

March 2022

BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



Volume XLI Issue 1

Minister's Message

In the Middle of Lent

We are in the middle of Lent as I write, on our way to Holy Week and therefore considering our faith journey in the context of Good Friday and Easter. Those two striking and starkly opposite events are nonetheless eternally joined, though we often do our best to either gloss over or avoid altogether the first in favour of the undiluted victory of the second. Yet neither happened in a vacuum, and without the passion of the first there would be no triumphant Easter proclamation.

The question of what exactly occurred on Easter Day, the factual account of the resurrection event, has been the subject of endless examination and, in the end, speculation on the part of scholars and historians for as many centuries as has unfolded since, whereas the so-called "facts" of the crucifixion have not been in dispute. Yet there is no straight line from fact to meaning, and the truth and significance of both events has undoubtedly been the most extended conversation in history among theologians and all Christians ever since.

My small contribution to this conversation has happened year by year since I was ordained in 1988, if not before, and this year is no different. Still, no summary simple statement is possible, and each year the context is different, history never standing still and therefore Good Friday and Easter Sunday never failing to send waves of dissonance and resonance through history to land in our ears and on our minds in what is always our present, current time. The contextual elements most publicly relevant to our reflection this year are, of course, our gradual emergence out of the worst of the pandemic, our conflicted emotional response of both unmitigated relief and still lingering uncertainty and hesitancy about gathering, and the despicable horror that Russia has inflicted upon Ukraine, not to mention all the impossibly complex public and personal concerns and joys that mark our time and times in March of 2022.

Part of that larger context, as well, is our recent life as a church, including our recent Annual Report and Annual General Meeting, both of which outlined the steadfast commitment of our members and friends to our financial health, as well as the ongoing nature of our future

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| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Minister | Rev. Brian W. McIntosh |
| Christian Development Co-ordinator | Wendy McEwen |
| Administrative Assistant | Halyna Parypa |
| Music Director | Paul Wisniewski |
| Custodian | Victor Nguyen |

Church Council

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Chair | Pat Conway-Willis |
| Church Council Secretary | Beth Jazvac |
| Congregational Meeting Secretary | Beth Jazvac |
| Board of Trustees | Julia Stavreff |
| Ministry and Personnel Co-Chairs | Melody Klassen |
| | Pat Conway-Willis |
| Nominations | Pat Nelson |
| Treasurer | Finance Committee |
| Presbytery Representatives | Norman Dundas |
| | Paul Rose |
| Minister | Rev. Brian W. McIntosh |

Committee Chairs

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Congregational Life (co-chairs) | Pat Nelson |
| | Pat Conway-Willis |
| Communications | Julia Stavreff |
| Finance, Stewardship, Planned Gift | Norm Dundas |
| Outreach and Christian Development | Lynn Lawrence |
| Pastoral Care | Sylvia Williams |
| Property | Pat Conway-Willis |
| Social and Fund Raising | Vacant |
| Worship | Melody Klassen |
| Member-at-Large | Joan Hollowell |

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WORSHIP SERVICES IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

| | | |
|-------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| March | 20 | Lent 3 |
| | 27 | Lent 4 |
| April | 3 | Lent 5 |
| | 10 | Palm Sunday / COMMUNION |
| | 14 | Maundy Thursday – St. James UC evening |
| | 15 | Good Friday – Bloordale UC 10:30 am |
| | 17 | Easter SonRise Ecumenical Service – Centennial Hill 6:32 am |
| | 17 | Easter |
| | 24 | Easter 2 |
| May | 1 | Easter 3 |

All Services at 10:30 am except as indicated

Minister's Message

(continued from Page 1)

planning by continuing in discussions with both the United Church's United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) and our nearby neighbour, Fellowship Christian Reformed Church (FCRC). More can be found about all of these elsewhere in this Bloorbeat, but suffice to say that the congregation's big picture is shaped by both gratitude and uncertainty as much as our individual lives continue to be these days.

Discussions among leaders in both Bloordale and the FCRC regarding our potential future in a shared community ministry, though not a merger or amalgamation, perhaps eventually in one shared building, has led the Joint Vision Team to ask both ministers to lead a study on our current understanding regarding the relevant topic: What is mission? That study begins on Zoom on Monday evenings March 28th, and the phrase "mission as hope in action" is a hint of what is to come, and brings into suggestive alignment three crucial accents that preoccupy our Lenten reflections. All three terms are deeply rooted in the gospel, and make little sense in a conventional world that either replaces hope with optimism or ignores it in favour of inevitability, that reduces mission to corporate or private vested interests, and promotes self-focused actions without life-or-death risks or sacrificial purpose. In the church's Lenten narrative, one which embraces the contradictions between Friday and Sunday, the church contradicts the world because:

- it asserts hope, resting in the assurance of God's promises.
- it asserts mission, because God has assigned the vision to human agents – us! – and does not abandon those

agents when times are tough.

- it acts to include, liberate and transform the life of the marginalized neighbour, when the fashion of the age is to exclude, limit or constrict such neighbours.

Lent is precisely the time for such contradictions that we ourselves can scarcely tolerate, since it makes the conventional world unbearable and, like the pandemic, exposes the unresolved contradictions, through our missional lens, between our stated public or private purposes and the actual facts on the ground. Lent is, indeed, the much needed space for a deep consideration of our place in the grand scheme of things, in God's missional purpose, in the midst of the so-called "normal" facts that we are called to never allow to be normalized again.

Lent reminds us of the disciplines we need, namely worship, reflection, and missional purpose, so that the church is not just a community of convenience committed only to private and passing religious impulses. I dare to assert that the issue at hand in our day, amid the contexts that mark our lives as individuals and our life as a church, is not the mere survival of the church, either locally or even nationally. Easter, friends, has never been about mere survival. The issue is, instead, whether there will be sustained and sustainable communities of faith that can bear Easter witness, in the midst of the contradictions of war, pandemic, decline, and the like, to the life of God in the world, and to the life of the world lived in missional response to the God of the gospel of both Good Friday and Easter. May we bear such witness, such mission as hope in action, this Lent or in any season.

Brian

Stewardship Spot

"Stewardship is everything I do after I say 'I believe'."

Pandemic as Portal

I begin with a quote from the amazing Indian writer and human rights and environmental activist Arundhati Roy, who wrote early on in the pandemic, and therefore almost two years ago:

"Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced human to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can

choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it." (from an online article, "The pandemic is a portal," April 3, 2020)

Her words ring even truer today, as we begin to emerge from the protracted pain and isolation of the pandemic into some semblance of whatever new normal we'll forge together in the future.

Roy is best known for her 1997 novel The God of Small Things, which explores how small, seemingly insignificant, everyday things and events shape people's behavior and lives, particularly in the midst of the Indian caste system. The novel won the Booker Prize the year of its publication, yet Roy's second novel was published only 20 years later, in 2017. It is titled The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, a no-doubt tongue-in-cheek reference to the Indian intelligence service, as well as an indictment of our general modern penchant

for making "the pursuit of happiness" our ongoing ultimate goal.

Such a goal, of course, leaves us bereft of the ability to truly come together collectively to commit to an impassioned attempt to overcome our larger societal or global challenges, such as the inexorably slow, steady climate crisis that inflicts death and destruction by a million tumbling increments rather than all at once. Such a slow process of degradation and decline blinds us to its nature as a global crisis, the proportion of which is unprecedented in history and threatens the very existence of the human species in the now not-so-long term. Just as Trump and the right wing anti-vaxxers ignored science in the name of their confusion of "freedom" with the liberty to do whatever they want during a public health crisis – bear in mind that the founding principles of the United States are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," while the Canadian constitutional equivalent is "peace, order, and good government"! – so, too, have the climate deniers scoffed at the overwhelming scientific consensus regarding the forecasts that reliably predict the catastrophic advance of multiple climate horrors, including ozone depletion, rising sea levels, unbearably hot temperatures which cause fires and forest depletion, and a countless host of others.

To continue to enable the obscene economic gap between advantaged and disadvantaged individuals, often due to no particular effort or skill but solely because of inheritance or good fortune (which is why we call it "fortune"!), in the name of capitalism and the freedom to pursue, in Roy's term, the utmost happiness, is both short-sighted and unjust. It is also completely misguided, as the accumulation of riches has been proven to only increase anxiety about losing wealth rather than help people rise on the happiness scale. It's also misguided in the larger sense, beyond the

individual, because the equation of corporate, wealthy climate denial and the pursuit of unmitigated and unlimited wealth ironically shrinks the ability for those who will inherit wealth to enjoy their privilege, due to the extent to which the climate crisis shrinks the future. This equation is not true in all corporate towers or wealthy individuals, but it's still prevalent enough to cause the rest of us to have to continually assert our collective human rights to peace, order and good government over their individual right to life, liberty and the pursuit of their utmost happiness.

Where does the above reflection leave us? Well, if the pandemic is to truly be a portal to a new and better world, we'll have to overcome our endless penchant for the pursuit of our utmost happiness in favour of paying attention to the God of small things, who calls us to undertake, with passion and collective sacrifice, the mission of justice, peace, and racial and environmental harmony, through good government and the systematic ordering of our collective lives in alignment with God's good purposes of a new and better world for all and not just some of us. May we do our part to be good stewards of such a vision, that we might live in to this pandemic portal in the days, weeks and years to come.

Brian

Outreach News

Refugee Update

First, because of the pandemic restrictions, we've been unable thus far to have a gathering to welcome our refugee who arrived in September, Ali Oubidin, to Canada – but that will change this spring, as we gradually open up and begin to gather for social occasions, including after Sunday Service!

Stay tuned to the bulletin, as we hope to announce the opportunity to meet and hear from Ali about his refugee journey, and give him a gift and a meal as our delayed welcome!

Ali is working in a bakery, by the way, and I'm told he's doing well in his learning of more conversational English.

Second, in February we finalized completion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Syrian Canadian Foundation (SCF) to enable a sponsorship application to be made for two Syrian refugees, Nathmya Alsalloum and Yosr Alsaud, then shortly thereafter received the required \$30,000 for this sponsorship from a single donor. We then completed the sponsorship application papers and sent them to the United Church of Canada Refugee staff, and await their submission of this application to the Canadian government, as the United Church, as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), hasn't yet been given its 2022 quota. Upon submission it is anticipated that a lengthy process toward hopefully eventual approval will then unfold, if slowly, and that we'll be able to welcome these two people to Canada within a few years from now.

Indigenous Kairos Blanket Exercise Coming to Etobicoke!

This spring, on the Saturday closest to National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21st), namely June 18th, local ecumenical justice organizations Kairos Toronto West and EcuLinks are partnering to co-sponsor another Kairos Blanket Exercise in Etobicoke. This event will have a capacity limit of 25 people, and will take place from 10 am to 3 pm, though the venue is yet to be determined. A suggested donation in lieu of a fee will be extended, and it is hoped that a number of churches will be able to sponsor the attendance of up to 2 people per church.

to take part in this transformative learning exercise which outlines the history of colonialism in this good land most of us know as Canada but Indigenous people know as Turtle Island.

A second Kairos Blanket Exercise is also slated for Etobicoke on Saturday September 24th, the Saturday prior to National Day for Truth and Reconciliation September 30th. Contact Brian if you would like more details about either of these events.

Etobicoke Climate Action (ECA) Group Very Active

Brian continues to serve on the Etobicoke Climate Action Group's Core Leadership team, as they ramp up and expand their activities, which have included deputations, webinars, and various other initiatives. Plans are underway for the hosting of a pre-election provincial candidates town hall meeting on climate as well. Bloordale could use a representative on this team beyond Brian, so be in touch if interested.

Bloordale UC – Fellowship Christian Reformed Church Joint Outreach

Having reported on a few Joint Outreach efforts by a few of our volunteers, Lynn Lawrence and Beth Jazvac, in the last Bloorbeat, the most recent shared effort with Fellowship Christian Reformed Church was the hosting of a 10-week art program for seniors which started in January of 2022, the program paid for by a grant from the City of Toronto and hosted by Nielson Park Creative Centre.

The next few months will have us deepening our dialogue about shared community ministry, and as shown below in this Bloorbeat you can read about the upcoming four week Monday evening online learning opportunity being offered by the two ministers, Mark

Broadus and I, beginning March 28th. Please be in touch if you'd like the Zoom link.

"MISSION IS HOPE IN ACTION FOR THE WORLD"
WALTER BRUEGGEMANN

VISIONING A JOINT MISSION FOR ETOBICOKE

**BLOORDALE UNITED + FELLOWSHIP
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

MONDAY EVENINGS 7PM VIA ZOOM

Participate in online dialogues with the objective of creating a practical, complementary and compatible vision of mission for our two churches, to be lived out in a specific place and time.

Hosted and led by Rev. Brian McIntosh and Rev. Mark Broadus.

MARCH 28, APRIL 4, 11 AND 25.
FOR MORE INFO AND ZOOM LINK, PHONE
BLOORDALE OFFICE AT 416-621-1710,
FELLOWSHIP OFFICE AT 416-622-9647, OR
EMAIL INFO@FELLOWSHIPCHURCHTO.ORG

Advent Giving Tree Program

We continued our Advent Giving Tree program this past December, which supports three shelters, Ernestine's, Women's Habitat, and Youth Without Shelter, and people were generous as usual, though we limited the giving to gift cards only for health and safety reasons. We received thank you notes from all three organizations, and are grateful for the continued generosity of our congregation and its members.

Bloorbeat Available by E-mail

If you wish, you can receive Bloorbeat electronically as an e-mail attachment. Just inform Halyna in the church office 416-621-1710

Hosting a Vaccination Clinic Saturday March 26th

Elsewhere in this Bloorbeat you should also see info. about a Public Health Vaccination Clinic we're hosting at the church, downstairs in the gym, from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday, March 26th. If you need a booster or other shot, feel free to come – no appointments necessary.

Property Options Report

Over the past few years we've held discussions with United Property **Resource** Corporation (UPRC), resulting in a Term Sheet being developed which outlined a non-binding agreement between UPRC & Bloordale United. The highlights of the Term Sheet are as follows:

1. Non-Binding agreement for 120 days from signing.
2. After 120 days a detailed agreement, if arrived at, will be presented to the congregation for a decision. The decision of the congregation is final.
3. Key details of the agreement:
 - a. Building will be handed over to UPRC
 - b. Bloordale U.C. continues to worship and support the community at this site.
 - c. UPRC will manage & maintain the property
 - d. UPRC will administer & honour existing rental agreements
 - e. UPRC will provide a revenue flow back to Bloordale U.C. equal to or greater than our Net revenues today from our rentals.
 - f. Bloordale will pay \$1 per year for the use of the property.

The above Term Sheet was presented to the congregation at the last Semi-Annual meeting, signed in late November, and

approved for a period of 120 days for further exploration. The Bloordale team has submitted documentation to UPRC for their analysis. Much more remains to be done, and it is now inevitable that an extension of the 120-day period, which ends on March 26, 2022, will be needed in order to properly negotiate a final proposal to come before the congregation for approval. The decision of the congregation at that time is final, and we will keep you well informed of the process as we go along.

In the interim, if further details are desired, or if you wish to provide input, please reach out to any member of the Executive Team, namely Pat Conway-Willis, Julia Stavreff, Brian or myself.

Paul Rose

Join Our Circle of Friends!

Worship Update

For the time being your Executive leadership team has decided to keep our vaccination and masking policy in place for Sunday worship attendance, beyond the March 21st provincial deadline for the lifting of restrictions regarding gatherings, though it is our hope to monitor the situation and perhaps withdraw this policy, as well as begin to offer coffee and conversation time following worship, in the near future, perhaps by Easter or just after.

It is also our hope to be able to begin to gently ease back into having choir rehearsals on Thursday evenings, and choir participation on Sundays, sometime soon as well, as at the time of this Bloorbeat's printing this option is being discussed by your church and choir

leaders.

We also plan on having shared Holy Week Services with St. James UC, with them hosting us for Maundy Thursday evening and Bloordale hosting them for Good Friday morning. Details for both these services will be confirmed prior to Holy Week, and will be shared in the bulletin and congregational notes.

Lastly, the local Ministerial churches will once again be hosting the Easter SonRise Ecumenical Service on Centennial Hill, this year at 6:32 am. Plan to join us for this unique public witness, as we together ring in the Easter SonRise!

Bloordale Anniversary Awards

Previous Bloordale Anniversary Awards

For the past ten years we've bestowed upon three people the Annual Bloordale Anniversary Awards, as a way of recognizing the significant contribution that our members make to both the church and the community. They were:

The Bloordale Outstanding Service Award

The Bloordale Outstanding Service Award is given to a member in recognition of long-term, distinguished service to Bloordale United Church. The award may only be bestowed once to an individual, who must have been a member for at least ten years.

Previous Award Recipients

2021-Dana Bach

2020-Shirley Jankus

2019-Shirley Scott

2018-Pat Nelson

2017-Edna Bell

2016-Helen Hitchcock

2015-Jo-EmBettridge

2014-Ross Prout

2013-Joan Hollowell

2012-Grace Everett

The Bloordale Community Service Award

The Bloordale Community Service Award is given to remarkable people who put service at the center of their lives, making a significant contribution to the surrounding comm.- unity. The award may only be bestowed once to an individual.

Previous Award Recipients

2021-Lynn Lawrence

2020-Pat Conway-Willis

2019-Diane Mulholland

2018-Diane Hercus

2017-Joan Hollowell

2016-Frank Sword

2015-Ruth Alexander

2014-Jim Donaghy

2013-Jack Lovatt

2012-Bill Alexander

The Bloordale Vision and Mission Award

The Bloordale Vision and Mission Award is given to a person who has offered significant leadership in the past year toward achieving our vision and mission goals and objectives. The award may only be bestowed once to an individual.

Previous Award Recipients

2021-Debbie Cauch-McIntosh

2020-Beth Jazvac

2019-Paul Rose

2018-Pat Conway-Willis

2017-Roy Harvey

2016-Jim Donaghy

2015-Bob Hitchcock

2014-Norman Dundas

2013-Julia Stavreff

2012-John Pauksens

Bloordale Anniversary Award Recipients for 2022

This year is the eleventh year that we were bestowing these awards. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic we were unable to gather for our usual Anniversary celebration and dinner. So the awards were presented at the 2022 Annual General Meeting which was held in the Sanctuary and had both in-person participants and remote participants connected by Zoom link.

This year's Award recipients were:

Bloordale Outstanding Service Award

Julia Stavreff

Bloordale Community Service Award

Nelsona Dundas

Bloordale Vision and Mission Award

Joan Hollowell

Introducing the 2022 Anniversary Award Winners

Outstanding Service Award 2022

Introduction by Dana Bach



I'm honoured to share with you, directly, that **Julia Stavreff** is our 2022 winner for this award.

I know it is customary to comment on an individual's accomplishments first, then name our winner at the end. However, our winner's contributions have been so profound and she is such a force of nature that I'll name her first, for she is used to being direct, up front, leading the way.

Julia is well qualified, as someone who has served on many committees, often as Chair, including as Chair of our Council for many years, to receive Bloordale's award for long time distinguished service.

Recently, I looked back to the minutes of March 20, 2012: the olden days when 17 attended (all in one room, unmasked!!). I had just started my term as Secretary of Council – there was so much going on, it was difficult at first for me to keep up with all the reports from committee Chairs. But our Chair at that time, Julia Stavreff, kept things moving so the business was done, amicably and effectively. An example of her total commitment: in Jan. 2013, she showed up at our first Council meeting of the year, with a cast on her foot and in a wheelchair, after a mishap over Christmas. This woman is determined! A few years later, when amalgamation was being explored with St. James, more meetings were added to her

already busy schedule, as she worked with others to try to determine what was best for Bloordale and the United Church.

Over many years, Julia wore many caps: we know her in her professional capacity, as a Chartered Accountant, and she has volunteered her time and expertise, and that of her company, to manage our finances; countless hours poring over numbers, serving as a Trustee, and on the Finance/Stewardship/Planned Gift/Memorial Fund Committees. Her skills have helped us through some difficult times, as she applied for government grants when needed to further our programming.

She was a driving force on the Social & Fundraising Committee – remember the concerts, plays, baseball games, and she helped organize car pools too. Children's Craft nights in February were very popular in our community. Of course, her role on the Communications committee, helped make our community aware of our many activities.

Julia is not easily discouraged; her enthusiasm, optimism, and basic kindness, radiate from her, welcoming visitors, and encouraging other congregational members to contribute whenever possible. These past 2 years have been a test, an appropriate word for Lent, and she has continued to rise to the challenge.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the strong support of her husband, John Pauksens, who works diligently in the background. He has shared Julia with us for so many years, enabling Bloordale to move forward. Thank you both.

Dana Bach

Happy Easter!



Mission and Vision Award 2022

Introduction by Pat Conway-Willis



Joan Hollowell has been recommended for the Bloordale Vision and Mission Anniversary Award.

Joan is the first person to have received all three of our Anniversary

Awards - in 2013 the Outstanding Service Award, in 2017 the Community Service Award - and now the Vision and Mission Award. She has been tireless in her commitment to aiding in the delivery of worship over the years - finding readers, candle lighters, preparing communion in recent years and countless other things, including being the friendly face at the door as we applied our vaccination protocols over the last few months.

As a member of the Pastoral Care Committee for many years, Joan is constantly in touch with a whole host of people, offering care and compassion.

So much of Joan does sustain our church Joan can be counted on to do whatever Bloordale needs and she worthy of this award

Pat Conway-Willis

Community Service Award 2022

Introduction by Pat Conway-Willis



Nelsona Dundas has been recommended for the Bloordale Community Service Anniversary Award.

Nelsona has been a member of Royal

Canadian Legion Branch 266/46 as a chaplain for many years, looking after the veterans' needs wherever possible. Each November 11th, Nelsona does the Sunrise Remembrance Service at Prospect Cemetery, along with the service at Sanctuary Park in the afternoon.

Nelsona also continues to support seniors and others in need in the community.

Nelsona wasn't eligible to receive an anniversary award while she was on staff, so it is my pleasure to now recognize her for her many years of service, not only to our church, but to the community.

Pat Conway-Willis

Remarks by Award Recipient Nelsona Dundas

Nelsona was the recipient of the 2022 Bloordale Community Service Award in acknowledgement of her service in the Royal Canadian Legion and to Veterans. Her words of acceptance are reproduced here:

2022 marks the 20th Anniversary of my being a Legion Chaplain.

I've done the ordinary things like saying grace at Veterans' Dinners; participating in Remembrance Day Services; blessing flags and wreathes; and presiding at Weddings and Memorial Services all at the branch.

At one of these, I was able to share with the deceased's family that not only did my cousin live just down the road from where they had grown up in Quebec, but that her husband had taught them all in high school!

A couple of not so ordinary things were, working with other churches and the Legion to plan a Service commemorating the 60th

Anniversary of D-Day. It was all the more meaningful because two of our Veterans, Jack, a congregant, and Freddie, a member of the community, were returning to France for the first time since the war. *[Freddie survived the D-Day landing on Juno Beach, June 6, 1944. Jack received orders to deliver a truckload of supplies to a certain location. He did not know it was a concentration camp and only shared, with family and me before leaving, what he had witnessed and had carried with him for decades. Both blessed me with mementos of their trip.]*

I also worked with the Legion to plan the dedication of their newly installed elevator from an Ontario Trillium Fund grant. At the end, one of the delegation said, 'I've attended many dedication services, but I want you to know this is the only one that had heart!' Working together made for some lasting memories.

By the way, the current President of Dominion Command, of the Royal Canadian Legion, was not only a member of that Legion, but also my church!

I've served in a small village where many of the members of one organization belonged to the other and now in a big city where the two are more estranged.

At my current Branch 266/46, Maple Leaf/Swansea at Jane/Dundas, we host Sunnybrook Veterans twice a year at Christmas and Easter with a turkey and roast beef dinner. Unfortunately, this has not happened since Christmas 2019. *[On the Sunday preceding November 11th, the Branch Remembrance Day Service is open to the public and is followed by a meal.]*

In 2018, after 65 years of overseeing the November 11th public Sunrise (8:00 a.m.) Remembrance Day Service at Prospect

Cemetery, Br. 65 closed. Our Branch is now responsible for the service, which includes an address by the Chaplain and is followed by a breakfast for the public. This, too, has not happened since 2019.

Over the years, I've shared my church experience with the Legion and my Legion experience with the church, e.g. the Last Post service for Church Veterans. I've always tried to meet the people where they were. This was never made more clear than the time a Legion Comrade asked my opinion about Hell!!!

Nelsona Dundas

The Under Ground Rail Road

Part 4, By Sylvia Williams

Parts 1 to 3 in previous issues of Bloobeat

Thinking of railroads we picture a network of rail lines, trains and sometimes conductors. Thinking of an underground rail road we think of our subway system. In the case of fugitive Slaves trying to escape slavery and gain freedom in the north, we learn they used the Under Ground Rail Road (UGRR), yet, this system was neither underground nor did it consist of travelling by trains.

The system was a 3300 Kilometer network of routes extending in all directions throughout 14 northern states and the Promised Land of Canada which was out of the reach of fugitive Slave catchers. It consisted of safe houses and secret routes established during the early to mid- 19th Century. It assisted enslaved persons trying to escape slavery. It used railroad terminology; guides were conductors, hiding places were stations, or way stations, those who hid the fugitive were station masters those offering financial assistance were stockholders, the fugitives were

packages or freights. There was no headquarters, no pamphlets or advertisement as we have today. Communication was by word of mouth, spiritual songs, specially patterned quilts hung over doors or window ledges and the pattern of hair braiding. The codes contained in these media were all understood by the enslaved.

The term underground was used because it seemed that once individuals entered the system they disappeared with no trace until they reached their destination. Spoken language was couched in ways understood by the enslaved. In fact, it is postulated that some of the Negro Spirituals we all enjoy singing and hearing contained not only Biblical meanings and references, contained secret messages about the UGRR. They were used by both

enslaved individuals and abolitionists to communicate with each other about the movement of the UGRR.

"Swing low sweet chariot" when the enslaved heard this he knew he should be ready for the big escape. "Sweet Chariot" was a code name for the UGRR "Swing low" meant it was coming south. A "band of angels" referred to abolitionists and other sympathizers. It should be noted that many abolitionists and sympathizers were church ministers and their parishioners and would have been likened to angels." Wade in the Water" told the fugitive Slaves they need to go in the water to throw off Slave catchers and their dogs and also to stop their footprints. This song was used by the famous" conductor" Harriet Tubman to alert her "passengers" to what was necessary.

One cannot mention or even think of the UGRR without Harriett Tubman and Josiah Henson coming born to mind. These two escaped slaves made it to Canada and in turn helped others.

Harriett Tubman or Moses as she was called; was a shrewd, fearless and cunning outdoors woman. She was illiterate but wise. She was into slavery during the early 1800s. By her 12th birthday she was a field slave. As a young teenager, she suffered a horrific head injury which left her prone to narcolepsy, severe headaches and strange visions. She attributed these visions as messages from God. She dreamed of escaping slavery and would have sacrificed her life to gain her freedom. She did not invent the UGRR as is popularly thought. In 1849 leaving her husband behind, she escaped with two of her brothers while her brothers were captured and subsequently returned to the life of slavery, she did not abandon her dream of freedom and continued her quest. Tired, weary, lonesome and trying to avoid bounty hunters and their dogs, she travelled 90 miles to Pennsylvania. She travelled by night using the north star as her guide and stayed in safehouses or stations during the days. This was the pattern of travel on the UGRR. On reaching Pennsylvania, she is quoted as saying **"I had crossed the line. was free but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom. I was a stranger in a strange land."**

In Pennsylvania, she initially worked for a year to fund the first of a number of clandestine trips to Maryland. On this trip she guided some family members to freedom and later as a dedicated conductor on the UGRR, made many more trips guiding others to freedom. Her resolve to guide others to freedom strengthened after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act (FSA) in 1850. This act made it both more dangerous and difficult to escape. Free and or fugitive Slaves caught in the north could be returned to the southern states. Because of this, she changed her escape route so it ended in St. Catharines where she settled in 1851 and started and

ended her trips there. It is said she made 10 trips on the UGRR and transported at least 70 people to Canada and remarkably never getting caught nor lost a passenger. (Some references mention many more trips and people transported) In fact she was so successful that Slave owners posted a reward of \$40,000 for her capture or death.

Like Harriett Tubman Josiah Henson was born into slavery in Maryland. A freed Slave whose master deviously planned to sell him despite his status, he cunningly planned his escape and with his wife and children walked 600 miles to Canada using the UGRR as necessary. After arriving in Canada they settled in Dresden the last stop of the UGRR. He later established a community for other fugitive Slaves. Henson returned to the south and became a conductor on the UGRR leading many fugitives to freedom. Henson's story provided much of the material for the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Other notable abolitionists and conductors include Frederick Douglass, William Still, Gerritt Smith, Levi Coffin, some quakers and Rev. Calvin Fairbank among many more who were imprisoned and or killed in the process.

References::

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_Railroad

https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_Tubman

Boston: Arthur D Phelps 1849. The Life Of Josiah Henson Formerly A Slave .Narrated ByHimself

Sylvia Williams

Bloorbeat on the Internet

This issue as well as past issues of Bloorbeat can be accessed on the Bloordale United Church website at:

<http://bloordale.ca/bloorbeat/>

From Your Chair of Council



Hi. The last time we did a Bloorbeat, was October. By the time you receive your Bloorbeat, spring will be upon us.

This has been a long and very funny winter. That first snow storm was really something else, but we did get over it and survived.

As you are aware church is open and we do follow protocol, so it would be very nice seeing you on Sunday morning.

We had a general meeting on March 6th and it was nice seeing all of you including the ones on Zoom. As you are aware we are in the black, this is very encouraging. Thanks to all of you.

We continue to get calls from interested parties who would like to rent our space, once again this is very encouraging.

Once again, I want to thank Charles Desgrosseillers of Church of God, as he continues to assist us with contractors, who are trustworthy, we do have one or two outstanding projects, which I hope to have fixed soon.

We have renewed all of our lessees, which is very good.

Victor has replaced the flooring on the top steps to the men's washroom. (Same as he did with the women's washroom).

We have heard from Rooks to Cooks and they will be starting at the end of June through to end of August. The Food Truck has asked if they can come back again soon on Saturday afternoon. Here's wishing all of you a great spring and summer, and

Please continue to be very safe no matter what you do

Pat Conway-Willis
Chair of Council

Julia's Book Reviews

Some of you may know that I am a fan of cozy mystery books. To quote, *'they are a comfort read that leaves you satisfied and at one with the world, rather than scared to sleep alone with the lights out'*.

Some series that I have read include proprietors of teashops, cafes, restaurants, and retail stores; others are retired business owners. All are amateur sleuths.

I have come across two new cozy mysteries that are just a bit different, but just as satisfying:

SJ Bennett's "The Windsor Knot" is the first book in the original and delightfully clever crime series in which Queen Elizabeth II secretly solves crimes while carrying out her royal duties (Yes, that Queen Elizabeth).

With help from her assistant private secretary, Rosie. Her Majesty proves that she is a keen, albeit behind the scenes, sleuth.

SJ Bennet's second book in this series has just come out: **"All The Queen's Men"**.

You don't have to be a royalist, to enjoy these.

Richard Osman's "The Thursday Murder Club" is a New York Times Bestseller and, again, is the first book in a new series.

In a peaceful retirement village, somewhere in England, four residents in their seventies get together weekly to discuss unsolved crimes. When someone known to them is

found dead, the four septuagenarians find themselves in the middle of their first live case. Which they do eventually solve!

Osman's second book in the series has just come out. It is called **"The Man Who Died Twice"** and features Joyce (retired nurse), Ron (retired union leader), Ibrahim (a not quite retired psychiatrist), and Elizabeth (retired from something, maybe spying)

Both Bennett's and Osman's books caught my attention, as the protagonists were quite different than the usual ones.

Perhaps you would like to read them! Check for them at your local bookstore or library.

Julia Stavreffe
Cozy Mystery Afficionado

Health Guidelines for In-Person Worship Attendees - With Vaccination Protocols

Please be aware of and observe the following public health protocols as you arrive, so that we can all remain safe and healthy while worshipping together:

- sign in for contact tracing purposes
- masked upon entry and throughout the service, with one exception (see below)
- physically distanced seating
- no coffee and conversation inside following worship for the time being, though we do encourage visiting outside if possible while physically distancing.

We're of course encouraging vaccination, and

are now implementing what we believe to be a fair vaccination policy, as follows:

All attendees age 12 and older will be asked to provide one of the following to gain admittance:

- Proof of double vaccination against COVID-19, with personal identification (only needs to be shown once, not each week);
- A medical exemption letter signed by a medical practitioner, with personal ID (also only necessary to show once);
- Written proof of a negative PCR or Rapid Antigen Test within the past 48 hours, with personal ID (required each week if not vaccinated).

We trust that remain masked and physically distanced throughout their time inside the building.

There will be two sections of the five in the church, namely the choir section and the one next to it, where people who are vaccinated can physically distance and take off their masks while singing if they're comfortable doing so. Re-masking after singing is required.

Please let us know if you're able to volunteer to either usher or assist in ensuring that these protocols are followed




Let's get **T.O.**
VACCINATED

**COVID 19
VACCINE CLINIC**

Saturday, March 26, 2022
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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TORONTO toronto.ca/COVID19

Connecting with the Ill, Bereaved, and Shut-in

The Pastoral Care Committee connects with members who are ill, bereaved or are shut in. We are unable to make a connection if we are unaware. We are therefore appealing to members who may be aware of someone who might need a contact from us. Please obtain permission from that individual to contact a member of the committee. Thank you.

Congratulations Evelyn and Terry!



Congratulations to Evelyn and Terry Relyea on their 50th Wedding Anniversary in September 2021

IN MEMORIAM

Constance (Connie) Wright

Feb 13, 1932 – Dec 31, 2021

Margaret Taylor

Oct 8, 1932 – Jan 22, 2022

Shirley Thom

July 14, 1929 – Jan 27, 2022

June Erla Blunt

Jan 8, 1924 – Jan 28, 2022

Warren Wright

Jan 15, 1959 – Feb 16, 2022

Victor Chivers-Wilson

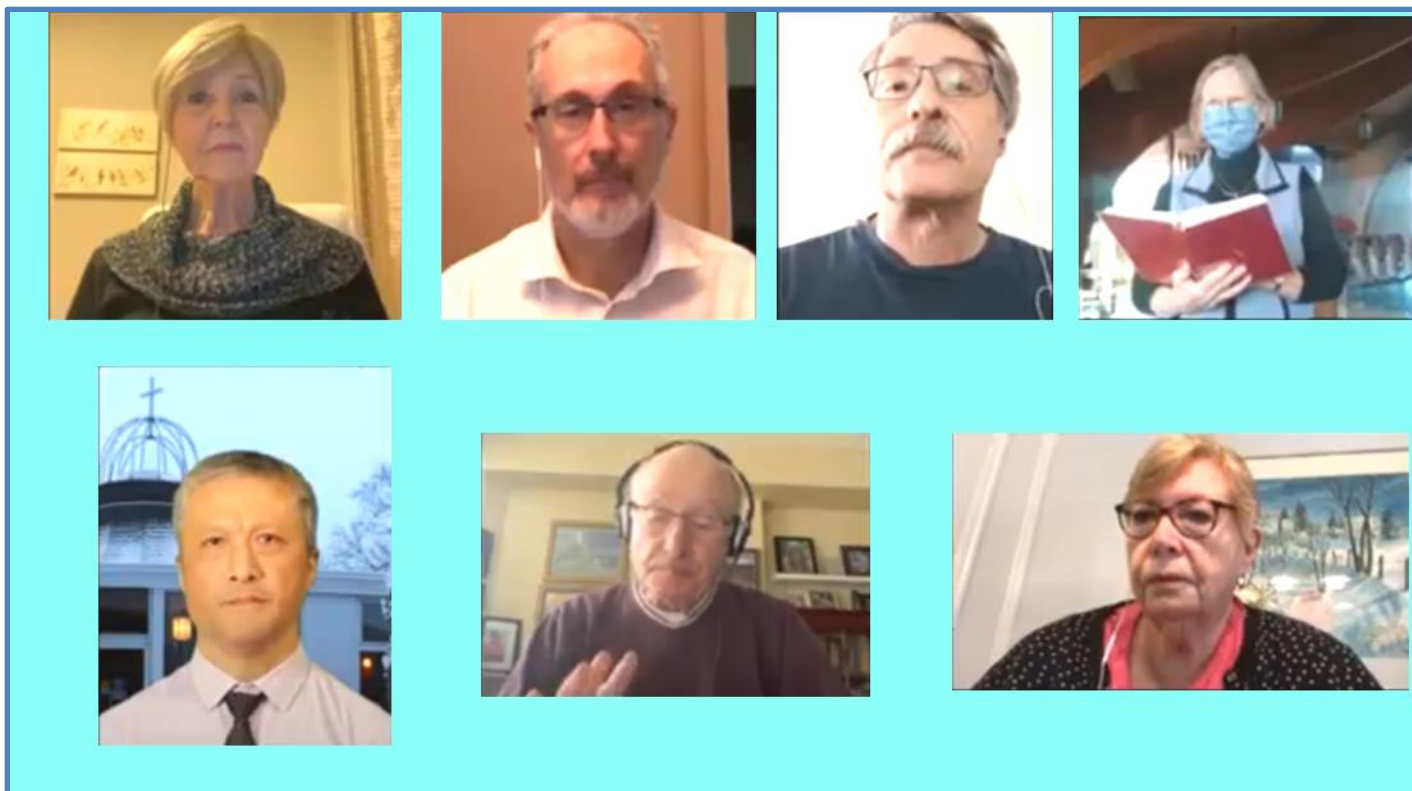
June 14, 1924 – Feb 25, 2022

William John Bickford

March 6, 1946 – March 10, 2022

St. James Food Basket

When you go shopping, please pick up one extra item for our food box, if you are able. Each week, we suggest a food item, to help feed the hungry. Past weeks' suggested items have been: peanut butter, cereal, canned tuna or salmon, toothpaste, pasta, beans or lentils, canned fruit, cookies and crackers. Please put items in Bloordale's food box, located in the sanctuary, and we shall take it to the St. James Food Basket.



Bloordale Choir Video

"What Does the Lord Require"

Under the direction of our Choir Director Paul Wisniewski, the Bloordale United Church Choir made a video recording of *"What Does the Lord Require of You"*. This Video was a special undertaking, by the choir, for Bloordale's 64th anniversary and was presented at Bloordale's anniversary Service on March 6th, 2022.

A screen grab from the Video is shown above. The video has subsequently been posted on Vimeo, and is accessible with a Vimeo link sent by email to congregants.

The singers in the video were:

Barb Saunders, Brian McIntosh, Doug Brown, Lynn Lawrence, Gary Ma, Roy Harvey, Beth Jazvac, and Alice Litherland (Audio only).

Remarks by the Choir Director

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of our wonderful choir that have contributed to Bloordale's 64th Anniversary Service on Sunday March 6th. It was our first ever VIRTUAL performance and we sang "What Does the Lord Require of You", VU #701.

The congregation truly appreciated our efforts! For some of us this experience of music making was a little out of our comfort zone, but we rose to the occasion and through our best efforts, we did a great job.

I hope that we will continue to contribute to our future services in a similar way and that soon we will be able to sing again in person.

Paul Wisniewski



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Upcoming Events Have Been Missed

Before the Covid Epidemic, in every Bloorbeat, there was a list of upcoming events, presented/hosted by Bloordale. It was one of our readers' favourite things to read.

Alas, virtually all in-person activities have been cancelled at Bloordale since March 15th, 2020, due to COVID-19, with no clear resumption date. In-person Worship Services were resumed in October 2021, with strict protocols, but, as yet, no additional in-person activities.

Listed here are some of Bloordale's activities that have been missed; we wait for things to normalize, so that we may resume:

- In-person participation in Choir
- Children's Choir
- Sunday Coffee Hour
- Men's Luncheons
- Open Gym for Teens
- Wesburn Manor Services
- Ladies Friendship Circle
- Pastoral Committee Seminars
- Social Committee Outings
- Power of Pen Series
- Welcoming BBQ
- Dinners presented by Rooks to Cooks Children
- Tenants/Congregants Potluck
- Fall/Spring Cleanup
- Holly Tea
- Congregational Singing

Consider a Planned Gift to Bloordale United Church

Giving a gift to the Planned Gift Fund through your will is one way to continue faithful stewardship beyond your lifetime. When your estate plan is prepared please consider a gift to your church through the Bloordale Planned Gift Fund. Contact Julia Stavreff or Norm Dundas for further information.

Bloorbeat Submission Guidelines *(updated Jan. 2019)*

When you email items to Julia and myself for Bloorbeat, please include the word "Bloorbeat" and words about the specific content in your e-mail header and in any file names, e.g. "Bloorbeat Upcoming Events". This makes it much easier to locate the items in my rather busy e-mail inbox when putting the Bloorbeat together.

In general, for text-based submissions, please avoid use of fancy fonts, and fancy spacings or tab settings because these create more work for me and make it more difficult to maintain a consistent style in the newsletter. And please never use "All Caps" in headings or elsewhere.

Straight text, in 11 point font, with bold (but not underlined) headings in 14 point font, is best. Use word wrap within a paragraph and "Enter" key at end of paragraphs, but not at end of each line.

For photographs of church related items we can handle the standard graphics formats such as .tif .gif, .jpg, .png or .pdf. We print in black and white but post on the church website in colour.

For advertisements, PDF or uncompressed TIFF are the preferred formats. Please check picture clarity and text clarity of your ad printed in your chosen size in black and white on a laser printer and viewed in colour on a computer monitor.

Holy Week and Easter 2022

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10, 10:30 am. Palm/Passion Worship at Bloordale United Church. We share together in Communion.

Maundy Thursday, April 14, 7:00 pm at St. James United Church

Good Friday, April 15, 10:30 am hosted at Bloordale United Church. We worship with our Tri-church partners.

Ecumenical Easter Son Rise Service, April 17, 6:32 am at the top of Centennial Hill. Organized by the west of 427 Ministerial.

Easter Celebration, April 17, 10:30 am worship at Bloordale United Church..

Invitation for Submissions to Bloorbeat

Spiritual perspectives, committee news, community happenings, and ideas for changes and improvements to make Bloordale an even nicer place than it already is are all welcome.

Please submit or discuss your ideas with our Communications Committee chair

Julia Stavreff, 416-622-6309,
stavreffj@stavreff.ca

Bloorbeat Publication Schedule

Following are tentative publication dates and submission deadlines for upcoming issues

| Publication Date | Submission Deadline |
|------------------|---------------------|
| June 5, 2022 | May 30, 2022 |
| Sept 24, 2022 | Sept 19, 2022 |

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Our printed pages size is 8 1/2" x 11"

To advertise, please call Julia Stavreff,
416-621-8050 or email stavreffj@stavreff.ca

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