

M THE S E N G E R

Thanksgiving Edition
October 2026

Thankful



Grateful



Blessed

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Deadline for the next issue is
November 9, 2026

IMPORTANT: When submitting photos to the Messenger, please ensure you have asked permission of the individuals if their 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>

Farewell to Bev

August 30, 2026 – a day that will live in our collective memories. A day of laughter and of tears, a day of gentle sadness and uplifting song. A day filled with the Joy of the LORD. The day the Parkdale family bid a fond farewell to Bev...

...for the second time!

She is a WOMAN
of Strength and Dignity.
When she speaks, her words are
WISE, and KINDNESS is the rule
for everything she says.

Proverbs 31:25-26

Bev was many things to us – pastoral care minister, counsellor, visitor, colleague and friend. Ah, but let me not forget – baker and quilter. All those wonderful treats that showed up on Sundays and staff meetings. The beautiful, meaningful quilts and antependiums (would you believe I had to google this word because I never heard it correctly?) that remain around to brighten the church.



The handmade note cards, jams, pickles and all the other little surprises that were always available.



Did I mention the butter tarts? Those glorious, sweet confections that were an annual treat. By the way, Bev, I never did get to try one, they never lasted beyond the Sunday you brought them in.

Now her laughter doesn't bounce off the walls any longer, but I will always remember it and smile.



Blessed is she who has believed
that the LORD would fulfill His
promises to her.

Luke 1:45

August 30th started with a big potluck breakfast. Banners to show Bev our affection, and handmade gifts and other treasures. Bookends made from the upright panels of a broken pew, there to hold the memories of her finger prints at Parkdale and in our hearts. A wooden vase, crafted to hold the flowers she loves. And then the song – written especially for her by Huda and sung by the youth who adored her.





The service that followed held more surprises for Bev. A special “throne” and tiara, a favourite hymn and another song, written by Mélanie and Dr. Keith consisting of notes that Bev collected months before from the congregation. And finally, an emotional moment with special prayers just for her.

This momentous day wrapped up with, you guessed it, more food. I don’t think anyone minded the extended time that day.

I don’t attend Parkdale on Sundays, but I was privileged to attend and partake that Sunday.

Be blessed my friend.

With gratitude and love

Jo Anne



A vibrant garden scene with a path, trees, and colorful flower beds. The path is green and leads through a lush garden. On the left, there are tall trees and a large flower bed with yellow, pink, and blue flowers. On the right, there are more trees and a body of water. The overall scene is bright and cheerful.

A Song of Gratitude for Bev

- 1 Give thanks with a grateful heart,
To God for our Beloved Bev
For she has been amazing
And God's gift for us.
- 2 Give thanks for a work well-done
And care simply quiet and deep
Throughout the changing seasons
You have made big difference here.

Refrain:

You sat beside the many weary souls
And wiped away lots of tears
A faithful servant
You have calmed our fears.

Refrain:

Young, old,
Spoiled alike with yummy treats
Lego blocks
And Toys in Den
All along you went planting seeds

- 3 Each prayer, you prayed for us
Each stitch, you thought of us
With hope, compassion weaving
Into pastoral care.
- 4 Prayer shawls, and many calls you've made
And lots of visits you have paid
All are the Master's signs
Of a grace freely given.

Refrain:

So Bev, it's very hard to say Goodbye,
You're not a glue, you're glitter glue
Tucked in our souls
Your prayer squares, your quilted hearts.

Refrain:

Dear Bev, ever Beloved in Parkdale,
We bless you now on your way,
May our Lord, be on your side
Always.
We give thanks!

Notes From Council

Greetings Parkdale Family,

Fall is often a time for new beginnings. Students head back to school and others begin new employment opportunities. Your Council is back at work as well, turning our attention to the ongoing business of ensuring the health and vitality of our congregation.

Particular emphasis this fall is on our Strategic Plan. We received the report from our consultant, Reverend Darren Roorda and are anxious to share it. Council is busy right now establishing priorities and creating a framework for turning our dreams into reality. We hope to develop a ministry action plan for the future and we will meet as a congregation this fall to discuss the report and gain support for our future plans. We are grateful for all of you who took time to provide input, answer surveys and

attend the Lunch and Learns. We are better for having received your wisdom and ideas.

We are almost a year into our ministerial relationship with Rev. Bob as our Coordinating Minister. Hopefully you have been intentional in getting to know him and appreciate all he brings to Parkdale. We were sad to say goodbye to Bev last month, but our love and prayers will follow her as she tries retirement once again. Huda continues to be our mainstay and we are grateful for her ministry with our children, youth and young families.

Council is pleased to see the resurgence of The Messenger and we thank Rebecca Fillier for spearheading this venture.

This fall promises to be full of new adventures. Please continue to hold Council in your prayers as we hold all of you in ours.

Liz Harrison, Chair of Council



3 DAYS LATER
WITH *Rev. Bob*
Wednesdays | 12PM-1PM
Join Rev. Bob in the
upper room or online to
delve a little deeper into
the theme from Sunday.



Thanksgiving When the Barn is Empty

I've been thinking a lot lately about gratitude and being thankful: what it means, how easy it might or might not be, its implications, the choices it inspires, or the choices that lead towards it. In many ways, these are all typical ponderings, especially as Thanksgiving Sunday approaches in Canada. Yet, in our current context, I find myself wondering if there aren't other dimensions to gratitude and thankfulness that we often skip over with a preference for the more agreeably cosmetic version.

Recently, our focus reading in worship was from Exodus 17:1-7. It's not an unfamiliar story to many who've grown up on scripture and many outside the church. The Israelites are in the desert. They've received both manna and quail, yet now they're thirsty and grumbling about it. Moses consults with God and is told to take some elders and strike a rock. Voila! Water abounds. But the water follows both the escape from Egypt and the miracle of nourishment. Why were folks grumbling? Why was their gratitude and thankfulness so fleeting when, obviously, God had their backs and

wasn't going to forget about them or ignore their plea?

When I look around, I'm amazed at the abundance I see. From an endless amount of clean water from the tap to exotic fruits available at the market whenever my whim requires it. Reliable electricity and gas at the flick of a switch. Roads and cars and motorcycles (I'll talk about public transportation some other time) are everywhere you look. Parks, rivers, ponds, lakes, and leisure opportunities are just outside my doorstep, and while I'm grateful and thankful for all of those, the gaps in our society are becoming more and more apparent with each passing minute.

The harvest is plentiful, very plentiful for some and yet utterly absent for too many. People are stretched too thin and simply trying to make it from one credit card payment to the next. We're told we are in the midst of the largest transfer of wealth from one generation to another in human history, and yet more and more people are crumbling under financial stress, housing and food

insecurity. At Parkdale United, in the first ten months of 2026, we've seen an increase of almost 40% in the number of people seeking assistance.

When I hear about the shooting in Belleville outside a synagogue, or the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the treatment of 2SLGBTQAI+ people in Turkey, or residential school denialism, or blaming people for being under-housed or unhoused, or the number of people who need our gift card program each month, or kids going to school hungry, or people unable to afford their medication and their heat and groceries or any two of those, or people becoming unemployed from global economic shifts and AI developments I wonder if our gratitude might not be fleeting and more like a nostalgic story we tell ourselves so we feel good, even if only for a fleeting moment. It's something I wrestle with.

Apparently, I'm not alone. Scripture is filled with stories about doubt and wondering where God is in the midst of suffering, disparity, privilege, and human greed. Habakkuk (3:17-19), when wrestling with these concepts, concludes:

*Though the fig tree does not blossom
and no fruit is on the vines;
though the produce of the olive fails
and the fields yield no food;
though the flock is cut off from the fold
and there is no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;
I will exult in the God of my salvation.
God, the Lord, is my strength;*

*he makes my feet like the feet of a deer
and makes me tread upon the heights.*

It seems Habakkuk reminds us that it is possible to hold two truths in tension with one another. On the one hand, we can say, 'Thank you for what has sustained me' while at the same time saying 'this is not enough to live on.' Gratitude does not ask us to call scarcity good. Instead, it helps us notice the goodness that scarcity has not taken away. For me, this reminder is helpful as I wrestle with what I see happening in our neighbourhood and world. It's helpful when I'm tempted to throw my hands up in despair and turn inward. When I feel overwhelmed by the scarcity and need of the world, I can find the space to still be grateful.

Henri Nouwen, in a meditation, once said, "I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment." Maybe that's the secret to being grateful behind the words from Habakkuk. It doesn't mean that other feelings aren't also present and deserving of space. Gratitude is a choice, and it can be chosen even in the midst of the challenges of life.

That choice can make all the difference in our lives and in the lives of those around us. It is a choice to embody gratitude. It is a choice to be grateful when the barn is empty, or the cupboard is bare, or the bank account is overdrawn, or health is fleeting. Gratitude is a gift that can make us tread upon the heights. In a way, it makes the words from Diana

Butler Bass in their book Grateful all the more meaningful. “We recognize gifts, we receive them, and we pass them on.” We recognize the gift of gratitude, we receive it into our hearts and minds, and then we are called to pass it on to someone else.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving in Canada, I pray that each of us will be able to hold in tension the reality that scarcity is real and our gratitude is not a cheap coat of paint that covers

up that reality. I pray each of us will find the space to choose gratitude and, perhaps most of all, I pray that we will find a way to share that sense of gratitude with those around our tables and those whose names we will never know.

Happy Thanksgiving...even when the barn is empty.

Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier

From the Finance Committee

As we approach the end of 2026, we would like to give an update on our current financial situation.

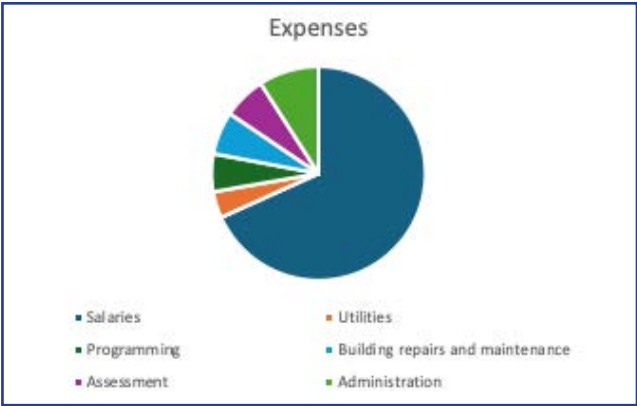
We budgeted a deficit of about \$171,000 for 2026.

As expected, we are currently in a deficit position. As of the end of August, the current deficit is \$115,000.

Any deficit at the end of the year will be taken from the Memorial Fund.

Our ministries continue to be strong as a result of your continuing involvement, prayers, and generosity. This deficit reflects the congregation’s wish to continue with our staffing and programs and we hope that donations will continue to support that mission. Thank you for your contributions and ongoing support.

Debbie Sarre-McGregor



Hello, here is a brief update from the Search Committee tasked with finding both a new Pastoral Care Minister and a SME.

Our committee consists of: Andrew Dick Douglas, Alexandra Stockwell, Heather Clarke, Helen Hayes & Danielle Gougeon. As well as Barbara Reynolds from EOORC. She ensured we reviewed Holy Manners which will help us to be unbiased and fair to all applicants.

We met with the congregation to get approval in late June to get the job descriptions approved. Over the summer we took the necessary steps to post the job, get applications in, and agreed upon an interview process. Established questions for both roles as well as a myriad of other tasks. Reviewed resumes and contacted applicants.

We are now in the process of conducting interviews for both roles and anticipate filling first the SME role then the Pastoral Care Minister positions in the next 8 weeks or so, although this is a projection not a certainty. As a group we are thankful that God has enabled us to take on this process of finding a replacement for Bev and welcoming a new member to the Parkdale team.

Thanks,
Kyle M.

**News from the
Pastoral Care Committee**

Parkdale's Search committee will be interviewing candidates to fill the position of the Pastoral Care Minister during late September and early October 2026, after which the Pastoral Care Team will be re-energized by the enthusiasm of a new leader.

In the meantime, the Pastoral Care Team is meeting regularly to plan future activities/workshops, as well as continuing visitation of members in seniors' residences and homes.

The following groups are currently meeting or are on the horizon and are always looking for new members:

- Prayer shawls (crocheted shawls blended with prayers, to be given away to baptizands, confirmands, cancer patients, and others - meets bi-weekly by ZOOM)
- Prayer group (meets bi-weekly by phone)
- Caring Kitchens (being re-evaluated for a more efficient way to answer requests for meals) Looking for people who like to cook!
- Caregivers group (may restart if there is sufficient interest).
- Visitation (continually being done in person and by phone).
- Workshops (more to come)

Contact Danielle Gougeon, Chair of the PCC for any questions at danielle.gougeon@sympatico.ca

CE/Faith Formation/Huda:

The summer for the Christian Education and Faith formation ministry at Parkdale was both busy and blessed.



From August 12 to 15, 2026, more than 500 youth, young adults, leaders, volunteers, and global partners gathered at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, for **Collective 2026: (Em)brace for Impact**, a national youth gathering hosted by The United Church of Canada and The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

15 members of Parkdale attended the conference with Huda. They enjoyed worship, learning, and moments of connection and making

friendships. There were many workshops to choose from including Scottish country dancing, youth advocacy, and conversations about why church matters. They asked big questions, learned new skills, and shared ideas about how to put faith into action.

A highlight of the gathering was keynote speaker J.R. LaRose, who challenged participants to think about what it means to rise to meet the moments before them. His message encouraged those present to consider who they are called to become, and how they can support one another in creating positive change.

The theme **(Em)brace for Impact** invited youth to embrace one another, embrace their communities, and embrace the opportunities and challenges of our time with courage and with hope.

Young global partners brought greetings from their churches including those representing the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the East Jerusalem YMCA, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Together, these voices reminded us that we all are part of a global community of faith connected by hope, compassion, and a shared commitment to justice.

Throughout **Collective**, we heard moving testimonies from youth and young adults, including global partners, reminding us of the many communities, experiences, and perspectives gathered together at **Collective**, working to draw the circle wide (and draw it wider still).

Participants also engaged organizations that support young people and serve the world. They met with theological colleges, youth organizations, advocacy groups, ecumenical collectives, and global partnership and development agencies. They were able to hear real-life stories of how faith can be lived out through service, leadership, learning, and community engagement.

And there was plenty of joy! From games and delicious food to an incredible DJ-led worship service that had participants dancing together.

The youth enjoyed four memorable days that ended up too quickly but even as the gathering concluded, participants found ways to extend its spirit of generosity. Leftover food was shared with a nearby shelter supporting people who are unhoused, and donations were collected for the **Canadian Foodgrains Bank** in support of efforts to address global hunger.

We give thanks for the way this conference impacted the many youth who attended especially the Parkdale ones.



Right after the youth conference from Aug. 17-21, 32 children and 18 youth volunteers and 15 other adult volunteers enjoyed a week of **Vacation Bible School** at Parkdale.

Parkdale's Tape Hall was transformed into a winter wonderland—complete with snowboards, sleds, skis, and colorful gear—which was a welcomed escape during the hot Ottawa August. The “Olympic energy” of the daily Opening and Closing Assemblies kept energy levels exceptionally high with all kids and leaders alike. Everyone enjoyed worship, high-energy music, bible story time, team-building exercises, scientific experiments, creative art projects, and the snacks reflected the daily bible lessons, teaching children to put their faith in God who



can help us do all things in all circumstances (Philippians 4:13) through physical, winter-sport-themed challenges.

The progression from tentative participation on Day 1 to the confident proclamation of the mountain motto—**“Challenge accepted—with God I am strong!”**— by Day 5 was a measurable shift in the kids’ confidence. Children learned to reframe life’s daily anxieties as “slopes” they don’t have to climb alone. The children memorised 6 bible verses during the week and received, as a result, many Olympic medals.

We had two outings during this week. The first one was a visit to the Museum of Natural History and the other one was to Parkdale Park where we enjoyed playing Olympic games.

This years’ VBS **Snowball Mountain Challenge** at Parkdale provided a vital space for our youth to share their gifts of leadership. It also helped the kids build lifelong faith foundations, cultivate deep emotional resilience, and discover that true strength comes from Christ. we couldn’t have done it without the hard work of our adult and youth volunteers. A big thank you to all those who offered their time and talent to ensure that our kids can grow in “wisdom, stature, and grace”



We concluded our vibrant summer season with our annual congregational camp at Gracefield, held from September 11–13. It was a wonderful weekend of community, nature, and spiritual renewal. we were blessed with beautiful weather and many of us swam and canoed, soaking in the sun and praising God for the beautiful creation surrounding us.

This year, about 70 members from our Parkdale family gathered together to connect and grow. The weekend was grounded in our central theme from ***Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”*** Through shared meals, outdoor activities, Tai Chi, hiking, Bible Olympics, campfire, archery, ropes course, and meaningful times of outdoor worship, we were all reminded of the source of our resilience and hope, and the secret which gives us strength in all life’s circumstances.

Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, and prayed for the success of this retreat. The memories made and the bonds strengthened at Gracefield will continue to uplift us as we step into the year ahead. **Join us next year from Sept. 10-12, 2027!**



**Setting the Table
for Thanksgiving**

Oct 11 bring your gifts of foods
of the harvest to donate to
Parkdale Food Bank to decorate
the front of the sanctuary.

From The Director of Music and Worship Arts, Dr. Keith Hartshorn-Walton

The music ministry and worship arts season can be said to start again every September, when our various groups return from summer break. The weather co-operated this year, and allowed Parkdale to kick off the season with a rally service in the park, accompanied once again by “Dr Jazz”, a trio whose New Orleans sound fitted the convivial atmosphere of the beautiful day. Moving In Spirit was there, too, to help us honour the land with a special offering.

The Senior Choir and Dalesong have once more resumed rehearsals, and will be contributing to worship with many exciting things in store, including a Cantata on the first Sunday of Advent. If anyone wishes to join the choir, and has experience reading music (a definite plus!) please let me know.

Lastly, I want to draw your attention to a new series of concerts at our church, called “Parkdale Presents”. Our sanctuary is known as a wonderful space for music, and we will be featuring various groups throughout the year. The first scheduled events are:

Oct 30: Tribute to Ray Draper and John Coltrane, 7 pm

I will be playing tuba and joined by saxophonist Al McLean from Montreal, along with some of Ottawa’s finest and well-known jazz musicians. This concert is also the opening event of the Canadian Regional Tuba Euphonium Conference, which is taking place at our church Oct 30 - 31. The conference is for members of the International Tuba-Euphonium Association, but this concert is open to all.

Tickets: <https://simpli.events/e/drapercoltranereturns>



Dec 19: Christmas with the Ottawa Guitar Trio, 7 pm

Celebrate Christmas with music from the renowned Ottawa Guitar Trio

Tickets: <https://simpli.events/e/ottawaguitartriochristmas>

I am looking forward to another year of worship through song and movement, and am proud of how our community comes together to enrich our faith and our lives through the arts.



IMAGES & STORIES RETURN FOR ITS 15TH YEAR

Here we are into the 15th year running of Images & Stories. A few of you will remember that the Late Janet Taylor started Images & Stories on the last Friday of September 2011. That was really a trial run because we were not sure if people would have enjoyed hearing, on a Friday evening, travels and stories of peoples' lives. Well, it took off like a wildfire. We have been blessed with continued interest in this program because of the fantastic presentations we have had to date. While we do have a few requests for live presentations, the committee feels the number of guests who usually attend indicate that there is considerable interest in Zoom presentations where one is free to enjoy them as they relax at home. I must say that the fellowship and desserts enjoyed after the presentations are certainly missed.

Those of you who tuned in on our first presentation of the **2026-2027 Images & Stories** know that it was a fascinating & impressive presentation by our Coordinating Minister – Rev. Dr. Bob K. Fillier about his

“Life and Times from Newfoundland & Labrador to Parkdale with Some Stops in Between.” That was **Friday, September 25th**. You will not want to miss Friday, **October 30** when Barbara Hennessy presents “Springtime in Sunny Scandinavia” as she explored elegant castles and strolled along cherry-blossom boulevards and much more. Our last presentation for 2026 will be on **Friday, November 27, 2026**. Maxim Beaufort-Bradley will thank all people of Parkdale for helping, for months, to raise funds to send him on his first, and such a memorable trip, to his first Scouts' Jamboree in Switzerland, along with 16 other youths. So many firsts!

We then pause for Christmas activities in December and return for another 3 months of exciting presentations on **January 29, February 26, & March 19, 2027**.

We look forward to seeing you!
Committee: Daunett Tucker, Marilyn Hahn, Helen Hayes, Faye Beaufort.

Honeython for Camp Kalalla



October is Honeython time at Parkdale. This is Parkdale's fundraiser for Camp Kalalla, a Christian girls camp. The Honeython offers much loved local honey by Crerars, and also spreads, snacks and other all natural products. Order forms will be available soon and a display of the products usually takes place several Sundays in October. Orders are due October 25th and will be available at the church in early November for pickup.

These products make great Christmas gifts!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Honeython@ParkdaleUnitedChurch.ca



Looking for a different way to help lead worship?

**Join the
Tech Team.**

Contact Rebecca:
rebecca@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca

Parkdale's Online Auction

We are excited to hold another ONLINE Auction. It will start on November 7th, the day of the Bazaar, and will run for about 2 weeks. We typically have 100 items for you to bid on, so it's lots of fun. Our last Auction in the Spring raised over \$4,600.

We are collecting items for the online auction now as well, so you if think you have items for the auction, please send me an email and a picture of the item at: **bazaar@parkdaleunitedchurch.ca**



Thanks very much, Judy Hamley, Convenor, Christmas Bazaar & Online Auction

Parkdale United Church



Saturday, November 7, 2026

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Great Products & Great Prices

Baking & Soups

Jewellery

Crafts & Knitting

Antiques & Collectibles

Books, Plants, Artwork

Attic Treasures, Linens

Online Auction &

Coffee Shop

Come & join the fun!

Volunteers needed

Contact Judy Hamley at
Bazaar@ParkdaleUnitedChurch.ca

NEWS FROM “IN FROM THE COLD 2026-2027”

Our “In From The Cold” (IFTC) ministry begins its 24th year, having been started by the Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey in November 2002. We were blessed with Interim-Minister Bev Buckingham who handed IFTC over to our present Coordinating Minister the Rev. Dr. Bob K. Fillier, who arrived at Parkdale on Monday, December 1, 2025. He was at IFTC on his first Saturday, December 6, 2025, and has been there almost every Saturday. We are delighted to have Rev. Bob join us bringing his passion for music, caring for the homeless, those experiencing poverty, hunger, racism and injustices of all kinds. He joins the various bands with his drum and obviously enjoys the evening with our guests and is one of the last to leave at the end of our evening.

Over the years, IFTC functioned through a Coordinator reporting directly to the Coordinating Minister. For a few years after, the Coordinator reported through the Mission, Outreach & Justice Committee to Council. After much discussion, it was agreed in Council that IFTC is a ministry unto itself, and that the IFTC Coordinator should report directly through Council to the Coordinating Minister.



We are now about to start our 2026/2027 season on **Saturday, November 14, 2026**. As is customary, we pause just before Christmas on **Saturday, December 19, 2026**. We then start-up again on **January 9, 2027**, and close on **March 20, 2027**.

At this point, I would like to again thank everyone who worked so hard to bring our last IFTC season to a gratifying and pleasing end for both our guests and our volunteers.

Everyone will agree that we must give a special thanks to

Christina Tucker, last year's 3 Chefs & Mark Nixon who are key to the working of this great gift of ministry that we have here at Parkdale – **In From The Cold**. Rev. Bob is enthusiastic about this ministry with which we are so blessed. We will

be meeting soon to ensure we have everything in place for our guests to enjoy a safe, friendly atmosphere, with live bands, a well stocked literacy table, sumptuous four course meals graciously served by respectful and compassionate volunteers from so many organizations in Ottawa and beyond. Last, but certainly not least, we are very grateful to our members & adherents here at Parkdale for their continuous prayers and donations.

(With much gratitude! Rev. Bob & 2026-2027 Coordinator: Faye B - fbeaufort@bell.net)

ABOUT OUTREACH AND JUSTICE

According to our congregation's Vision, Mission and Values statement, two of the ways we respond to Jesus' teachings are by reaching out to people in need and by promoting justice. How do we reach out? How do we promote justice? Council assigns much of the task of reflecting and acting on these questions to the Mission, Outreach and Justice Committee.



Outreach through sharing your donations

The **Moments for MOJ** during Sunday worship inform you about various local charities that Parkdale supports through your donations to Mission, Outreach and Justice. Some of these groups have a long history of partnership with Parkdale, like the Ottawa West Community Support Services or Bethany Hope Centre. Others have been more recently connected, such as the God's

Beloved LGBTQ+ ministry at our neighbouring Kitchissippi United Church. We also allocate MOJ funds every year to the national United Church's Mission and Service Fund, which supports people in need across Canada and around the world.

Starting this year, Parkdale's crucial and long-standing outreach ministry, **In From the Cold**, is no longer overseen by MOJ but reports directly to the Council and the congregation, under the leadership of Faye Beaufort.

Right Relations with Indigenous Peoples

Every Sunday, we acknowledge the unceded territory of the Anishnabe Algonquin and their stewardship of this land for thousands of years. But what does this acknowledgement of stolen land actually mean? How does it change us? How do we live in right relations with the First Peoples of this land?

For many years, MOJ has given a yearly financial donation to the Homeless Drop-in Centre at 510 Rideau St, one of the programs run by the Odawa Native Friendship Centre. This year, Rev Bob and some members of Council, MOJ and the Property Development Committee met with the leadership of Odawa Native Friendship Centre. We asked them how we might build a better

understanding and closer relationship between Odawa and Parkdale, in the spirit of reconciliation. We also discussed possible collaboration and use our property for some of the wide-ranging services they provide to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people throughout Ottawa.

In follow-up conversations, Odawa graciously offered to host a series of reconciliation circles with their community elders for members of Parkdale. The purpose of these get-togethers, held at their location, would be to engage in respectful relationship between our two communities. They suggested that a different elder share their lived experience at each circle, because each elder has their own perspective and stories, some of which may be hard for us to hear. Listening to diverse stories and views can widen our understanding of Indigenous people and challenge our assumptions. Hopefully, we will be able to announce more details about this initiative coming up later this fall.

Justice in God's wider community

MOJ also considers how to extend support to our wider community across Canada and the world. This spring, we sent cards with your messages of solidarity to the Tumbler Ridge and Kitigan Zibi communities

after the terrible shooting tragedies in their midst.

In May, some MOJ members helped the small group organizing Father Nassar's visit and the Peace Walk. We learned from Father Nassar's experience in the war-torn Middle East and the Awareness Foundation's work promoting peace. Our Ottawa Peace Walk, which attracted about 50 participants, included stops at three area churches. At each stop, we reflected on what peace-making looks like in our own lives. Out of this first event emerged the Parkdale Peace Initiative, a small group that aims to increase awareness in our congregation about peace and justice issues; and to promote dialogue about how to follow Christ as peacemakers in our own lives.

This group's next event is taking place on October 4th World Communion Sunday. Come to a Lunch and Learn after the service, with guest preacher Mervin Toquero of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Come and learn about the human rights situation in the Philippines and reflect together on how it relates to our own daily lives through the worldwide body of Christ.

Elise Mennie
Chair of the Mission, Outreach and Justice Committee



PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP UPDATE

It has been many months since our last update on this important project and some of you may wonder why we've been so quiet. I am pleased to inform you that the work continues, spiralling with ever-narrowing circles towards the development of two or three options that are aligned with our emerging strategic priorities.

You will recall that Parkdale's Property Development Working Group (PDWG) has been working on options for property redevelopment since 2017, motivated by the increasing maintenance costs of an aging building and specific needs related to accessibility, security, and the desire to create a more welcoming space, with a well-defined main entrance.

You have been kept apprised of our work over the years and you have been generally supportive. As we continue to work towards clarifying our vision, we are confident that the Holy Spirit is leading us towards a future as a hub of missional and community collaboration, a beacon of hope, and a space devoted to outreach for the vulnerable in our city.

The need to clarify our vision and to prioritize our many ideas for programming, and the urgent need to develop a strategic plan, compelled us in early 2026 to enter into a strategic planning process with Shepherd Consulting. The final report was received during the summer, and Council is in the process of reviewing and focusing the recommendations, after which the emerging direction for Parkdale's future will be shared with you for consideration and approval. It is our ardent hope that, with the priorities clarified and substantiated, we will be able to provide two or three options for redevelopment aligned with new strategic priorities and a ministry action plan, for decision by the congregation in early 2027. We also hope to be ready to begin working with Daniel Hussey, of Hussey Philanthropic, on the first steps towards a capital campaign, by late Spring 2027.

The strategic planning process has clarified that we need to address issues related to risk management, including financial risk. Your

PDWG has realized for some time that there are a range of options that will help us realize our ministry priorities, including a phased approach. The goal remains to undertake improvements to and renewal of the sanctuary, while making changes that will adapt and enhance the building, especially Tape Hall, to create flexible, accessible, and highly relational community-oriented ministry environments.

Previous architectural concepts were developed to include a robust building design based on past requirements and solving accessibility, image and traffic flow issues. These were comprehensive but perhaps overly ambitious in the current environment. The strategic plan, ministerial discernment, and a prudent review and use of our resources will be foundational to the next phase of PDWG's work.

All this to say, as the potential - or not - of collaborating with immediate neighbours becomes clearer, we are refining our options to reflect the emerging reality. In recent months, we have learned that the Salvation Army is not in a position to work with us in the foreseeable future. The former Knights of Columbus building on Gladstone remains on the market, but the owner is reluctant to work with us, given our failed attempt to purchase in the past. We have been advised that the Canada Post building has been sold. We continue to work with Abbeyfield Ottawa to respond to their concerns about our redevelopment plans, in the hope of finding a mutually satisfactory solution.

As we as a congregation become clearer about our priorities and the views of our Abbeyfield neighbours are clarified, conversations about housing as an expression of Parkdale ministry will continue to evolve.

We look forward to continuing the work that our predecessors began decades ago in the Hintonburg community and in the City of Ottawa, as we develop our emerging mission, identity and spiritual direction which can be simply captured by our tagline: ***Come, Grow, Serve.***

Please continue to pray for your Property Development Working Group as our journey continues.



4 Steps to a More Welcoming Church Building

By Lovett H. Weems Jr. on February 19, 2020 Leading Ideas

Do you remember what it was like to go to a church for the first time? Many church buildings are an impenetrable labyrinth to someone new. Other buildings send the signal that nothing new or exciting has happened here in decades.

A building is not an end in itself, but it can either help or hurt your mission of reaching and serving others in the name of Christ.

Visitors form a first impression of your church before they ever cross the threshold of your sanctuary. Does the exterior appearance of your church signal that things are going on? Are there yard signs and banners? Is any play area well kept and safe? Is the landscaping well tended? Are there cars in the parking lot? Lights on in the evening? These things indicate that the church is alive and are a means of welcoming and informing those approaching the church or just driving by.

Remember, these things probably matter more to newcomers at this point than they ever will again. Chances are that your building and property need to put a more welcoming face forward. A building is not an end in itself, but it can either help or hurt your mission of reaching and serving others in the name of Christ.

1. Declutter your church.

Does your church need a dumpster? Many churches are filled with clutter. One place to begin is the entrance that first-time guests most use. Often this area becomes a magnet for clutter. It's filled with all the things that may accumulate around your home but that you would never leave out when expecting guests. Clutter multiplies so get on top of it quickly. A workday can help, but what's most needed is a new mindset and practices to ensure that clutter is routinely removed and out of date materials come down immediately.

2. Audit all signage.

Signage can easily become inadequate or out of date since regular members pay little attention to signage or its absence. They don't need the signs. They already know where they are going! It is critical that both external and internal signage be attractive and functional. Don't make people guess where they need to go. They are already nervous. Be generous with signage. New people will pay close attention, and longtime members may never notice the signs are there. Ask relatively new participants or even persons not in your church to help by walking into and through your church and make their lists of what signs are needed and where those signs would be most helpful. And be sure to use simple language rather than words that may be unclear to newcomers.

3. Pay attention to areas of special importance to visitors.

Some areas are of special importance to new people. Pay special attention to places where people first enter and to restrooms and nursery area. Make sure they are in good condition and then make sure they are checked before services to make sure everything is in order. Missing supplies in a restroom may have no connection to the spiritual vitality of your congregation, but they certainly will leave visitors with an impression about your church.

4. Check the parking areas.

The parking areas send early signals about whether you are expecting guests and, if so, have you prepared for their arrival. Marking spaces closest to the entrances “reserved for visitors” not only assures that your visitors will have a place to park – it signals that you expect and welcome visitors. Make sure it is clear how to get from the lot to the worship space, nursery, restrooms, and welcome center.

Increasingly, churches begin their hospitality in the parking area using parking attendants and greeters. They can monitor spaces and direct people to available parking, give directions, and help people when needed and appropriate, especially when the weather is bad.

Here’s a fun exercise you might try. Someone said that every church, based on its appearance and upkeep, has a date stamped on it. It might be 1970, 1985, or 2000. What date does your church communicate? Use this exercise with groups to begin conversations about your facilities.

Remember that your facilities send messages. What messages do your buildings and grounds send?

THE MESSENGER is a publication of



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