

Grace's Chatter – Easter 2023

Rev. Takouhi's Reflection... Lent-Easter 2023

"Spiritual nourishment is anything that fills us with a sense of the fundamental goodness of life, the clear and constant gifting of God."¹

Sr. Joan Chittister

Dear Grace United Church,



This picture was captured on April 3, 2020, one of the most intense moments in history, when we were learning about COVID-19 and the deadly power it had on humanity. My colleague and soul sister, Rev. Lynne Gardiner, always dropped by and brought flowers, food, but most of all fellowship, with distance apart, outside our home. She does not live next door to us, but she made our days through the lockdowns of COVID brighter as much as possible.

Today, we can say that we have come a long way from that time in history, but we also must say we still have a long way to go. However, in all that is around us, within our families, communities, country and the greater global family, we are reminded that there is always goodness, if we pay attention. As Sr. Chittister says, "The fundamental goodness of life" is "the clear and constant gifting of God."

Throughout Lent, we have been focusing on the topic of "Belonging" and how the Lenten Season reminds us of this TRUTH. We were reminded how our True name is: Beloved. Also, God calls us to be Born Anew, push the RESET Button by the Grace of God; live a life of Beyond Belief, and trust that we always will be Found. The Lenten Season is not completed yet, as we are still journeying through this wilderness of life. However, it is clear in every way that the Presence of God is everywhere and we are blessed through God's Goodness of Grace in different ways. All we need to do is to pay attention to the natural world that surrounds us. Even in the storms of life and natural disasters, there is a Mystery that brings forth community of care and compassion, and goodness becomes evident when we do our part.

Beloved, we are truly fortunate to be part of such a loving, caring, and compassionate Community of Faith. We truly endeavour to live as Easter People and offer a new life to all who come our way. We study the Word through VIBE (Venturing in Biblical Education). Yes, this does not seem like a regular Bible study, however it is a Bible study in a new creative way. It is still Adult Christian Education in a different way. This Community of

¹Sister Joan Chittister - <https://joanchittister.org/content/newsletters/monastic-way/current-issue - March 17, 2023>

Faith is wrestling with the questions. Living the questions, so that we can hear God's mission and see God's vision in a new way and invite people to God's Love without using any words. Try it, and you will see that God is not looking for defence lawyers to protect the Christian Belief, but God is looking for disciples who Trust and Obey the Call and live their belief.

So, friends, as we journey on to the empty tomb, I pray that we are ready to go to the cross with Jesus first. There is no resurrection without death on the cross. Hence, I invite you to go to the cross and have all the former ways be crucified, including our ego and selfish desires, and take the time with God to be born anew, making resurrection tangible to us in this day and age. Therefore, as you prepare for Easter, take time to contemplate and decide what shrouds you are going to leave in the tomb, and step into a new life not just for yourself but for all the world, near and far.

Grace United Church: Just like the flowers I received in 2020, or all the flowers we get to enjoy all around us, flowers remind us of one true fact -- in every end there is a new beginning. Like Voices United #703 reminds us,

- 1 *In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.*
- 2 *There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.*
- 3 *In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,*



*unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.*



Therefore Beloved, do not be afraid to embrace the new gifts of God and be ready to step into a new life this Easter and enjoy the Presence of the Gardener, who is our friend, teacher, and example to follow.

May you rejoice and say out loud,

“The Lord is Risen, He is Risen Indeed. Thanks be to God.”

Your Servant-Leader,

Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro

B.A., B.Th., M.Div.

Stewards set fundraising goal at \$14,000

By Chair of Stewards, Denise Wood

Stewards are meeting regularly for another year. We welcomed a new member Dave Charles who brings new ideas with him.

The group continues to review all requests for assistance from our community. Funds from the Benevolent Fund will be used. The offertory envelopes in 2024 will have the option to contribute to this fund. Until then, the congregation can contribute by writing “Benevolent Fund” on their envelopes.

The pie ladies are hard at work again baking pies for Easter. This group has raised thousands of dollars for the Church over the years. It’s a great fundraiser and a wonderful time of fellowship and fun.

Stewards have set a goal of approximately \$14,000 for fundraising this year. We are committed to meeting and hopefully exceeding this amount. Several concerts and other fun events are in the planning stages.



Maintenance Committee upgrades washrooms

By Brian Brooks

The maintenance team now consists of five members – Murray Roantree, chair, Brian Brooks, Angus Fergusson, Derryl Wood and Chuck Galway.

Our monthly review of the safety lighting continues as does the monthly inspection of the fire alarm system, extinguishers, and defibrillator.

A new sink and paddle taps have been installed in the washroom next to the choir room. The sink's height was increased to make it accessible compliant. A new cabinet was installed in the washroom and new paper holders will be installed in all the church washrooms. New soap dispensers and hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed as some old ones do not work properly.

In conclusion, a new motion activated light was installed in the elevator, making it much easier to see when the doors are closed.

Revenues are up, but still much to do

By Vicki Leakey

As we all are looking at our budding trees and early sprouts in our gardens, we are filled with hope for normality to come back into our lives in 2023. We are off to a great start as we see an increase in new faces and familiar faces sitting in the pews on a Sunday morning. For the first two months in 2023 we see an increase in revenue of approximately \$3000, which is a great start to the year. There are many new group activities happening in our church hall and the stewards are planning for a few fundraisers this year so watch your bulletins for dates for concerts to be sure you don't miss them, and we are hoping that some of the other activities may continue after March and will advertise them as well.

Again, I need to remind anyone interested in helping our pie makers to reach out as they are a very talented group always looking for an extra pair of hands. This group brought in the largest per cent of fundraising revenue last year and we look forward to benefits of what they can accomplish in 2023 as well. Grace United Church pies is very well known in the community.

Grace United Church has renamed our Special Grace Missions to the Benevolent Fund where we are fortunate to receive gifts to assist those community needs as they arise. We continue to look for opportunities to better serve those needs in the community, and we are so fortunate to have our members support the operations of our church, Mission and Service to address the growing international need around the world as well as local community needs. Sunday offerings reach so many needs and we are proud to be able to expand our financial help beyond the brick and mortar of our building.

We appreciate the generosity of members of this congregation, we continue to have an amazing caring church family and we are optimistic that 2023 will bring new vitality as we strive forward on our journey.

Order pies for Easter now, pick up April 6

By Elaine Davidson

Our wonderful volunteers on the Pies for God's Sake committee has been busy throughout the winter months and the freezers are well stocked. Pies are now available for purchase and if you wish to order some for Easter or spring, just give Carol Currie a call at 613-382-4376.

The pie pick up day is Thursday, April 6, 2023 at the church from 3 to 6 p.m.

On another note, our Grace Church kitchen was inspected recently by the health unit and we received a good rating along with some suggestions. Tracking sheets have been developed for the pie makers as well as for anyone else using the kitchen.

Finally, there will be an in-person class for the course "In Good Hands" slated for sometime in June. It will also be offered online. Some of the volunteers have already taken the course, but having a few more trained is a good idea as we always have to have someone who took the course at our pie gatherings.



The Pie Makers enjoying a coffee break, March 21, 2023 and one "messy" pie baker 😊

Session looks at exciting new initiatives.

With Barb Jenkins, Chair of Session

Easter Communion

At a recent meeting of Grace United Session it was decided that it is safe to renew a more traditional Communion Service at Easter. Both sides at the front of the sanctuary will be served. Those attending will also be asked to come forward, as able, to partake and deposit their used glasses on a separate tray. Bread will be passed with tongs. Following this portion of the sacrament, Rev. Takouhi will circulate and serve those who are seated. We always use gluten free bread and fruit juice.

Church directory

Plans are underway to produce a new church directory in May. Everyone will be contacted by email or by phone to confirm whether they wish to have their picture taken for the directory. Pets are welcome.

Outreach Services

Monthly outreach services continue at Carveth Care Centre and Fox run. The focus is mainly on music and prayer.

Pride Service

A great initiative is underway to have a Pride worship service at Grace United during 1000 Island Pride Week in July.

Rentals are filling our space

Rentals of our Grace Church facilities continue to fill our building with happy voices in French and English as well as healthy activities such as yoga and fall prevention programs plus we welcome Probus, The Historical Society and Choral Society.

Office Rental

Session is pursuing the opportunity of leasing the Minister's office to a community group as Rev. Takouhi is always happy to meet in her virtual space.

Lenten Reflections

Throughout Lent, you have been invited to reflect on the importance of various aspects of our community of faith. This falls under the direction of the Official Board but Session is keeping notes on the progress and hope everyone will come together with Rev. Peter Bartlett on April 30th after morning worship to share a meal and discuss our findings. We are excited about the prospect of having a genuine pot luck lunch once again! Bring whatever you would like to share.

Messy Church/Drop-in

Other ideas percolating along include re-introducing Messy Church in September if we can find an organizing team. This was such a successful outreach program before Covid. It would be nice to see if we can do it again! And Session is also looking at the possibility of a drop-in social hour during a weekday evening.

Garden Grant

And finally, Session is applying for a grant in order to create a garden in front of the Christian Education wing on the east side of the church. Ideas centre around creating a quiet place with a theme such as healing or peace and incorporating benches, small trees and flowers for all to enjoy.

Holy Week Events

Palm Sunday

Join us as we welcome new members to the Grace Church Family.

Special Musical Guest – Sheri Shenton

Singing a solo by Bill Gaither and Sandi Patty, "In The Name of the Lord".

More details – click the link below

[Palm Sunday 2023 Promotion Final - YouTube](#)



**Come and Re-Member the command
"Love, as I have Loved You"**

**Maundy / Holy Thursday
Gathering**

April 6, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

All Welcome



Grace United Church
Presents

Eleanor Glenn in
"The Servant at Supper"
3:00pm

Good Friday, April 7, 2023

All are Welcome – Admission:

FREE WILL OFFERING -

**Dedicated to the BENEVOLENT
FUND of Grace United Church –
extending help to the less
fortunate in our greater
community.**

THE SERVANT AT THE SUPPER



Celebrating 16 years of
Performances

Clothed in the simple costume of the
servant girl who baked the bread and
served the wine at the Last Supper;
ELEANOR GLENN describes the
events taking place as she witnesses
them at:

THE LAST SUPPER

THE CRUCIFIXION

THE RESURRECTION (women
return to the Upper Room)

PENTECOST

and ending with a timely MESSAGE
for CHRISTIANS OF THIS 21ST
CENTURY.



He is not here.

Easter Sunday - Communion

Special Musical Guests

Brass Quintet

Pre-Service Music 10:15am

Service 10:30 am – April 9, 2023

**Join Us for a Special Easter
Service.**

Click link below for more details

[Easter 2023 Promotion HD - YouTube](#)

Our sincere condolences to all who have lost loved ones. The following members of Grace United passed away this year, Shirley Warren, Edna McCuaig and Margaret Chitty. We pray that their families and friends are finding comfort in their memories. Blessings.

Celebrations for April, May & June – Happy Birthday or Anniversary to all those celebrating over the next few months. **Happy Birthday** to Graham, Jack, Jim, Paul, Joan, Connie, Connor, Helen, David, Betty, John, Mackenzie, Maryfil, Nicole, Vera, Max, Angus, Gloria, Betty, Christina, Shirley, Reta, Alyn, Tammy, Mel, Tom, Doreen, Nancy, Eileen, Laurie, Anne and Richard. **Happy Anniversary** to Jim & Dianne, Paul & Carolyn, Brian & Cecile, Steve & Connie, Paul & Colleen, Laurie & Gerard, Doug & Betty, Tammy & Angus, Brian & Susan and Neil & Gillian.

We would love to hear your feed back. Do you read the newsletter? Should we continue with the newsletter? Let us know. Email Paul Scott scottsonhill@hotmail.com

Contributors this month are: Rev. Takouhi, Denise Wood, Elaine Davidson, Brian Brooks, Vicki Leakey, Barb Jenkins, Laurie Cadue, Paul Scott and Paul Harding.

Deadline for the Summer Edition of Grace's Chatter – June 9, 2023