

"Living faithfully in the Spirit of Christ to make a loving difference in the world."

Paul's Ponderings

What a difference a year makes. Last year as Lent began, we were gathering for weekly worship, a lenten study group began and the final arrangements were being made for the annual congregational meeting. Along with the Anglican congregation, plans were being finalized for a renovation project of the chancel area which included an improved audio system. A year later, the Anglican congregation has closed, we haven't had worship here since March 8th and this year's annual meeting is delayed until spring.

With all the changes happening, there has been a Transition group at work sorting out what we need to do in response. The group has adopted a "**Come Back Strong**" approach as we imagine what will be possible when the building will once again be able to be fully utilized.

We are inviting the congregation to an information meeting on Wednesday, March 3rd at 7pm through Zoom. A 4 page Come Back Strong document will be circulated ahead of time. One of the questions to explore at this meeting will be how to proceed with the Chancel renovation project.

While there has been much that has changed over this year, I am also aware that the dedication and commitment of so many persons to this community of faith has strengthened and continued to be revealed.

World Day of Prayer

Like most events these days, this year's World Day of Prayer is going virtual. The service, with the theme "Build on a Strong Foundation", has been prepared by the women of the Republic of Vanuatu, in the South Pacific. This was adapted by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, and a one hour video has been produced. We will be unable to gather with our local churches, as we usually do, but we at Riverside can come together on-line to watch and participate. On Friday March 5th at 2:00 PM we will be hosting a Zoom meeting, to which everyone is welcome to join. This link, as well as the link to download the service booklet, will be sent out later.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



The write-a-thon in December, carried out on Zoom and at home, produced 150 letters and emails on the 10 cases presented. We currently have two campaigns involving Russia. One is defending opposition leader Navalny who is again in prison. The second is defending a woman being harassed for the participation in a demonstration. We are also defending a human rights worker imprisoned in Egypt.

Good news: Women human rights defender and University of British Columbia graduate Loujain al-Hathloul has been released from prison in Saudi Arabia, after nearly three years in prison. She is now finally reunited with her family, but continues to live under strict controls. We did write defending her.

REFUGEE COMMITTEE: The final documents for the sponsorship of the Taimouti family currently living in Kuwait have been submitted to the Refugee Desk of the United Church in Toronto. We have been informed that they are on the waiting list for 2021/22.



During these unprecedented times, when it seems that we need to change or adapt how we do everything, donating to a food bank is no exception.

Our Sunday worship services are suspended; we are told that we should not take any unnecessary trips outside our homes and we are instructed to engage in social distancing.

We have no idea how long these circumstances will continue, and it is possible that more folks will find it necessary to visit food banks. Since we will not be at church and able to drop donations into the yellow bin, the safest and most efficient way for us to help is to donate money on line, and our dollars will have more spending power. Go to hefc.ca and click on the DONATE button.

Any questions - contact Mary Shaw (613) 733- 4600 or mbshaw@rogers.com Thank you for your ongoing support. It is truly appreciated!

MINI BAZAAR

Due to COVID-19, we did not have a regular Christmas Bazaar in 2020. Instead we had a mini-bazaar table for 5 Saturdays at the Ottawa Organic Farmer's Market which started operating out of our building in November. We sold food products such as jams and jellies, frozen soups, pies, applesauce, cookies and shortbreads, and fresh baked products that people dropped off at the beginning of the market. In those five weeks we made \$2500.

We were able to do that thanks to all those who made soups and jams and pies and shortbread and other baked goods, as well as those who created and generously donated the wonderful quilts, knitted goods and crafts, in anticipation of the Christmas Bazaar this year.

So now what? The Christmas Bazaar committee got together recently to discuss whether we should continue with this activity once the current lock-down is lifted. All committee members wanted it to continue, at least on a monthly or semi-monthly basis, weather permitting. While we would always want to have a table showcasing the quilts, knitting, and possibly other bazaar items, the initial draw to our table on the part of people coming to a farmers' market seems to be the food items. Therefore, we would only be able to continue our successful mini-bazaar if members of the congregation are interested in contributing their time and baking/cooking/jam-and-jelly making talents on a regular basis in support of the endeavour so that there is always food (mainly frozen rather than fresh) available to sell.

Now that the lockdown has ended, the Church building is available for people who might want to drop off contributions, pick up containers for pies, soups, loaves etc, or use the kitchen for a work party. With ten days to prepare, we could have enough food products on hand to have a table for Saturday February 27th. If you are interested in contributing please contact Peg Brandon (peg_brandon@hotmail.com or 613 739-7569) or Wendy Graham (w.j.graham@rogers.com or 613 523-2244) and let them know what you would like to do. We can also organize pick up of food and/or drop off of food containers as needed.



Other News Items:

1) **Quiz Night** - Saturday, March 6th - A poster is attached announcing a fun night which will also raise money for Veteran's House - a project of Multifaith Housing. Veteran's House has opened - but funds are still needed. The United Church in this region has a goal of raising \$150,000 in a United We Stand campaign.

2) **RUC Information Meeting** - Wednesday, March 3rd at 7pm on Zoom. Over the past few months there have been a lot of changes for Riverside and so a meeting is planned to share information and respond to questions that you might have. The Annual Congregational meeting will be delayed until later in the spring.

3) **Scripture readers:** We have now produced 41 weeks of You Tube reflection videos. As part of these videos approx. 30 people have recorded the scripture for inclusion on the video. As we prepare for season two - we are looking for additional readers. Smart phones/tablets have an audio recording feature. Another option would be to come to the church and be recorded. Let me know if you are interested.

4) **Warm Winter Clothing** - If you have any surplus winter clothing, please bring it to the church, so we can share it with Centre 507 clients. We are grateful for one donation of several knitted hats and mittens.

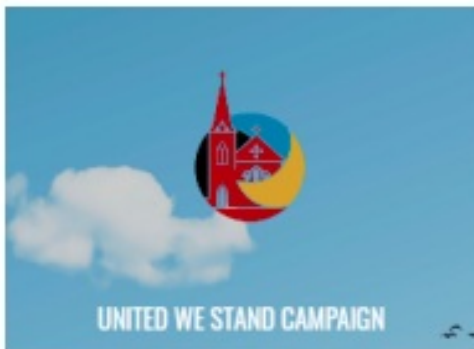
5) **Office Hours** - with the lifting of the Stay at Home order - the church office will return to regular office hours. We still need to limit numbers in the office at one time, so I would suggest that you call ahead and let us know you are dropping in. Offering envelop sets for 2021 are at the church.

6) **Lenten Activity Calendar.** A calendar is attached. It offers a daily suggestion. Many of them suggest a levy and so you are invited to keep track of a growing total and then at the end of Lent make a donation to Centre 507, Heron Road Emergency Food Centre and/or the Mission and Service Fund. This activity calendar is prompted by our inability to have reverse offerings.

Lenten Activity Calendar - Riverside United 2021

This calendar invites each person/household to mark the season of Lent with a daily activity. Some of the activities are reflective/prayer tasks. Many invite a financial contribution. You are invited to keep track of the financial “levies” and to make a donation at the end of Lent to Centre 507, the Heron Road Emergency Food Centre or the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada. One of the realities of this COVID time is that we are not able to have Reverse Offerings at church for these partners. You can make a direct donation or send your money to the church and it will be forwarded. If these amounts are beyond your means, please contribute what you can. And if you can double or triple the total at the end, that would be allowed. Most of the Thursdays are Spiritual Geography references for the Thursday evening worship/reflection times offered at 7pm each week on Zoom.

Date	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb 17-20				Lent begins. Think about how you will make this time distinct.	10 cents for each water tap in your home	10 cents for each phone call or text sent or received	2 cents for each pair of shoes in your home
Feb 21-27	Say a prayer for those who live amidst war	5 cents for each year of school for each one in the home	50 cents for each vehicle owned in the family	5 cents for each window in your home	Spiritual Geography: What have wilderness times been for you?	10 cents for each hour of TV watched (or show streamed)	5 cents for each hour slept in a bed
Feb 28-Mar 6	Say a prayer for those who are homeless	1 cent for each book in your home (exact count or approx!)	5 cents for each cup of coffee/tea/pop drunk today	25 cents for computer you own	Spiritual Geography: How are mountains an image of faith?	World Day of Prayer Learn about the country of Vanuatu	10 cents for each country you have visited
March 7-13	Say a prayer of our neighbours who rely on the Food bank	25 cents for each subscription received in your home	2 cents for each time toilet is flushed today	\$1 if your home has air conditioning	Spiritual Geography: What images do you have of seashore / lakeshore?	10 cents for each serving of meat eaten today	10 cents for each win your favourite hockey team has this season
March 14-20	PIE Day - Pray for those who live in fear due to sexual orientation or gender identity	25 cents for each cell phone in your home	\$1 if you have a dishwasher	\$1 if you have been to Ireland	Spiritual Geography: How is a river an image of faith?	\$1 for each bag of garbage put out on last garbage day	50cents for each take out meal this week
March 21-27	Say a prayer for those who are sick with COVID	5 cents for each serving of vegetables eaten today	25 cents for each television in your home	10 cents for each small electrical kitchen appliance	Spiritual Geography: What images of sky speak to your soul?	25 cents for each Zoom call you have been on this week (non-work)	25cents per person who has 5 outfits of clothes
March 28-Apr 3	Phone or write a friend who you have been out of touch with	25 cents for each online shopping purchase this past week	5 cents for each time of bread eaten today	How has this Lent been meaningful?	Maundy Thursday - reflect on a significant communion time.	Good Friday Pray for political prisoners	Remember and pray for those who grieve.



UNITED WE STAND CAMPAIGN



VETERANS' HOUSE
A Multifaith Housing Initiative Community

Are you tired of quiet evenings without a challenge ? Well then,

Riverside United Invites you to ZOOM into our Quiz Night - Saturday, 6 March 2021

This event is to raise funds for :

Veterans' House; the Andy Carswell Building is Multifaith Housing Initiative's fifth housing project and Canada's first community house built for homeless veterans. This pioneering project specifically targets the needs of the rising number of homeless veterans who are "living rough" in Ottawa and combines safe housing with essential on-site rehabilitation services.

Saturday March 6, 2021 7:00 – 8:30 pm (ZOOM link to follow)

We ask the trivia questions on line, you provide the answers as a single or group in the zoom chat. We all provide the fun and we can contribute to a great cause.

No one will know your score unless you want bragging rights !

To register, send email to Peg_brandon@hotmail.com - remember this is free but we welcome contributions.

Should you wish to donate, go to [Donate Now - RIVERSIDE UNITED CHURCH, \(canadahelps.org\)](https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/18475) (or <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/18475>) When asked to which fund you wish to direct your donation indicate the "General" fund (bottom of the list) and then in the "Message for Riverside Church" below that, indicate that it is a donation for **Veterans House**.

Donate early, donate often. Every donation will be matched by Commissionaires Canada.