

Grace's Chatter

December 2020 – Christmas Edition

Sanctuary closed, church continues online

By Paul Scott

In view of the 37 positive cases of Covid 19 in the Gananoque area, and the district health unit moving the area from Green-Prevent to Yellow-Protect on Monday, Official Board chair Brian Brooks announces that Sunday's worship service will be online only. *There will be no in-person worship at the church.*

In consultation with Rev. Takouhi and other church board chairs, it has been further decided that Sunday services at Grace United will continue online only until the Gananoque area reverts back to Green.

Each Sunday the worship services will be live streamed on Facebook at 10:30 a.m. and will also be on YouTube a little later in the day.

"We have been closely monitoring this recent surge and the health and safety of our congregants is paramount," said Mr. Brooks. "We have had no Covid cases linked to our church and we do not want any," he said.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is currently reporting a total of 64 cases with and as on Monday afternoon 37 active cases are linked to the Gananoque outbreak. Of the 64 cases, 63 are termed "community spread" and one is a health care worker.

Eternal Love is the blessing of Christmas

Dear Grace United Church Family and Friends,

As we approach Christmas 2020, which seems to be so different than ever before, may we remember that God's Love has NOT changed toward us.

So, I offer you these words to remind you that you are loved more than you know at Christmas and always.

Christmas Eve

Christ's gentle arrival

Holds the gift of endless Love.

Right from the start humble he was

In a manger modest and shy.

Shepherds heard angels on high

Telling the news of the King who has come.

Magi from the East were guided

A promise fulfilled for all who hunger, a

Savior is born to set us free

Eternal Love is the gift he brings.

Very seldom we stop and think, but

Eternal Love is the "soul" reason for the First **Christmas Eve.**



Blessing:

*May the New Year ahead make this Eternal Love evident
in ALL that you do.*

Christmas 2004 - Laval, QC

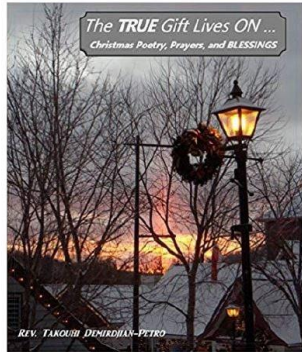
(by Rev. Takouhi – "The True Gift Lives ON" (page 8).

The True Gift Lives ON... A GIFT FOR EVERY REASON...

& EVERY SEASON... By: Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro

First Armenian woman ordained minister

by the United Church of Canada.



Born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon in an Armenian family and entered Canada on August 21, 1986, as a refugee. This is her first published work composed of Poetry, Prayers, and Photography. All content is original. Photos captured by Rev. Takouhi and her husband, Gary Petro; photographed in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario (Canada).

\$20.00 each - Payments can be made in cash or cheque: payable to "Takouhi Demirdjian"

**\$10.00 per book will go towards:
ADVENT: THE SPIRIT OF GIVING
A MINISTRY OF GRACE UNITED CHURCH –
GANANOQUE – FOR THE FOOD BANK.**

Get Your copies today, while Quantities last!

Available at the church sanctuary or through the church office

Phone: (613) 382-2161 Email: grace.gan@outlook.com

or Rev. Takouhi: revtakouhi@terrautopia.ca

Covid 19 couldn't keep us down, Grace United is stronger than ever!

By Paul Scott

As we move further into December, we have two bright lights before us. There is the light at the end of the tunnel that the release of the Covid 19 vaccine presents and there is THE LIGHT that we prepare to receive at this Holy time of year.

Throughout this pandemic year of 2020 we have likely wondered about the big picture, the fears, the stress and about the meaning behind this virus that has spread throughout our world. Yet through all the mask wearing, physical distancing and hand washing, there is a LIGHT that keeps pointing to opportunities and blessings as we care for each other.

And after our long wait and brush with "the walk in the wilderness experience" at Grace United, we are now blessed with The Call of a new minister, Rev. Takouhi, who has arrived to help guide us on our Journey of Faith. Together, as we move through Advent, we have some highlights to share.

Spirit of Giving

Our two Spirit of Giving opportunities have again been welcomed by our Community of Faith. This year our **White Gift Sunday** on Dec. 6 supported the **Gananoque Food Bank** and their ambitious goal of providing 120 food hampers for families facing fragile financial times. Each hamper can be filled for \$40.00. Grace Church members and adherents embraced this initiative and provided funding for 62 hampers! What an excellent response to an immediate need.

"Feed my Sheep" (John 21:15 The Message)



The second Spirit of Giving Opportunity is the **Baby Shower for Jesus** on Dec. 27. This event may be viewed online on Facebook at 10:30 a.m. or later on Youtube. We are once again supporting the essential work of **Interval House**, an emergency shelter providing support and shelter for abused women and their children throughout Leeds and Grenville. For details, please see the accompanying article. Last year the baby manger was filled to overflowing.

"I needed clothes and you clothed me" (Mathew 25:36 NIV)



Live Streaming on Christmas Eve – Be sure to join us on Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. for our live streamed Christmas Eve Service on Facebook Live. Because we always have a packed house for this Christmas Eve celebration and because Covid 19 limits in-person attendance to 60 people, we are taking to the internet so everyone can participate on Christmas Eve in the comfort of their own home. So, fire up your favourite device at 7 p.m. and join us. **"And it came to pass in those days ..."** (Luke 2 KJV)

Other Notes

Christmas and New Years at Home Worship - Please pay special attention to the last two pages of this newsletter. Rev. Takouihi has created a short Family Worship time for Christmas Day and New Years Day. You can easily print out these pages and then gather with members of your household for a very special family time together.

Pies for God's Sake – A big shout out to the pie makers in our congregation. This small group of efficient, dedicated people met every couple of weeks throughout the fall and lovingly created a minimum of 60 pies per session. At the recent pie sale at end of November, over \$3,100 in pie sales were realized. We must have a lot of "pie-faces" in this community! Well done!

Newsletter moves to Quarterly – It is hard to believe that when Grace United Session suggested a church newsletter would be a good way to stay in touch that we were signing on for nine of them! We have been blessed with so many folks who without hesitation agreed to write articles to help keep everyone in the loop during the darker days of this pandemic.

Now we are ready for a break. It has been decided that Grace's Chatter will go quarterly. So stay tuned and we will reach out to you in March with the Easter newsletter. Thank you so much Laurie Cadue for your creative layout and production skills and for adding a touch of cartoon humour each month!

Christmas Office Hours

Laurie Cadue will be finishing her annual vacation time during the Christmas Break. The church office will be **closed from noon Dec. 24 to Jan. 4**; however, messages and phone calls will continue to be answered. Office phone # is 613-381-2161.

Take time to reflect on the important gifts of Christmas 2020 – The birth of Jesus and the Vaccine! Both provide so much Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Embrace these gifts and stay healthy, stay safe in 2021!

Baby Shower for Jesus will assist Interval House clients

By Colleen Harding



On Sunday, December 27th, we will be celebrating our Second Annual Baby Shower for Jesus!

But it will be very different this year.

This celebration will be live streamed only; there will be no congregation at the church. Please join us for an informal, virtual service on Facebook at 10:30 a.m.

Our Guest Worship Leader will be Rev. Kathy Walton. We have chosen Interval House as our special Baby Shower Spirit of Giving opportunity again this year. Interval House provides emergency shelter, outreach counselling and transitional support for abused women and their children throughout Leeds and Grenville.

We invite you to contribute gifts for infants and small children who have been forced to leave their homes and seek shelter. Some suggested items are listed below. Please drop gifts off at the church office before December 24th. Monetary donations marked Interval House are also welcomed by e-Transfer, by mail to 120 Pine St., Gananoque, ON. K7G1C7 or to the church office during office hours.

Suggested items:

- Diapers, baby wipes
- Baby shampoo/body wash/ children's bubble bath, body wash
- Infant formula/bottles/nipples/sippy cups for toddlers
- Soothers
- Socks, underwear for toddlers, slippers
- Crayons, markers, colouring books, activity books
- Pencils, drawing paper, Playdoh
- Toys for babies, toddlers
- Gift cards for grocery stores, Shoppers, Walmart, fast food outlets, Tim Hortons
- Monetary donations (cheques payable to Grace United Church – Baby Shower)



Grace United ends year with a bang, 2021 looks promising!

By Vicki Leakey, treasurer

Wow, what a month of activity at Grace United!

First, we were allowed limited seating in our sanctuary on Sunday mornings, that was an amazing gift and we saw attendance range from 31 to 59 each November Sunday. Then on November 15th, we were blessed to have our new Minister, Rev. Takouhi begin to lead us in Sunday morning worship. We also have improved our technology to live stream services as well as provide the full service on YouTube that can be watched later.

Although many challenges still exist with Covid-19, we have had so many successes this fall, our pie sales were fantastic, and we organized a couple of Sunday's in December to provide Spirit of Giving opportunities to the Food Bank and Interval House.

The stewards and the official board have worked to draft a 2021 budget where we have set a target of \$213,300 for expenses with matching revenue. Fortunately, we do have some access to Trustee funds to help subsidize our work; however, we have incorporated some ambitious expectations with weekly offerings and fundraising opportunities. Fundraising is exactly that, members of the church family having fun while raising additional dollars to cover our essential operating costs or for specific needs in the community. There are many church members bringing forth fundraising ideas regularly, so 2021 should be an exciting year even with the required safety restrictions for Covid-19.

Total revenue for year-to-date November 2020 was \$167,230 compared to \$200,162 in 2019. Total expense for year-to-date November 2020 was \$142,688 compared to \$160,253 in 2019. From Special Grace Church Missions, we provided \$500 to the Children's Toy Drive and the Foodbank.

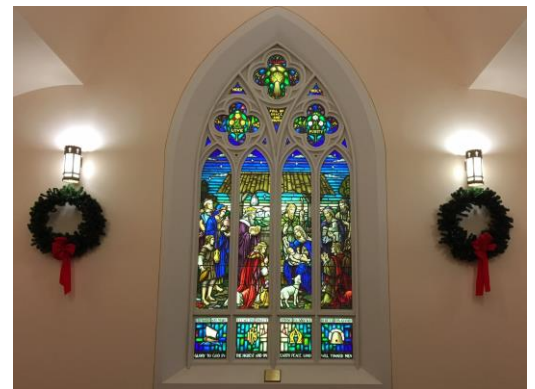
YOUR Church Needs YOU!

By Diane Kirkby

The Official Board of Grace United Church is elected by all members of the congregation and comprised of the Board of Stewards, the Session, and representatives of various committees and organizations.

The Nominating Committee is inviting people to step forward and volunteer for some positions that need to be filled.

Terms on Session and the Board of Stewards are usually three years. Ideally, there should be a mixture of new and seasoned members. Meetings are held monthly, September through June.



The Session has a few vacancies and responsibilities of Session members could be divided into five areas: Worship, Membership, Faith Formation & Christian Education, Pastoral Care & Visitation, and Outreach.

The Board of Stewards is also hoping to fill a few positions. The Stewards manage the financial affairs of the congregation by assisting in securing contributions, disbursing the money received, fundraising, reporting the financial condition of the Congregation to the Official Board, and presenting financial statements at the Annual Meeting.

The congregation appoints Members of the Board of Trustees for longer terms, due to the nature of their work. The Trustees administer funds held in trust, such as bequests from estates.

The Ministry & Personnel Committee is also hoping to add more members. They liaise between church staff and the congregation.

So please, if you have not served on a church board or committee in a number of years or if you have never served, please consider doing so and contact a member of the Nominating Committee, indicating your area of interest by Sunday, January 17.

Linda Brooks (613-382-2385) lbrooks6.lb@gmail.com

Tammy Fergusson (613-328-7766) thefergussons@primus.ca

Diane Kirkby (613-929-2010) dianekg@cogeco.ca

Contributors this month

Rev. Takouhi, Diane Kirkby, Colleen Harding,
Vicki Leakey, Paul Scott, Laurie Cadue.

Next deadline: Friday, March 19, 2021

*We wish you all a very
Merry Christmas and
a Healthy and
Happy New Year.*



Contacts:

Minister: Rev. Takouhi Demirdijian-Petro Direct line: 613-777-0880

You can also follow and learn more about Rev. Takouhi on Facebook, YouTube and her Blog www.RevTakouhi.ca

Church Contact: Laurie Cadue 613-382-2161 grace.gan@outlook.com

Church Boards:

Official Board – Brian Brooks 613-382-2385

Session – Paul Scott 613-382-4386

Board of Stewards – Carolyn Scott 613-382-4386 or Vicki Leakey 613-382-4015

A Christmas Day Family Worship at Home

Friday, December 25th, 2020



Lighting of a Candle

(have someone light a candle)

A Leader is chosen who says:

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light. Those who
lived in a land of deep darkness — on
them light has shined.

(Isa. 9:2) The light shines in the
darkness. And the darkness did not
overcome it. *(John 1:5)*

For Christ is born in Bethlehem. Come,
let us adore him.

Prayer: God of small things, you
came among us as a tiny baby
open to all to meet you. Today,
remind us once again how to
welcome you in our hearts and live
through Your Compassion. **Amen.**

Carol: Away in a Manger

Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask Thee to stay
close by me forever,
and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in Thy
tender care,
and fit us for Heaven,
to live with Thee there.

The Birth of Jesus

(Luke 2: 8-20; N.R.S.V.):

8 In that region there were
shepherds living in the fields,
keeping watch over their flock by
night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord
stood before them, and the glory of
the Lord shone around them, and
they were terrified. 10 But the
angel said to them, "Do not be
afraid; for see—I am bringing you
good news of great joy for all the
people: 11 to you is born this day
in the city of David a Savior, who is
the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will
be a sign for you: you will find a
child wrapped in bands of cloth and
lying in a manger." 13 And
suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host,
praising God and saying, 14 "Glory
to God in the highest heaven, and
on earth peace among those whom
he favors!" 15 When the angels
had left them and gone into
heaven, the shepherds said to one
another, "Let us go now to
Bethlehem and see this thing that

has taken place, which the Lord
has made known to us." 16 So
they went with haste and found
Mary and Joseph, and the child
lying in the manger. 17 When they
saw this, they made known what
had been told them about this
child; 18 and all who heard it were
amazed at what the shepherds told
them. 19 But Mary treasured all
these words and pondered them in
her heart. 20 The shepherds
returned, glorifying and praising
God for all they had heard and
seen, as it had been told them.

A Christmas Prayer: Almighty
God, Christ your Word became
flesh and dwelt among us, born in
Bethlehem. May we receive Christ
into our lives and become, through
him, your blessed children who
walk in the light you have sent into
our world. Through Christ we pray.
Amen.

***Happy Birthday,
Jesus!***



Merry Christmas

A New Year's Day Family Worship at Home

Friday, January 1, 2021



(have someone light a candle)

**A Leader is chosen
who says:** *(Ps. 148:1, 7, 12)*

Praise the Lord! Praise God in the heavens. Praise the Lord from the earth! Young and old alike, men and women together. Praise the Lord!

Song: Jesus Loves Me this I know

Jesus loves me,
this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong,
in his love we shall be strong.

Refrain: Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes,
Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves
me! The Bible tells me so.

Prayer: O God, into a realm of clerics and kings you sent your child to teach the wise and show the world what power there is in love. Keep us vigilant to hear the voices of those who speak your

truth. In the name of Jesus we pray. **Amen.**

Let All Creation Praise God **Psalm 148**

1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
Praise him in the heights above.
2 Praise him, all his angels;
Praise him, all his heavenly hosts.
3 Praise him, sun and moon;
Praise him, all you shining stars.
4 Praise him, you highest heavens and
you waters above the skies. 5 Let them
praise the name of the LORD, for at his
command they were created, 6 and he
established them for ever and ever —
he issued a decree that will never pass
away. 7 Praise the LORD from the
earth, you great sea creatures and all
ocean depths, 8 lightning and hail,
snow and clouds, stormy winds that do
his bidding, 9 you mountains and all
hills, fruit trees and all cedars, 10 wild
animals and all cattle, small creatures
and flying birds, 11 kings of the earth
and all nations, you princes and all
rulers on earth,
12 young men and women, old men
and children. 13 Let them praise the
name of the LORD, for his name alone
is exalted; his splendour is above the
earth and the heavens. 14 And he has
raised up for his people a horn, the
praise of all his faithful servants, of

Israel, the people close to his heart.
Praise the LORD.

Song: Amazing Grace

- 1) Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
- 2) The Lord has promised good to me, this word my hope secures; God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

A New Year's Prayer: *(Col. 3:14)*

Loving God: We give you thanks for this New Year.

As we begin a new chapter, help us put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, that we may be Christ for others, every day of our lives. We humbly pray. **Amen.**

Happy New Year!

*May 2021 be
Filled with
Hope, Peace,
Joy and Love...*

