

SHUC NEWSLETTER

Imagine Easter

I'm not sure what the weather will be like when you read this, but today, as I write, we are all just wondering if we are brave enough to imagine that more comfortable weather might dare to grace us again.

Yes, of course we know that spring comes every year, but after the bone-chilling days in January we have been through, spring simply doesn't feel like a "given" this year. Right now, when we still have double-digit negative temperatures, believing in spring seems more like an act of faith. Besides, knowing that spring comes every year isn't what we want. We want to "feel" spring ourselves, on our faces and in our bones.

It's a bit like waiting for Easter. If you have a calendar, you know that Easter is coming. We do know the date after all. There is no mystery there. We already know that we will soon be reading Scripture in church where Jesus heads towards Jerusalem. We already know that at the pivotal moment when Jesus might turn away and continue his public ministry, he heads into Jerusalem and the events that make up what we know as "Holy Week". It's unfortunate that the date of Easter is already known because - just like with spring - knowing that Easter is coming isn't what we want. We want to "feel" Easter ourselves, on our faces and in our bones.

Besides, if you lost your calendar, how would you recognize that Easter had come? What does Easter feel like for you? What are you looking for at Easter? What are you looking for THIS Easter?

Traditionally, we associate Easter with spring, and with new life. That's a pleasant image of course, which ties in easily with resurrection. But perhaps the meaning of Easter is larger than springtime. I always wonder how Easter feels in the southern hemisphere. How would Easter feel if we lived on the moon, with no seasons at all? Surely, we believe that even on the moon Easter would come. But I wonder what it would feel like.

So, this year, I invite us all to think of the meaning of Easter in the broadest terms we can imagine. Imagine beyond bunnies, eggs, and chocolates. Imagine beyond springtime and green shoots. Imagine what resurrection might mean in your own life.

What part of you needs to die so that the rest of you can find new life? Imagine Easter. Then feel it on your face and in your bones.

Rev. Paul

Highlighting: MUSIC MINISTRY

Sydenham-Heritage's choir had a busy Advent season recording and performing various folk, country, and sacred tunes including new instruments such as guitars on our soundtracks. Unfortunately, the restrictions we faced put choir rehearsals virtual again for the winter months, however as soon as we are able, in-person rehearsals will resume hopefully this spring. The choir will continue to rehearse on zoom but hopes to be back in the sanctuary rehearsing in early spring. Please let our music director, Trevor Dalton know if you have any special musical requests you would like the choir to perform!

We have also been blessed to have a few beautiful young soprano voices join our choir this season. We welcome Markeeta Thompson and Allison Smith to our choir family.

Member Highlights:

As part of our Music Ministry column in our newsletters (and emailed weekly 'SNIPPETS'), we will be highlighting the various members of our choir to showcase their interests and musical muses!

Beginning with our director... Trevor Dalton has a big passion for classical music (especially Debussy and Ravel) but outside of church, enjoys genres like pop, country, indie, even hip hop. Some of his favourite artists include Stevie Nicks, Miranda Lambert, The Eagles, Rihanna, and most notably, he is a die-hard Lana Del Rey fan (He has 4 t-shirts, framed pictures, and according to spotify, listened to her records for a grand total of 200 hours in 2021).



Stay tuned for our next member highlight!

Need more Contact information?

DO YOU NEED TO reach the church? Call 519-753-1248 Tuesday to Friday during office hours from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. You can also leave a voice mail message if you call after hours. Email us at Sydenham-heritage@gmail.com. Find us on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram by searching for Sydenham-Heritage United Church or by clicking on those links found on our Website <https://sydenham-heritage.ca>. If you need to contact Rev. Paul directly you can always reach him by Phone/Text/WhatsApp: 647-700-7129 or Email paul.shuc@gmail.com



Calling all knitters and crochet enthusiasts: It has been a very long time since we were able to get together to share conversation, meals, and projects, but if you love to knit or crochet and would like to start a club of similarly interested crafters, please email me at tmatheson49@gmail.com and let me know where your interest lies and where your talents are. If there is an interest, maybe we could work towards small projects of love for our shut-ins or donated blankets, hats, mitts & scarves for wherever there might be a need. The possibilities are limited only to our imaginations. If you think this might be something you'd like to be involved with contact me and let me know your thoughts.

Fellow knitter and crochet enthusiast, Terry Matheson

LENTEN DISCUSSION – Lesser Evils

One tradition I really appreciate in the United Church of Canada is that every year we are given a new book to facilitate discussion groups during Lent.

This year is no exception. I invite us all to read through **Lesser Evils** together, and to share our own stories too.

You do not have to be a fast reader. This is 1 page per day (ok, double-sided) The book is composed of content from multiple authors, each with their own perspective. And as we discuss the book, we will add our own voices to that mix.

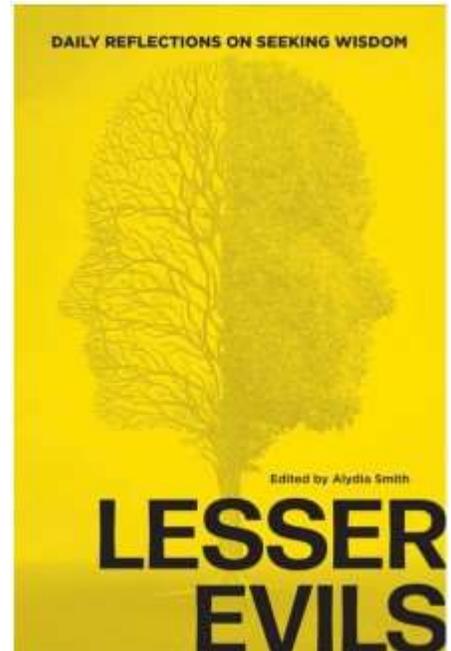
Books are available from Cindy at the Grand River Bookstore.

Dates/Times/Locations:

Tuesdays Mar 8 – Apr 12.

- Afternoon group @ 2 pm in the church.
- Evening group @ 7 pm online.

For more information, please contact Rev. Paul



What are you doing for Lent?

(Article originally posted on UCC March 8, 2020)

The pancakes have been eaten, and the smudges of ash washed from the forehead. Lent has begun. Our 40-day experience may not be as challenging as the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, but I appreciate setting this time apart in some way in preparation for Good Friday and Easter.

I seem to vary my Lenten practice every year. Last year I gave up candy, which wouldn't be much of a sacrifice for some, but was a real discipline for me. One year I gave up buying things — anything except food, toilet paper, etc. and even though I do not think of myself as a big consumer, that too required more restraint than I had anticipated. This year (and this is partly because I am trying to organize to move after I retire), I am spending time each day “decluttering,” sorting things that I do not need and figuring out what to do with them. Each of these practices through Lent have given me occasions to think, at least daily, about the many things that occupy my mind and my life and distract me from the centered faith that I yearn for.

There are many more resources out there. Aren't we lucky to live in a time when the internet gives us access to such a vast array? I wonder what you are doing for Lent? I hope you have found something to ground you, to challenge you, to accompany you, through a time of deepening connection with God. Blessings, Nora

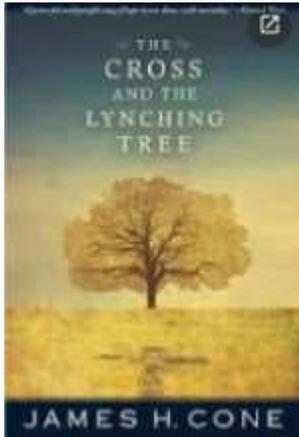
— Nora Sanders, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada.

A Commentary: The Cross and the Lynching Tree by James Cone

Psalm 13: 1

How much longer Lord? Will you forget about me?

In a message delivered on a Black History Month Service a few years ago, the minister asked the question, “how many people are wearing a cross?” A few hands were raised. He followed up with another question; “why do you wear a cross?”. Many folks murmured, “it reminds me of the crucifixion of Jesus.”



The minister then introduced the story of “The Cross and the Lynching Tree” by author, James Cone. He highlighted the similarities between both the Cross and the Lynching Tree.

But in the Lynching era, between 1880 to 1940, lynching was only done to black men and women. It was indeed a spectacle. It might even be considered a community event. It was advertised in whatever mediums available. People gathered to witness the lynching as they did when Jesus was crucified. The meaning, however, is somewhat different.

“Both the cross and the lynching tree were symbols of terror, instruments of torture and execution, reserved primarily for slaves, criminals, and insurrectionists, the lowest of the low in society. Both Jesus and blacks were publicly humiliated, subjected to the utmost indignity and cruelty. They were stripped, paraded through the streets, mocked, pierced, spat upon, and tortured for hours in front of jeering crowds.” (taken from *‘The Cross and the Lynching Tree’*, page 31)

This message prompted me to read James Cone’s book as well as participate in the book study. It was a painful read, but glad that I was able to get through the book. How far have we come from the lynching era? Progress is slow, but Hope is real.

***Merciful and Loving God,
Open our hearts and minds to new learnings and understandings each day.
Heal us from the pain of hatred and hurt.
Fill our hearts with love and grace as we yearn to be the people you have created us to be.
Amen.***

Respectively submitted by:
Yvonne Wright

Dr. James H. Cone was best known for his ground-breaking works, **Black Theology & Black Power** (1969) and **A Black Theology of Liberation** (1970); he was also the author of the highly acclaimed **God of the Oppressed** (1975), and of **Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare?** (1991); all of which works have been translated into nine languages. His 2012 book, **The Cross and the Lynching Tree**, received the 2012 Nautilus Silver Award in Religion/Spirituality-Western Traditions.

This info taken from an article on Dr. Cone’s Biography on the Northwestern University website.
website.<https://jameshcone.northwestern.edu/biography-of-james-cone>

REMEMBERING Alan Ross Cook November 30, 1930 - May 16, 2018



Alan Cook was a lifelong member of what is now known as Sydenham-Heritage United Church. He attended Sunday School here. His mother Marjorie was the music director, and his father Minto was Sunday School Superintendent for many years.

I was asked to write a memory story of Alan Cook and his life and accomplishments he made over the years so I will repeat the words of remembrance that I presented when invited to speak at Alan's funeral.

Alan Cook was a good person. Some people thought he was eccentric. Maybe he was but I think we all are at times. Alan was a quiet man living in his childhood home all his life. He was passionate about music and supported the Brantford Symphony Orchestra by playing his cello in it and by fundraising. He raised many thousands of dollars from local industries and individuals. He told me many times that he wished he could be healthy again and live longer in order to encourage the Board of Education to give elementary students more opportunities in music.

He also loved the church. He was always involved in something at the church, and I got to know Alan better after I became the church treasurer in 1984. He had many pet projects that he was willing to help fund or fully fund such as the new organ; refurbishing the stained-glass windows and the new stained-glass windows he had installed in memory of his family members. He did the research; he knew what he wanted and how to go about getting results. He also created "Symphony Sunday." Alan would pay a musical artist to perform during a Sunday morning service during the mid 1990s to the early 2000s.

Alan and I did not always agree on everything, but we always had respect for one another. Things changed when the United Church made some policy changes on gender. Alan was upset about these policies and did not attend church for a period of time. I didn't see him as much, but we still had conversations when I would see him going in or out of his house across from the church.

As his physical health began to fail, I started visiting him at least once a week or made phone calls where we discussed many subjects including music, politics, world around us and of course the church. He wanted to know about the special events and of course the financial health of the church.

Although his physical health continued to fail his mind remained sharp. Alan had the best of care from his caregivers Tom, Shirley, Lisa, and Josey. I would like to acknowledge the pastoral care team who visited Alan often with much love and compassion.

A few weeks before Alan's death, he told me he was going to create a foundation with the help of his friend and power of attorney Tom Humble. Money from the foundation would be given to organizations for approved projects and Sydenham-Heritage would be one of the recipients. Tom, who was the executor of Alan's estate, informed me in early 2019 that the foundation was established and ready to approve projects.

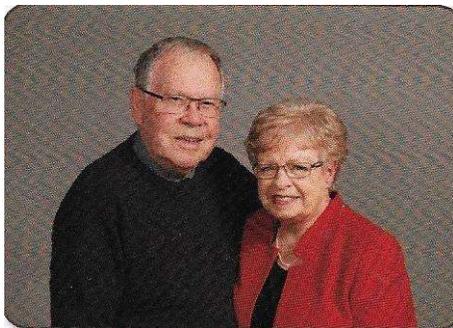
Tom and his wife Tracey are the managers of the foundation and approve the projects and make the recommendation to the foundation. Starting in 2019 the church received a donation to paint the outside

of the church, the auditorium, and the sanctuary. In 2020 a donation was received to install a new audio-video system in the sanctuary and in 2021 a donation helped to install a new electrical panel, resurface the auditorium floor, and install an electric track for the stage curtain.

We all acknowledge and thank **Alan Cook and the Alan R. Cook Foundation** for remembering Sydenham-Heritage United Church and inviting us to be a recipient of the foundation.

Submitted by
Larry Pickard

Why do you give of yourselves, time, talent, and treasure to the church?



Ruth & Larry answer:

We are lifelong members of the United Church of Canada. We were both baptised in Sydenham Street United Church. Our parents were members of our congregation, and we were married, and our children baptised in Sydenham.

Our church is a way of life for us. We receive spiritually but also receive friendships from church members that we have known for years and new friends that have joined over the years, especially the new friends we have gained when Heritage United church joined Sydenham to become Sydenham-Heritage United Church.

We have been fortunate to have had good ministers to lead us over the years and inspire us to accept change. We freely give our time, talent, and treasure to our church. Financially we give as generously as we can to maintain and staff an old building.

We have donated our time and talents in many ways over the years. Ruth joined the choir as a teenager, took some time off and rejoined after the children were born. She has been part of the Worship committee, U.C.W. and church seasonal decorator. We both have worked on fund raises such as turkey suppers, concerts, and dinner theatre over the years. Larry has served on the board for years, been secretary of the board and was treasurer for 34 years. Larry is presently on the board and finance committee and also a fix-it club member on the property committee.

We believe it is important and rewarding to be a member of a spiritual community like Sydenham-Heritage United Church.

Submitted by
Ruth and Larry Pickard

Staying Connected

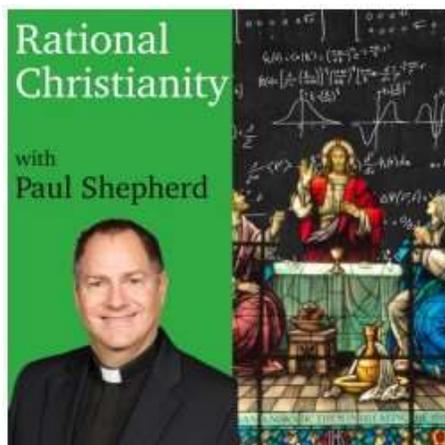
Worship services are always available to view online Sunday mornings. Just click on the link in the church calendar. But did you know that you can watch them at your convenience too? There are 3 options for finding our services online after Sunday service.

1. The online calendar at sydenham-heritage.ca includes links to past services (as well as future ones).
2. If you go to youtube.com and search for “**Sydenham-Heritage United Church**” you will find everything there. Click on our channel to see only our content.
3. If you go to paulshepherd.ca and click on “**reflections**”, you get links to our services. You also get links to the sermons. They are now available in 3 formats: pdf (great for printing), eBooks (great for reading at a comfortable font size), and video.

Wherever we are – online or in-person – we are **Sydenham-Heritage United Church!**

REMEMBER: As restrictions change and lift, we will keep you updated in our weekly emailed newsletter, our church website and on social media – so keep checking the website, Facebook & Instagram. Stay informed and stay connected! And don't hesitate to reach out to the church office if you need help staying connected or have any questions.

Staying Connected – New Podcast



Staying Connected – A new way to hear Rev. Paul's messages

I enjoy preaching every week. It's a real challenge to try to be relevant, interesting, and inspiring every week. And while I'm happy to preach for you, I sometimes wish that our impact went a bit further beyond our walls. We always say we want to attract new people to SHUC. But we must get their attention first. We must take the message to where they are.

So, I have decided to start a Podcast based on my sermons, content from my book, and other sources. And every episode will include an invitation to join with us @ SHUC. If you want to help, please listen in, and help get the word out.

The Podcast will be called “Rational Christianity” and will be available on Apple and Spotify.
Rev. Paul

Outreach/Stewardship message

The Outreach/Stewardship Committee have initiated an “**Outreach Ministries Project**” to help where needed in our community. Monetary donations can be made in your offerings or to the church office marked “**Outreach Project**”. Bins will be placed in the narthex and outside the church office for **NEW** warm socks, mitts and scarves. Separate bins will be put out for food donations that will be taken to the **Brantford Food Bank**. Matthew 25 vs.40: ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Submitted by
Verna Timpener

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Sydenham-Heritage United Church ALL are welcome in this place



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