The line is open at 10:30am (not before) If you need more information, contact Alcris.)

FROM THE PASTORAL CARE CORNER



Compassionate Ottawa
Compassion Ottawa

GRIEF WORKSHOP Getting Comfortable with Grief and Loss

At the invitation of Compassionate Ottawa, twenty-nine people from Parkdale's and MacKay United Church's Pastoral Care Committees took part, via Zoom, in a Grief Workshop on January 15, 2021.

The workshop featured Marion Rattray (a former Nurse at CHEO) and Anne DeButte, (a Registered Nurse & Grief Coach) outlining the journey of a grieving person.

As these two people skilled in their fields noted, we, as a society, are often 'death averse' ... fearful and uncomfortable speaking about death. Thus, the workshop focused on enhancing the participants' understanding of the grieving process.

Topics discussed were:

- The normalcy of death & loss
- The various faces of grief
- Secondary losses of grief
- Mourning as an outer expression of grief
- Finding ways to 'memorialize' the person who has died
- A look at the various emotions experienced while grieving

Then, the focus of the workshop turned to enhancing our skills at reaching out to the grieving person. The skill of empathic listening seemed to be the most helpful method to assisting a person struck by grief. As well, often times, there is a very real need for practical supports to the person.

The group was able to participate in two 'break out' sessions, discussing personal situations of our own experiences with grief.

In all, a very well-outlined and supportively delivered workshop on a challenging topic ...

Freda Sutton

FROM THE PASTORAL CARE CORNER



Compassionate Ottawa is a volunteer, non-profit organization that builds the capacity of the citizens of Ottawa to be more capable and confident in helping themselves, their families and their communities to live well and to die and grieve well.

One of the initiatives of Compassionate Ottawa is to foster linkages with Faith Communities throughout the city. We are building on the collective experience of Pastoral Care teams and working in partnership to create a loving and supportive environment for conversations about the end-of-life.

(taken from Compassionate Ottawa website: <https://compassionateottawa.ca>)

Parkdale's commitment to the Compassionate Ottawa work

Norman Tape is a founding member of the Board of Directors. Besides the *Grief Workshop*, Compassionate Ottawa has facilitated two other workshops on *Conversations about the End of Life* and *Advanced Care Planning* at Parkdale.

Norm Tape and Rev. Alcris are part of the Faith Communities team and Faye Richardson (Parkdale Pastoral Care Team) and Rev. Alcris are part of the new Chapter on Grief and Loss.

For more information on their events and ways to support, check their website!

A Meditation from the Prayer Shawl Group





SMALL MIRACLES

As a member of the Prayer Shawl group, I am always on the lookout for good deals on yarn, so I can share that with my fellow crocheters. ... especially those who are much quicker with the stitch than I am.

So, it was with excitement that I read a post on my Facebook group “Buy Nothing Westboro”, that one of my neighbours, Annie, was offering up some skeins of yarn that she no longer needed. If you have never seen one of these FB groups, which have popped up all over the city, the Buy Nothing group has a tradition that items are offered (or requested) for free and no consideration (payment). And, another rule is the OFFERER is not supposed to accept the first person who expresses interest. Rather, they want the offer to “be visible, or “simmer” for a day or two, to share with our neighbours. Not everyone is watching Facebook all the time.” So, it did not matter that I was the first to express interest in this bundle of yarn. I simply had to wait.

After watching almost a dozen people express interest over several days, I was surprised and pleased to see a message posted saying that I had been randomly selected. And, after a private exchange regarding location to pick up, I received two large bags of assorted yarn. When I thank her, and explained the destination of the yarn, I got the following message:

Hello! I came across a few more of those skeins (I obviously hide my yarn stash from my husband) and wondered if you could use them. I also found a bunch of “gift bags” that may be something for packaging of end product shawls/etc. With joy, I returned to the porch, where, in addition to the additional balls of yarn, there was this beautiful baby shawl, and another one “in process”.

I further learned that she has friends who attend Parkdale. The hidden blessings are always waiting for us around the corner, even during the time of COVID.

Susan Mailer

Introducing: Alexandra Stockwell Chair of the Worship Committee



In the late afternoon, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in January, *the Messenger* had a Zoom conversation with Alexandra Stockwell. Her written responses to a few questions are included below but we had agreed that this would be a hybrid “interview” including a face-to-face chat on Zoom.

On that Sunday afternoon I contacted Alex at a winterized cabin in Duhamel, QC where she and her husband, Kevin, and dog Gunner were spending just over a week. We were on Zoom so she turned her computer around so I could see the vista... a small lake, frozen, snow-covered with a forested hill on the other shore. Idyllic, I thought. Alex, chair of our Worship Committee and a frequent one-person choir for our video worship services, together with her dear ones as above, was on a well-earned get-away.

Alex told me she was currently read-

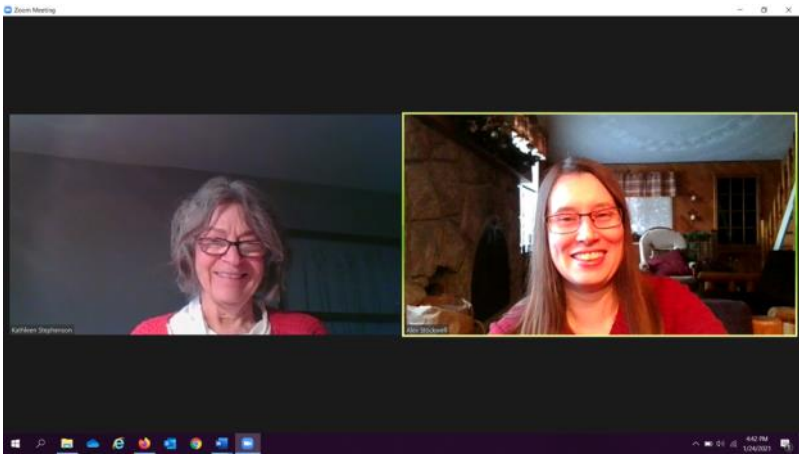
ing a Japanese graphic novel called *Library Wars*. Here’s the story: In the near future, the federal government creates a committee to rid society of books it deems unsuitable. The libraries vow to protect their collections, and with the help of local governments, form a military group to defend themselves--the Library Forces! Heroine Iku Kasahara has dreamed of joining the Library Forces ever since one of its soldiers stepped in to protect her favorite book from being confiscated in a bookstore when she was younger. But now, finally a recruit, she’s finding her dream job a bit of a nightmare. Alex was smiling from ear to ear while giving me a brief synopsis of the story and I’m smiling again right now!

A typical day? Reading and relaxing as well as writing the Worship Committee Annual Report! That afternoon, Alex said that she had spent an hour or more looking out at the lake. Knowing there could be deer crossing the lake, Alex just sat and watched and waited. It was peaceful and beautiful but, alas, no deer!

Here follows, in her own words, Alex’s responses to *the Messenger’s* suggested topics:

Work

After an academic background in Liberal Arts and short dabble in professional theatre stage management, I decided to study law because it seemed like something with good



job prospects and which would put to good use my lifelong love of reading and writing. I'm now quite happy working as a lawyer in a security technology company. I do indeed read and write quite a bit!

My days are typically spent in meetings (video calls, these days!) with engineers and product managers so I can learn about and then write the license and service terms and conditions for my company's products and services. I sometimes also negotiate the contracts that my company enters into with customers and vendors.

In a small way, I think my job is about fostering positive relationships. If you've heard the expression "good fences make good neighbours", I think of contracts the same way—good contracts make good business relationships.

Music

I got serious about music and singing in high school, due to a teenage obsession with *The Phantom of the Opera*. There was a time when I could sing by heart every lyric of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical version. That led to an interest in musical theatre, opera and classical music more generally. I love Stephen Sondheim, George and Ira Gershwin, Mozart, Tallis, Palestrina. I also have to admit a weakness for Disney movie music! 😊

In my first year of university I took "choir" as an optional course, and had the opportunity to sing in Mozart's Coronation Mass in C Major, which has remained to this day one of my favourite pieces. Outside of school, I sang in the chorus of amateur Gilbert and Sullivan productions, and eventually, I was invited to join the choir at St. John's United Church in my

hometown of Pointe-Claire, Quebec. I don't have a favourite hymn, but generally I feel you can't go wrong with anything composed between 1600 and 1900!

Family and Home

I grew up in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, on the West Island of Montreal. My parents are both still living in the home they moved into with me, their first child, when I was a year old. I have one brother, who is married with two children and lives in Seattle. My younger sister is married with a daughter, and they live just across the river in Gatineau.

My husband and I were married by Reverend Bailey here at Parkdale in 2013. Although we haven't been blessed with any children, we have a dog (a boxer-mastiff mix), Gunner, and a cat, Milo.

We bought a little house in Hintonburg in 2010. Unfortunately, in 2013, we discovered some major issues with it, so over the last 7.5 years we have torn most of it down and are rebuilding it, doing most of the work ourselves. Our pace has slowed in the last few years due to some health problems. When people ask us when we expect to be done, our standard answer is "By Christmas... we just don't know what year"!

Church and Faith

I was brought up Catholic, and alt-

hough my family was not particularly religious and I never felt a strong connection to my local Catholic congregation, I somehow feel that I have always been a person of deep faith. Late in my teens, the mother of my boyfriend at the time invited me to join the choir at the local United Church. I was immediately welcomed in the congregation of St. John's United, and this is where my faith was nurtured and grew, and where I first really understood what it meant to have a church family. At St. John's I sang in the choir and served as a member of the "Hope Committee". I'm not sure how to describe the mandate of the Hope Committee...our projects included an AIDS awareness and fundraising campaign and a Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue and understanding program.

When I moved to Ottawa in the late 2000s, I started coming to Parkdale for the mundane reason that it was the closest United Church to my apartment! But I certainly stayed because of the quality of the preaching as well as the hospitality and commitment to social justice of the congregation. I joined the choir in 2009 or 2010 and have been so grateful for the chance to sing with so many talented and all-round wonderful people! I serve on the Stewardship and Worship Committees, and the Property Development Working Group, and I am also on Beth Gutsell's roster of collection-counters.

General

What gives you happiness and how do you “live happiness”, Alex? I don’t know if I have a good answer for that, but I think having a good sense of humour is very helpful.

Do you like to travel? I would like to travel more once my house is finished. Some places that I’d love to visit are Hawaii, France and Scotland.

What’s one (appropriate!) thing that nobody knows about you? I think a few people know I am a sci-fi/fantasy geek...Kevin and I are the kind of people who included Star Wars music in our wedding ceremony. But I don’t think anyone would know that I am also a big fan of Arnold Schwarzenegger movies.

Do you read the *Messenger*? All of it? Yep, every month. Keep up the good work!

On behalf of our Messenger readers, many thanks, Alex, for answering those questions!

But back to Duhamel, Quebec for the conclusion of our Sunday afternoon chat and for Zoom farewells.

I asked Alex if there was something she would like to say from her perspective as a member of our Property Development Working Group. Well, yes, she said! Her observation, pretty much on the spur of the moment, is that the pandemic has required us to come up with options and we have learned to do that. So,

looking ahead: “Our vision can be bigger. Our capacity is greater than we perhaps recognized. We can be bolder and think more creatively about our mission.”

And at that point, Alex leapt to her feet and Gunner was barking madly! “Oh Oh Oh. Hold on! There are the deer on our lake!” And sure enough, four of them. The very picture of winter serenity!

And Alex offered this:

Dear Messenger readers:

The Worship Committee is just four people now. Our worship experience has undergone big changes and we need to think more about the experience of worship and how we can enhance and deepen it now and looking ahead. The Worship Committee has a very broad mandate – music, communion, ushering, worship arts, the sanctuary – so many different areas! If you, dear reader, are a member of Parkdale you’ll have some perspective on worship that would be valuable.

**Sincerely,
Alexandra Stockwell.**

Kathleen Stephenson
For the *Messenger*
February 2021

OUR CAMINO 2021 JOURNEYING TOGETHER THROUGH LENT



Although we might not be thinking about it, Easter is not far away. However before we reach that landmark, we must journey through Lent - starting on February 17... a special time of discernment and reflection.

One way in which we have been journeying as congregation for the past three years is by producing and using Our Camino as our Lenten devotional resource. A copy is distributed each Monday to your email address all along the 40 days of Lent and Holy Week. If you do not have internet, please call the church office to have a copy mailed to your home.

Our Camino is a meaningful way to connect with God through the practice of the spiritual disciplines of Biblical reflection, personal meditation, and prayer. This devotional resource reflects the richness of experiences, gifts, and diversity our community of faith. It helps us to build community and connect to

each other, to get to know more in-depth members of our congregation and to celebrate our rich intergenerational and intercultural make out.

I invite you to contribute again this year, or to do it for the first time.

You will find details in this issue of The Messenger and posted on our Website.

If you have any questions, please contact me at alcris@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca, or call the Church at 613-728-8656 Extension 224 for more information.

May God bless our Lenten journey,

Rev. Alcris Limongi
Minister of Pastoral Care



Our Camino contributions

Camino translates into *Our Way, Our Common Path*. The invitation is to walk together though Lent and Holy Week. We join in this journey from our own different places in life, carrying with us our unique stories, perspectives, interpretations, and experiences. We walk day by day reflecting on the word of God, reading Scriptures through the eyes of one another. At the end of the reading we lift up a prayer for our Camino leader of the day.

This journey offers the unique opportunity to get to know each other better and build a sense of community in this time of virtual reality and physical distancing.

How does it work? Each week, starting on Ash Wednesday and reaching our destination on Easter Sunday, we

offer a reflection based on the lectionary reading for that particular date.

How: Contributors choose a date from the Lectionary Readings 2021 and sign up at mcleod.mm@gmail.com or by calling the office.

What: Each submission has four components:

- A brief bio about the author. Whatever we are comfortable to share about us (cultural background, job, studies, interests, travels, hobbies, preferred music, food, family, pets, favourite Biblical passage, or author, etc.)
- A digital photograph of yourself
- A devotional based on one or a combination of the readings. It could be a personal reflection, a theological reflection, a series of

questions to the text, a poem, a prayer... or anything else you feel inspired to write.

- A short prayer at the end.

How long: The length of the submission is to fit one page, we can play with the font size if you are a little over or under one page.

Format: We will do the final formatting. You will be provided with an example.

Deadline: The liturgical seasons are divided into 7 weeks. The deadline for your submission is the Wednesday before your week. Once ready please send it to *Mary McLeod* at mcLeod.mm@gmail.com

Note: If you wish, you could use the lens of Racial Justice or the global (or local) Pandemic to write your reflection. Just listen and write as the Spirit inspires you.

We welcome new and seasoned writers, all ages and stages. If you have questions, or need any help, please contact me at alcris@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca

Asking for God's blessings upon our Parkdale family on this time of spiritual reflection and prayer, under our unique Pandemic circumstances.

*Rev. Alcris Limongi
Minister of Pastoral Care*

Birthdays in February



Our warmest greetings to:

1st: Winston Koch
1st: Lexy Fincham-Dinsdale
1st: Rachel Strangemore
1st: Marcus Strangemore
2nd: Richard Yearwood
3rd: Jordan Yeck
4th: Scott Andrews
7th: Hannah Crabtree
7th: Elise Mennie
7th: Edward Ellis
8th: Glen Drodge
8th: Victor Amishi
9th: Angela Linton
9th: Martha Radstake
12th: Cordel Epale
12th: Mariam Amisi
13th: Molly Praamsma
13th: Marianne Dos Santos
14th: Scott Taylor
17th: Anna Mela
17th: Gabriella Hilkes
23rd: Carolyn Halkett
23rd: Keenan Nesrallah
23rd: Tyson Valcin
24th: Esther Hermosa
28th: Valdengrave Okumu
29th: Laura Lu

WEEK ONE Deadline: Wednesday February 10

Day 1. Wednesday, Feb. 17 *Ash Wednesday* Joel 2:1–2, 12–17 or Isa. 58:1–12; Ps. 51:1–17; 2 Cor. 5:20b—6:10; Matt. 6:1–6, 16–21

Day 2. Thursday, Feb. 18 Dan. 9:1–14; Ps. 25:1–10; 1 John 1:3–10

Day 3. Friday, Feb. 19 Ps. 25:1–10; Dan. 9:15–25a; 2 Tim. 4:1–5

Day 4. Saturday, Feb. 20 Ps. 25:1–10; Ps. 32; Matt. 9:2–13

Day 5. Sunday, Feb. 21 *First Sunday in Lent* Gen. 9:8–17; Ps. 25:1–10; 1 Pet. 3:18–22; Mark 1:9–15

WEEK TWO Deadline: Wednesday February 17

Day 6. Monday, Feb 22 Ps. 77; Job 4:1–21; Eph. 2:1–10

Day 7. Tuesday, Feb. 23 Ps. 77; Job 5:8–27; 1 Pet. 3:8–18a

Day 8. Wednesday, Feb. 24 Ps. 77; Prov. 30:1–9; Matt. 4:1–11;

Day 9. Thursday, Feb. 25 Ps. 22:23–31; Gen. 15:1–6, 12–18; Rom. 3:21–31

Day 10. Friday, Feb. 26 Ps. 22:23–31; Gen. 16:1–6; Rom. 4:1–12

Day 11. Saturday, Feb. 27 Ps. 22:23–31; Gen. 16:7–15; Mark 8:27–

Day 12. Sunday, Feb. 28. *Second Sunday in Lent* Gen. 17:1–7, 15–16; Ps. 22:23–31; Rom. 4:13–25; Mark 8:31–38

WEEK THREE Deadline: Wednesday February 24

Day 13. Monday, Mar. 1 Ps. 105:1–11, 37–45; Gen. 21:1–7; Heb. 1:8–12

Day 14. Tuesday, Mar. 2 Ps. 105:1–11, 37–45; Gen. 22:1–19; Heb. 11:1–3, 13–19

Day 15. Wednesday, Mar. 3 Ps. 105:1–11, 37–45; Jer. 30:12–22; John 12:36–43

Day 16. Thursday, Mar. 4 Ps. 19; Exod. 19:1–9a; 1 Pet. 2:4–10

Day 17. Friday, Mar. 5 Ps. 19; Exod. 19:9b–15; Acts 7:30–40

Day 18. Saturday, Mar. 6 Ps. 19; Exod. 19:16–25; Mark 9:2–8

Day 19. Sunday, Mar. 7. *Third Sunday in Lent* Exod. 20:1–17; Ps. 19; 1 Cor. 1:18–25; John 2:13–22

Day 20. Monday, Mar. 8 Ps. 84; 1 Kgs. 6:1–4, 21–22; 1 Cor. 3:10–23
30

WEEK FOUR. Deadline: Wednesday March 3

Day 21. Tuesday, Mar. 9 Ps. 84; 2 Chr. 29:1–11, 16–19; Heb. 9:23–28

Day 22. Wednesday, Mar. 10 Ps. 84; Ezra 6:1–16; Mark 11:15–19

Day 23. Thursday, Mar. 11 Ps. 107:1–3, 17–22; Gen. 9:8–17; Eph. 1:3–6

Day 24. Friday, Mar. 12 Ps. 107:1–3, 17–22; Dan. 12:5–13; Eph. 1:7–

14

Day 25. Saturday, Mar. 13 Ps. 107:1–3, 17–22; Num. 20:22–29; John 3:1–13

Day 26. Sunday, Mar. 14. Fourth Sunday in Lent Num. 21:4–9; Ps. 107:1–3, 17–22; Eph. 2:1–10; John 3:14–21

WEEK FIVE. Deadline: Wednesday March 10

Day 27. Monday, Mar. 15 Ps. 107:1–16; Exod. 15:22–27; Heb. 3:1–6

Day 28. Tuesday, Mar. 16 Ps. 107:1–16; Num. 20:1–13; 1 Cor. 10:6–13

Day 29. Wednesday, Mar. 17 Psalm 107:1–16; Isaiah 60:15–22; John 8:12–20

Day 30. Thursday, Mar. 18 Ps. 51:1–12; Isa. 30:15–18; Heb. 4:1–13

Day 31. Friday, Mar. 19 Ps. 51:1–12; Exod. 30:1–10; Heb. 4:14–5:4

Day 32. Saturday, Mar. 20 Ps. 51:1–12; Hab. 3:2–13; John 12:1–11

Day 33. Sunday, Mar. 21. Fifth Sunday in Lent Jer. 31:31–34; Ps. 51:1–12 or Ps. 119:9–16; Heb. 5:5–10; John 12:20–33

WEEK SIX Deadline: Wednesday March 17

Day 34. Monday, Mar. 22 Ps. 119:9–16; Isa. 43:8–13; 2 Cor. 3:4–11

Day 35. Tuesday, Mar. 23 Ps. 119:9–16; Isa. 44:1–8; Acts 2:14–24

Day 36. Wednesday, Mar. 24 Ps. 119:9–16; Hag. 2:1–9, 20–23; John 12:34–50

Day 37. Thursday, Mar. 25 Ps. 118:1–2, 19–29; Deut. 16:1–8; Phil. 2:1–11

Day 38. Friday, Mar. 26 Ps. 118:1–2, 19–29; Jer. 33:1–9; Philippians 2:12–18

Day 39. Saturday, Mar. 27 Ps. 118:1–2, 19–29; Jer. 33:10–16; Mark 10:32–34, 46–52

Day 40. (Part 1) Sunday, Mar. 28 Fifth Sunday in Lent Palm Sunday
Liturgy of the Palms Mark 11:1–11 or John 12:12–16; Ps. 118:1–2, 19–29

Day 40. (Part 2) Sunday, Mar. 28 Fifth Sunday in Lent Passion Sunday
Liturgy of the Passion Isa. 50:4–9a; Ps. 31:9–16; Phil. 2:5–11 Mark 14:1–15:47 or Mark 15:1–39 (40–47)

WEEK SEVEN: HOLY WEEK Deadline: Wednesday March 24

Day 41. Monday of Holy Week. Mar. 29 Isa. 42:1–9; Ps. 36:5–11; Heb. 9:11–15 John 12:1–11

Day 42. Tuesday of Holy Week Mar. 30 Isa. 49:1–7; Ps. 71:1–14; 1 Cor. 1:18–31; John 12:20–36

Day 43. Wednesday of Holy Week, Mar. 31 Isa. 50:4–9a; Ps. 70; Heb.

12:1–3; John 13:21–32

Day 44. Maundy Thursday, Apr. 1 Exod. 12:1–4; 11–14; Ps. 116:1–2, 12–19; 1 Cor. 11:23–26; John 13:1–17, 31b–35

Day 45. Good Friday, Apr. 2 Isa. 52:13–53:12; Ps. 22; Heb. 10:16–25 or Heb. 4:14–16; 5:7–9; John 18:1–19:42

Day 46. Holy Saturday, Apr. 3 (Part 1) Job 14:1–14; Lam. 3:1–9, 19–24; Ps. 31:1–4, 15–16; 1 Pet. 4:1–8; Matt. 27:57–66 or John 19:38–42

Day 46. Holy Saturday, Apr. 3 (Part 2) Easter Vigil Ps. 136:1–9, 23–26; Ps. 42 and 43; Rom. 6:3–11; John 20:1–18

Day 47. (Part 1) Resurrection of the Lord / Easter Sunday Morning.
Apr. 4 Acts 10:34–43 or Isa. 25:6–9; Ps. 118:1–2, 14–24; 1 Cor. 15:1–11 or Acts 10:34–43; John 20:1–18 or Mark:16–18

Day 47. (Part 2) Resurrection of the Lord / Easter Sunday Evening.



WE COUNT

We continue to be so grateful for the financial support of our congregation. We have been able to continue our ministries and in fact provide more assistance to those in need this past year than ever before. Our salaries and building maintenance have been secure.

When money is received in the form of cheques, our cracker jack counting team pictured (John Butcher and Edward Brado) record them and make sure they are banked promptly. Thanks Team!



Ash Wednesday

Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.
The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.
But all the trees of God would clap their hands
The very stones themselves would shout and sing
If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognize in Christ their Lord and king.

He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases you please,
And still to dust and ashes you return.
But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.

by Malcolm Guite

Submitted by Elaine West

from Sounding the Seasons by Malcolm Guite; Canterbury Press 2012; used with the author's permission.

Photograph by Annika Gordon, (Unsplash)

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

David (Dave) Stanley King died in Ottawa on January 12, 2021. Dave was the loving son of Dr. Stanley and Mina King and beloved brother to Jennifer. Parkdale extends its deepest sympathy to the family; please hold the King Family in your prayers.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Rabbi Reuven Bulka who has moved to New York to be with family while he receives treatment for pancreatic and liver cancer. Rabbi Bulka has been a good friend to Parkdale and Rev. Bailey.



Dear Editor,
The Messenger

Parkdale has always had a well-deserved reputation of being a caring congregation.

We recently experienced proof of this, when so many members of the congregation reached out to us on the occasion of our leaving, to move closer to our family in southern Ontario.

Thank you so much for the many calls, notes, and other expressions of kindness and thoughtfulness that we received. Our lives are enriched for having been part of such a wonderful church family.

We are grateful for your love. May God continue to bless Parkdale.

Kathryn & Peter Meerburg

FOOD FOR THE ~~S~~C~~H~~OL BODY

As we bid farewell to our dear friends the Meerburgs, we thought we would share a Kathryn Meerburg recipe, a perfect warming, caring (Meerburg) meal for a winter evening at home. Kathryn tells us that the recipe was her mother's, in Nova Scotia.



MEAT LOAF

1 1/2 lbs ground beef
1 medium onion
2 eggs
1 stack Christie crackers
1 tsp salt
1 1/2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 1/2 Tbsp horseradish
1 tsp prepared mustard
1/3 cup chopped green pepper
1/2 tsp thyme
7.5 ounce can tomato sauce

Combine all ingredients except thyme and 1/4 can of the tomato sauce. Pat into 2 quart loaf pan. Sprinkle with the thyme and 1/8 can of tomato sauce. Bake at 350 degrees F for approximately one hour. Turn out of loaf pan and decorate top with remaining tomato sauce while still hot.

2021: Activities for All Ages...

Sunday school online every Sunday - @ 9:00 AM (please note the change of time). Parents are invited to print out the children's Worship Bulletin every Sunday as a conversation starter about the Bible story.

Senior Youth group online- Every other Sunday- including Feb. 7th @ 8:00 PM. We will be looking at tough questions. The question this week: *Is it a sin to think about sex?*

Junior Youth group online- Every other Wednesday– including Feb. 3rd @ 7:30 PM. We will be looking at: *Why does the Bible contradict itself sometimes?*

IGNITE group every other Thursday – Feb. 4th @ 7:00 PM (please note the change of day) Our new study UNAFRAID is an informed and inspiring study for anyone who is struggling with fear, worry, or anxiety or who wonders how we can live as peacemakers in troubled times. The session this time is about: *Apocalypse, Change, Missing Out, and Finances.*

Kids' Club every last Saturday of the month Feb 27 @ 4:00 PM. A time for families with young children to connect and share time with a simple crafts and games. The link will be sent in the weekly young families' email.

How to Join Children and Youth Gatherings.

Ring Central links for the gatherings will be emailed to all to join the meetings. Contact Huda or Camille if you have any questions regarding the meetings. Parents are invited to print the children's Worship Bulletin every Sunday as a conversation starter about the Bible story.

Small Groups On ZOOM in 2021

Writers Group meets on Thursdays at 5pm

Prayer Shawl Group meets on Thursdays at 5 pm.

(These two groups meet every second week on alternate Thursdays.)

Contact the church office for connection details

SILENCE ?

Namby: Good morning, Pamby.

Pamby: And a good morning to you as well.

Namby: So, now that you are spending more time at home, are you doing anything different ?

Pamby: What kind of question is that?

Namby: The kind of question which I am sure to be asked in any telephone conversation.

Pamby: You sound as though it offends you.

Namby: It does; it's nobody's business.

Pamby: Wow ! I thought that you believed that you and I were our brother's keeper , that no person is an island.

Namby: Of course, I do believe that we are all in this together, at least in the sense that any of us may catch that wretched virus. That doesn't mean that you have the right to know my personal business.

Pamby: I agree. Some people just don't respect boundaries. I have a friend who speaks enthusiastically about 'open friendships'.

Namby: What does he mean by that?

Pamby: That if he is my friend, he may tell me anything and he expects that I should tell him anything too.

Namby: It's funny that you have brought up the idea. I have decided to go on a talking strike.

Pamby: Why would you want to do something like that? I wasn't talking about not talking at all but respecting

boundaries about what you should say to me and I to you.

Namby: You still aren't getting it. I just mean that I am going to shut down or shut up, if you prefer, just be silent for a while.

Pamby: So, are you going on a retreat or something cool like that?

Namby: I have never heard it described as "cool". It's something that has been happening in monasteries and nunneries for a long time. They don't call it 'cool' or anything exotic like that.

Pamby: Are you sure that you are ok? I have never heard you talk like this before..

Namby: If I were talking to somebody else, just an acquaintance or so, I would have expected a question or a remark like that, suggesting that I am off my rocker or may be losing it, but you are supposed to be my friend.

Pamby: So, if I suddenly told you that I was going to shut up, meaning that I would stop talking to you and anybody else, wouldn't you think that I was losing it?

Namby: Perhaps and perhaps not. I would certainly want to find out why you had made that unusual decision.

Pamby: Ok, have you decided to become a nun? What are you going to do about your husband and your children?

Namby: Just back off, ok. I'm just sick of all the talk that's going on around me all the time – on social media, TV, radio, my smart phone , people shouting at each other, peo-

ple FOREVER complaining. Even if I turn off everything, I still seem to be hearing the cackling.

Pamby: So the solution is to turn off yourself?

Namby: You could call it that! I prefer to look at it as a time when I give myself an opportunity to hear another voice which I think I have but don't use enough because I don't give it a chance to speak as much as the voice you and everybody else hears.

Pamby: You make me think when you say that.

Namby: You mean that you don't think that I'm going crazy or going to a nunnery anymore?

Pamby: Not at all. You'll be following a good model.

Namby: Wow! You are even giving me a compliment now! So, who would this model be?

Pamby: Well, we have never talked about it in our many conversations, but, like you, I've been giving lot of thought to being quiet. It all started when I was reading James Baldwin recently and he said that "the inner life" was the most important.

Namby: Ok, is he the model that you are talking about?

Pamby: No. I have always wondered about that part in the story about that fellow Jesus where it says that the Spirit led him into the wilderness and he was with wild beasts and he fasted forty days and forty nights.

Namby: So, he is the model that you are talking about? But that must

have been weird, not talking to anybody for that long.

Pamby: Yes, just being with himself. Wonder what he thought about, how he felt in the silence

Namby: Well, wild beasts were around, it says. Wonder how he got along with them.

Pamby: Well, he lived to tell the tale. Funny though, eh? The moment he got out, he never seemed to stop talking and helping people

Namby: Is that why he is your model?

Pamby: Yes. It is strange. As if he learned something about himself and about people when he was quiet and silent

Namby: So, how comes it that you never talked about him like this before?

Pamby: Maybe because I never had a friend who suddenly decided to go silent on me.

Namby: Well, now, I've got even a better reason for shutting down -- and a good model to boot. Maybe when I start talking again, you will think that the silence did me a lot of good.

Pamby: Yes, and maybe other people and I will benefit from it too.

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LECTIONARY FOR FEBRUARY

Fifth after Epiphany

February 7 Isaiah 40:21–31
Psalm 147:1–11, 20c, 1 Co-
rinthians 9:16–23 Mark 1:29
–39

Transfiguration Sunday

February 14 2 Kings 2:1–
12 Psalm 50:1–6 2 Corin-
thians 4:3–6 Mark 9:2–9

First Sunday in Lent

February 21 Genesis 9:8–
17 Psalm 25:1–10 1 Peter
3:18–22 Mark 1:9–15

Second Sunday in Lent

February 28 Genesis 17:1–
7, 15–16 Psalm 22:23–31
Romans 4:13–25 Mark 8:31
–38 or Mark 9:2–9



Parkdale's Council Meeting January 26, 2021

January is a busy time for Council, as the previous year is reflected upon, new Council members recommended and the financial reports for 2020 and the proposed budget for 2021 received, for presentation at the Annual General Meeting. Reports are also received from Committee chairs and the Ministerial staff.

At this meeting, Council considered how the Annual General Meeting (usually held in late February each year) could be held in this time of Pandemic. It was decided to hold the meeting on Sunday February 28 at 7p.m. on a ZOOM call. Members will be asked to register ahead through the church office. The 2020 annual report will be circulated electronically prior to the meeting.

Council also considered a music ad hoc committee report and recommendations for music leadership. Council voted to accept the report and has given the mandate to the Worship Committee in collaboration with the Ministry and Personnel Committee to begin a search for musical leadership for Parkdale.

Council heard nominations for Council for 2021 (see page 39).

Council was advised that there will be a World Day of Prayer service Friday March 5. Host church will be Woodroffe United Church and the service will be online. The link will be shared.

Reports to Council highlights included:

Ministry and Personnel: the report updated Council on the recruitment process for the new Office Administrator.

Mission, Outreach and Justice:
In from the cold

Saturday, November 14 was the first meal for the 2020/2021 season which was scheduled to run to March 27, 2021. The season went well starting off with 23 guests and ended up with 88 meals being served on Dec. 19 - which was our Christmas Dinner. We opened up our 2nd session on January 9 intending to go to March 27th. However, as a result of the “stay at home” order announced on January 12, 2021 by the Provincial Government, to our disappointment and that of our guests, the decision was made to cancel our take-out program until the order is lifted.

Worship:

Livestreaming

Since the December 16th Reflective Christmas Service, we have been able to use our new livestreaming technology to be able to broadcast our worship services on YouTube in real time. We invested in a PTZ Optics "pan-tilt-zoom" camera, a new computer, and a video switcher that allows us to mix inputs from our existing sound board, the new camera, and PowerPoint slides and videos on the computer. In addition, our church internet connection and hardware has been upgraded to support the bandwidth requirements of broadcasting a live stream in high definition. The cost of our new equipment came to approximately \$5,300. In the future, we may wish to consider an additional camera, but already with this new technology we have experienced a higher production quality for our virtual worship services, and by broadcasting in real time, with the "comment" function in YouTube, the sense of community is enhanced.

Implementation of the Reopening Plan

Since the last council meeting in November, a great deal of work was carried out to prepare for and coordinate the implementation of

the reopening plan. Survey-Monkey was used to survey the congregation, a set of guidelines for in-person worship was drafted and posted on our website, a simple registration system was set up, volunteers were mustered for ushering and signing-in worshipers, and pews in the sanctuary were marked with adequate spacing between groups.

Rev. Anthony Bailey:

As the pandemic persists, the Ministerial staff have experienced more requests for pastoral care from congregants as well as non-Parkdale residents in the community. Many continue to reach out for spiritual, relationship and grief counselling; this has increased. Anthony has also been called upon to provide specialized counselling for those experiencing racial trauma resulting from experiences from neighbours, co-workers, strangers, as well as images of the brutalization of black bodies in the media. He is also continuing to provide support and counselling via phone calls, outdoor physically-distanced venues, and hospital visits with appropriate PPE protocol.

Rev. Alcris Limongi:

The one-on-one ongoing and

confidential ministry of listening, praying and supporting is happening in conversations on ZOOM, over the phone or emails. Also she continues to check regularly on members and reach out with email and invitations to join in groups.

Our Pastoral Care Team is continually in touch with the elder saints, offering support to them as the circumstances and restrictions allow. The team, along with the prayer and cancer prayer teams, supports the pastoral care ministry with prayers as new requests come in, supports Parkdalers who are going through health challenges and bereavement. This month the team participated in a workshop on grief.

Huda Kandalaft:

Huda outlined the considerable work that has been happening in planning and providing for children and youth activities. A leaders and teachers meeting was held on January 18. Sunday School and youth groups meet regularly and special intergenerational services have been offered. A lectionary based children's bulletin is sent every Sunday to assist families in exploring the learned lesson together.

PARKDALE UNITED CHURCH COUNCIL

Nominations for 2021

Chair – Rob Hilkes

Vice-Chair – **vacant**

Past Chair – Garth McLeod

Secretary – Alison Spiers

Treasurer – Debbie Sarre-McGregor

Member-at-Large – Hugh Nelson, Eleanor Creasey

Chairs of Committees

Communications – Carolynn Halkett

Faith Formation & Christian Development – **vacant**

Financial Trustees – David Mason

Membership Development & Rolls – Marilyn Hahn

Ministry & Personnel – Judy Hamley

Mission, Outreach & Justice – Faye Beaufort

Pastoral Care Team – Mary McLeod

Representative to Eastern Ontario/Outaouais United Church Regional Council – Beth Gutsell

Property Trustees – Matt Baker

Property Development Working Group – Helen Hayes (this group is represented on Council pro tem)

Recruitment & Succession Planning – Kathleen Stephenson

Stewardship – **vacant**

Worship – Alexandra Stockwell

Pastoral Staff (ex-officio members of Council)

Co-ordinating Minister – Dr. Anthony Bailey

Minister of Pastoral Care – Rev. Alcris Limongi

Congregational Designated Minister for Youth and Families – Huda Kandalaft

HUDA'S MESSAGE



Love and death... A word to Parents this Lenten season...

Lent is early this year. We've just finished Advent and Christmas and while we are still in the season of Epiphany, Lent is around the corner. This year, the Lenten season will mark one year since the world started changing after being hit by the global pandemic of COVID-19. I never imagined we'd be facing a second round of "remote" Lent this year. Yet, here we are.

This year the beginning of Lent will be on Feb. 17th, the day the church calls Ash Wednesday. It is a couple of days after Valentine's Day, Feb. 14th. The two days of love and death fall in the same

week. While usually the world is immersed with red and pink hearts, the church prepares to enter a season of fast, prayer, and self examination.

Valentine's Day, a day where people express their love to one another, usually has a great significance in market share and revenue generation. (Houston Asset Management tracked the USA 2017 Valentine's sales as just over \$18 billion in their yearly "Cost of Loving" index.)

With its declaration of human finitude and mortality, Ash Wednesday is always counter-cultural, but when it falls on the same week that candy hearts proclaim, "Be Mine," the contrast is particularly striking.

Though chocolate is generally my weak point, I've never been the biggest fan of the way we celebrate Valentine's Day. This year, however, with both Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day falling in the same week, I am reminded that however much we ignore the human condition, we are, in fact, as put in Ecclesiastics 3:20, dust and to dust we shall return.

Themes of love and death are entwined in this “Ash Valentine’s Week,” and they’re deeply connected in the story of our faith and particularly in the person of Jesus.

The church is not a morbidity-obsessed death cult that wants to extinguish the warm glow of romantic love, but the church rejects the idea that anyone could really love another without it costing something—and something far more than the “Cost of Loving” index could ever track. The contrast in this year’s “Ash Valentine’s Week” I think is between *sentimental love* and *sacificial love*.

Stanley Hauerwas, the Duke Divinity School professor of Christian Ethics, said, “The great enemy of the church today is not atheism but sentimentality.” In his view, there’s no deeper sentimentality than the presumption that we (or our children) can hold convictions without suffering for them. To have true convictions is to love something bigger than the self, and we cannot love God or others without suffering. For we Christians, Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of what it means that holding to our convictions might mean suffering unto death.

It is precisely why Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus went through the wilderness experience because of his convictions. Many times, we too are tempted because of our faith and beliefs. He ultimately went to the cross because of love. Jesus loved the world so much that he gave himself (John Chapter 16).

Besides the more dramatic example of martyrdom, there is, of course, the plain fact that all loving relationships will end in death. The reality of losing a loved one is always beyond words. Even in the best of love stories, death leaves us in deep grief.

Though we all know that our loved ones will die someday, what is often harder to admit is that loving someone will also involve a painful death to self long before we reach the grave.

In John 15, Jesus said that the greatest form of love is to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. Strikingly, the highest form of love for Jesus is not only the “happily ever after,” but love that results in suffering and death for your friends.

Even in marital relationships, we are reminded that if marital love is to last, it will inevitably require the couple to lay down their lives for each other.

This Ash Wednesday, we remember again that we are sinners and that our sin brought and continues to bring suffering and death into the world.

This Lenten season, we are called to self-examination and repentance; through prayer, fasting, self-denial, and by reading and meditating on God's word. We are also called to remember "our mortal nature".

Perhaps this year more than ever before, we face this reality because of the loss that is caused by Covid-19. However, every year, Lent invites us to remember this not because Lent is a depressing time; but rather because it anchors us in the truth of our human condition, and it anchors us in the greater reality of resurrected love.

Many Christians mark the sign of the cross with ashes on foreheads as a way to remember death, but also to recall that God has graciously given us eternal life through the suffering, death, and

resurrection of Jesus, who laid down his life for his friends.

As Christians, we are not people who focus on death while the culture around us seeks love and laughter. On the contrary, we celebrate love and laughter—a love more substantial and costly than we can imagine, a love that's unsentimental yet endlessly passionate, a love that defeated sin, a love that woos us, forgives us, calls us "beloved friends", and a love that ultimately tramples death by death. Yes, let us celebrate this love- the love that laughs at death!

I often wonder if we teach our children about this kind of love. In a culture saturated by consumerism, and feelings of entitlement, I wonder if our children know the meaning of commitment? dedication? responsibility, vows and promises? Do we teach them the value and importance of suffering in true human relationships? Do we teach them that true love is not free? And ultimately, do we teach them the full story of Jesus' unconditional yet costly love?

This Lenten season is an opportunity for you and me to do so.

Parkdale United Church

**We respond to God's call and Jesus' teachings
by:**



*uniting in joyful worship as an
act of praise and gratitude, for
inspiration and guidance*

**Providing learning opportuni-
ties for the Christian way of
life and to enhance Biblical
literacy**



Supporting each other through
pastoral care and concern

PROMOTING JUSTICE



*Reaching out to
people in need*