

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

### Paul's Ponderings

Last year - about this time - there was a conversation about whether we would be back to in person worship by Easter. One person in the conversation who works in the area of public health said, "We will be lucky if we are back by next Easter." It was a startling comment of reality at the time and helped me to get a long term view of this pandemic pretty quickly. Here we are approaching that "next Easter" and we are still not back to in-person worship and now the forecast is looking at maybe in the fall. WE want to come back when there is a sense of safety for as many as possible. So as we approach Easter this year, we have lived a year of grief, of anxiety, of stress, of isolation. So what do we see as the pain of Good Friday and the surprising joy of Easter? How does this eternal story speak to our reality? One of the important Easter concepts is hope. And I am seeing hope in the vaccination process. More than one person has mentioned the tears that came when they received their vaccine - tears of release and relief. I also give thanks for various glimpses of hope that I have known through the year: new ways of doing things, connections between persons in new ways, love and wisdom shared amidst grief. So let us experience Easter - on April 4<sup>th</sup> and whenever else God's Spirit acts.

**Centre 507 Warm winter clothing drive:** This winter 3 trips were made downtown to Centre 507 to drop off the donated clothing that you the generous people of Riverside United contributed. The Centre has sent a thank you card to the church office, saying how much appreciated the items were. The need is ongoing and we will continue with the donations next winter.  
Morag

Please note the passing of former Member Florence LADDS (nee Bird) on March 6, 2021

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



### CURRENT CASES

**COVID:** Amnesty International is launching a campaign for universal access to vaccines, calling on pharmaceutical companies to share their knowledge and technology to maximize the number of vaccine doses available around the globe, and on states to work together to ensure that those most at-risk of COVID-19 in all countries can access life-saving vaccines immediately.

**HONDURAS:** It has been five years since the assassination of Indigenous rights and river defender Berta Cáceres in Honduras. AI is campaigning to have those responsible brought to justice.

**RUSSIA:** Mikhail Iosilevich, a civil society and political activist is being targeted for his activism and for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association. He has been detained, wrongly accused of cooperation with an "undesirable" organization, a "crime" punishable by up to six years in prison. We are urging the authorities to drop the charges and release him immediately

**GOOD NEWS - ALGERIA:** Journalist Khaled Drareni, jailed for covering protests, has been conditionally released. This is one success of the 2020 write-a-thon campaign.

**USA:** Pastor Steven Tendo, a human rights activist and asylum-seeker, fled from torture in Uganda. He'd been held in immigration detention in the US since December 2018. Thanks to a sustained global campaign, the new US administration finally released Pastor Steven on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Faith Exploration Program:** If you are interested in confirmation - or a refresher discussion of faith - there will be 4-6 session program offered in April-May. Please let Paul know so that a schedule can be determined.

## Calendar of Events - April 2021

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details: Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 AM to Noon	Mini-Bazaar table at Ottawa Organic Farmers' Market
March 28 <sup>th</sup>	YouTube video & Zoom Gathering at 10:30 am	Palm Sunday
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Zoom Gathering with Communion at 7:00 pm	Maundy Thursday
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	YouTube video released that morning. Words of reflection interspersed with the music.	Good Friday
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:00 AM to Noon	Mini-Bazaar table at Ottawa Organic Farmers' Market
April 4 <sup>th</sup>	YouTube video & Zoom Gathering with Communion at 10:30 am.	Easter Sunday
April 11 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm - Book Discussion	<u>A Gentleman in Moscow</u> by Amor Towles
April 25 <sup>th</sup>	2:00 pm - The Annual Meeting of the Riverside United Congregation.	The meeting will be held on Zoom, with provision for some people to gather at the church to participate.
<b>All In Person Gatherings Cancelled Until Further Notice</b>		

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

Starting Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, Ontarians aged 75 and older can start to register for vaccine appointments using the Provincial website or telephone number.

[www.Ontario.ca/BookVaccine](http://www.Ontario.ca/BookVaccine) or by phone at 1-833-943-3900.

Service providers can take your call between 7:30 am and 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday, and 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Saturday and Sunday.

### **Transportation**

Accommodations will be made for residents who need help with accessibility and all clinic locations are accessible. If you are a Para Transpo user, you can book your ride to the clinic through the COVID-19 Vaccination Trip Reservation line at 613-842-3600. If a transportation option is not available to you, you can request a ride to and from the clinic through Ottawa Community Transportation after you have booked your appointment.

Appointments will be available at four community vaccination clinics:

- \* Nepean Sportsplex (open)
- \* Ruddy Family YMCA-YWCA (opens Wednesday, March 17)
- \* Eva James Memorial Community Centre (opens Tuesday, March 23)
- \* City Hall (opens Tuesday, March 23)

To enable physical distancing and to reduce the number of people in the clinic, please arrive for your vaccine no more than 10 minutes before your appointment time.

Walk-ins will not be accepted, so please book your appointment in advance.