

# SHUC NEWSLETTER

## We've been waiting, like, forever!

Does anyone really like waiting? Whether it's waiting for dinner, waiting to get in to see your doctor, waiting to get out of jail, waiting for the bus, or waiting for Rev. Paul to actually tell a funny joke. Waiting – something we seem to do a lot of - perhaps is not anybody's favourite activity.



We often add to this ourselves, particularly at this time of year by joining the collective consumer event called “Christmas Shopping”. We spend time waiting in line at malls and shops. Or we order things online and wait for them to be delivered. And in the church, Advent is designed as a time of waiting – waiting for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Waiting is a pain.

But while we are waiting, we can also ask ourselves what - exactly - are we waiting for. And that is not just an idle activity to help pass away the time. When we invest time thinking about what we are waiting for, a number of interesting possibilities emerge. Sometimes, we come to realize - even though we are waiting for something - that today, right now, we are adequate already. Sometimes, we come to realize - even though we are waiting for something - that key elements that we hope for are already present in our lives. Perhaps we just need to look for what we need with a bit more openness and imagination. We might even find that we do not really need to wait for anything at all.

Advent is an invitation to wait for the birth of Jesus. But what does that mean? I don't expect that any of us are actually waiting for Jesus to appear in the form of a baby. So, what are we waiting for? What are you looking for?

In the book “The Third Jesus” by Deepak Chopra, Advent is seen as a call to live in the present. Not to live in the past (e.g. remembering what God did in the past), or living in the future (e.g. waiting for heaven). But instead to embrace the present. And the gift of each other in the present. Are you feeling lonely? The person sitting in the pew beside you might be the friend that you need. We have many gifted people in this congregation. Each of us is a gift in our own way. It all depends on what you are looking for.

Advent is a time of waiting. But we do not have to wait alone. We can wait together. Let us wait well! The blessings of Advent be with you.

Submitted by Rev. Paul

## A Christmas Message from your Board Co-Chairs



As we reflect on the twists and turns and highlights of 2022, we can be proud of the various challenges that our Church has faced and met in ways that have demonstrated our grace and our humanity. Congratulations to all!

We are a vibrant community of faith with much to offer to each other and the wider communities of Brantford and Brant County. We look forward to what is ahead in the coming year.

Our custodian, Linda Brown, is retiring at the end of November after over 23 years of service to the Church. Thank you, Linda. We celebrate you and wish you well in your retirement. Linda is not going anywhere as she will continue to be a member of the Church.

We are committed as a Board to live out our vision for the congregation. Goals and aspirations were identified at the Board retreat in June at Five Oaks. We will lead in open and effective communication, strive for accessibility, encourage engagement of our congregation in issues relevant to them and look to the larger contexts in which we live with purpose so we can act out our faith, work with mutual support and foster an environment and culture of affirmation.

Sustainability is more than just whether or not we have sufficient funds; it is also about how we move within this world with spirit and God's grace. We wish all of you a season of joy and fellowship. Thank you to everyone for being part of our community. We welcome all suggestions and ideas as we grow into 2023. Be well; be great!

Submitted by co-chairs, Maureen Hall-Gilmore & Sharon Davidson

## Music Ministry

This advent season we are excited to have special guest and soprano Ruth-Ann Collins join us on Sunday December 11th, 2022! Ruth-Ann has sung with the Sydenham-Heritage choir previously, and we are excited have her sing with us again.



In other news, we are bringing back hymn-sings at Sydenham-Heritage! Our hymn-sing will occur the first Sunday of each month at 10:15 held in the sanctuary prior to the start of the service. Feel free to come out and sing some popular hymns together, new and old! Our hymn-sing will be led by Trevor, our music director and a few members of our choir.

We are continuing to look for more voices to join our choir as our grand advent season approaches. Practices occur Thursday nights at 7:00pm where lots of laughs, fun, and shenanigans ensue! There are no requirements to join in the fun, so feel free to let Trevor, our music director know if you'd like to come out - even just for a couple practices!

Submitted by Trevor Dalton

## What's New?

**SHUC Crafty Friends:** If you love to knit, crochet, quilt, craft and would like to be part of a club of similarly interested crafters, please email me at [tmatheson49@gmail.com](mailto:tmatheson49@gmail.com) and let me know where your interest lies and where your talents are.



Projects we're currently working on include knitted or crocheted blankets (48" x 64" or larger), knitted or crocheted 8 x 8 blocks for **Blankets for Canada - Stratford**, small lap blankets, hats & mitts for long term care residents (**Fox Ridge & Brierwood**), outer wear (toques, scarves & mitts), kitchen stuff (potholders, dish cloths for shelters and small 3D projects, fridge magnets and Pastoral care gifts).

To date we have delivered 235 – 8" x 8" squares along with 3 full sized blankets to the Stratford Chapter. This is an ongoing project, and we will continue to collect your 8" x 8" crocheted or knitted squares. Just drop them by the bright yellow crafting room at the church! We have also been working on lap blankets and so far, have delivered and 12 lap blankets each to **Fox Ridge Lodge LTC and Brierwood LTC**.



As this edition is being printed, the group is busily crafting for the **UCW Annual Christmas Bazaar** (November 26<sup>th</sup>). We are hoping our donated projects will bring in some revenue for the Bazaar and get some more interested crafters out to our sessions on Tuesdays (afternoon session at 1:00 pm and evening sessions at 7:00 pm). And please ask a Crafty Friend about the Christmas Pickle!

After the Bazaar our focus will be on putting together 'Christmas boxes' for shelters that we've been in touch with. If you love to craft and love to share, we'd love to hear from you.

Submitted by Terry Matheson

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**Advent Group and Video Production Group:** This year, our Advent Group will meet with our Video Production Group. We will discuss the meaning of Advent. And those who are interested will find creative ways to express that meaning in video form. We will discuss the meaning of Advent, and then we will give that meaning some form and life. We meet every week. We will meet throughout Advent.

- Thursdays @ 8 pm. In the Fellowship Room and online (hybrid meetings).

If you would prefer a book-based Advent Group, please join with **Harmony United Church** who are doing an online book study on the book "Awaiting the Already". Links to the meetings are in our church calendar.

**Please contact Rev. Paul for more information.**

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**Mindfulness Meditation:** As we enter into January – cold – dark – likely masking again - we might feel a bit discouraged. If you want to reduce stress in your life, why not join one of our Mindfulness Meditation Groups? No previous experience required! If you know how to be stressed, you know how to meditate!

We will have two groups that meet for 6 weeks. Please feel free to come when you can:

- Mondays @ 2 pm in the fellowship room. Jan 9 – Feb 13, 2023.
- Tuesdays @ 7 pm online. Jan 10 – Feb 14, 2023.

**Please contact Rev. Paul for more information.**

## Gifts with Vision Solves the What-to-Buy Dilemma

A meaningful gift is a simple click away

*(article taken from The United Church of Canada website)*

Is there someone on your Christmas list who is hard to buy for or doesn't need yet another gadget or figurine? Do you long to sidestep the consumerist trappings of the season for something more meaningful? **Gifts with Vision**—the United Church's giving catalogue—is the answer.

**Gifts with Vision** is full of gifts that will help transform people's lives throughout Canada and across the world. While Gifts with Vision continues to feature gifts for Ukraine and COVID-19, we have been busy adding new gifts to support people across the world who are experiencing the effects of climate change, economic instability, and war. Particularly children. There are several new gifts for children in this year's catalogue.

We have added a new category, too: anti-racism. Projects in Nunavut, Guatemala, and Palestine—just to name a few—support the rights, culture, and dignity of people who experience racism daily. In addition, several gifts that have been very popular in the past, like Operation Backpack, Help Build a Well, and A Safe Place to Heal, are returning in this year's catalogue.

And that's only the beginning! Mindful of the environment, the print catalogue continues to be small—but there are a lot more gift choices on the Gifts with Vision website. Stories of our partners' projects are also available there.

Every Gift with Vision provides support for a specific **Mission & Service** partner offering a unique project. Without Mission & Service, Gifts with Vision projects would not be possible. Thank you for supporting both. When Christmas rolls around, remember that a meaningful gift is a simple click away. If madly dashing around the mall on Christmas Eve is your gift-buying style, kick back and relax. Gifts with Vision has you covered!

## From your Communications Team

Are you a **Facebook** user? Do you follow **Instagram**? Do you check out **YouTube**?

Did you know that you can find Sydenham-Heritage United Church on all these social media platforms?

Jean Maich populates our Facebook page with uplifting messages and funny memes.

Terry Matheson updates Facebook with events and special dates

Rev. Paul uploads videos to YouTube and updates Instagram.

### **CALLING ALL RECYCLERS:**

**DID YOU KNOW** that the outer bag on a 3 litre bag of milk can be recycled into a sleeping mat?

**DID YOU KNOW** that your empty pill bottles with the labels removed can be reused?

**DID YOU KNOW** that the pull tabs on your aluminum cans can be recycled?

So, bring your milk bags, pill bottles and pull tabs to the church and put them in the bins by the office, and we will get them to people who will make very good use of them.

## Horseshoe Falls Regional Council and General Council

### Horseshoe Falls Regional Council

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is a decision-making body responsible to serve and support Communities of Faith within its bounds as well as to provide necessary oversight.

The purpose statement of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is '**Supports, Connects, Empowers Communities of Faith**'. Active verbs were chosen as a sign of the regional council's commitment to be in partnership with communities of faith.

The HFRC is composed of all ministry personnel within its geographic bounds; ministers of denominations within mutual recognition agreements while under appointment or call; and lay members elected by the Communities of Faith, respecting the balance of lay and ministry personnel where possible.

The Horseshoe Falls Regional Council includes communities of faith in the counties of Brant, Halidmand and Norfolk and the Regional Municipalities of Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Peel and Niagara and is pleased to serve alongside the Indigenous ministries of Chapel of the Delaware United Church, Grand River United Church, Nations Uniting and New Credit United Church.

The regional council's priorities are: **For Governance and Shared Services & For Mission and Ministry**

### General Council

General Council is the decision-making body of the United Church as a whole. It brings together Commissioners (those elected to be members of this meeting of the General Council) to help set the course for the future of the United Church. The 44th General Council met online only in July 22 – 26, 2022. This was the first time in the church's 97-year history that the triennial meeting was not in person.

Meet your **Horseshoe Falls Regional Council GC44 Commissioners**. We are proud to note that two of the Commissioners are from our own church family, thank you for your work with General Council Andrew & Yvonne.

**GC44 Commissioners:** Andrew Advincula, Judith Gilliland, Ralph Hayman, John Hurst, Deborah Laforet, Robert Lawson, President, HFRC, Steven Lowden, Wendy Lowden, Jessica McCrae, Samantha Miller, Karen Orlandi, Thea Sheridan-Jonah, Pat Tooley and Yvonne Wright.

## How do you say Merry Christmas?

Hebrew – חג מולד שמח (khag molad sameakh)

French – Joyeux Noël

German – Frohe Weihnachten

Greek – Καλά Χριστούγεννα (kalá Christóúgenna)

Irish – Nollaig Shona

Latvian – Priecīgus Ziemassvētkus

Navajo – Nizhónigo Késhmish Adíífeet

Chinese – 聖誕快樂, 圣诞快乐 (Shèngdàn kuàilè)

Norwegian – god jul

Polish – Wesolych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia

Cherokee – ᎠᎵᎠᎵ ᎠᎵᎠᎵᎠᎵᎠᎵ (uwotlvdi danisdayohihv)

Afrikaans – Geseënde kersfees

Ukrainian - Щасливого Різдва!

No matter what language one speaks, how the holiday is celebrated, or how huge the differences in cultures can be, the greatest pleasure is to enjoy the love that Christmas brings to you!

***Merry Christmas!***

## A Reflection of the Life of Lawrence Donald Jackson written by his grandson, Akil Annamunthodo with Yvonne Wright



In life, if you are lucky, you will meet a handful of people that often leave a mark; Lawrence Jackson was that person to many people. He was remarkable in that he would go the extra mile to make those in his presence feel seen and respected, often with a hello, a small joke, an interesting story, meaningful lesson, and above all, a warm smile to hug your soul.

He was a man of his word and strongly believed in the fundamental principles of love, respect, and unity. He strived to unite people from all different backgrounds regardless of their differences. He believed that it was in our differences that made us unique. He was very spiritual and made it his mission to let all know that we were made in the image of God and that God is love- therefore, we are all called to love and respect one another. These beliefs and way of living stemmed from Lawrence's early upbringing and experiences as a young man.

His great-grandfather, Albert Jackson, was the first black postman in Canada. Albert Jackson faced discrimination and hardship to keep his job. Through the support of the Black community and the intervention of Prime Minister, John A. McDonald, Albert was able to keep his job. The legacy of his great-grandfather is something Lawrence continually reflected upon during his own struggles and hardships of racism and discrimination in Toronto as a young man.

When Lawrence moved to Brantford from Toronto with his wife Delores, he faced a lot of discrimination. He found it even difficult to find a house to rent due to this prejudice against his race. He had to seek the help of a lawyer to find a residence. This experience was instrumental in him focusing on advocacy for the black community. He even became an advocate for other black families, at the time, who were seeking a place to live in Brantford. He then created the Black cultural village in Brantford's Villages. He fought strong and hard against anti-black racism finding equal opportunities in housing and employment.

At Massey Ferguson, he worked his way up as a quality inspector through self-education and hard work. This is the remarkable thing about Lawrence; he was humble and passionate about growing and learning as an individual.

Integrity and hard work are additional core principles he followed and shared with others. He was very instrumental in assisting the Black employees settled in the company as they transitioned from Toronto to Brantford. He was also a proud member of the Masonic Lodge and served as a Grand Master.

Lawrence came to what was then Sydenham in the early 2000 from the BME (British Methodist Episcopal) church. He quickly found a home in the Church and often expressed how important the church was to him. The United Church was an important part of his life. With his wife, Delores, he attended every week and was a member on several Committees. He often participated in the Black History Month Worship Services as well as other activities. He was so proud to share the story of his great grandfather who was commemorated on a stamp in 2018 in honour of Black History Month. He cherished all the members of the church, and continually welcomed new members often encouraging dialogue about ways the church can become more equitable to serve all regardless of race.

Finally, the most important thing to Lawrence was his family. His wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, in laws, and extended family meant everything to Lawrence. He wore their love on his sleeve and additionally shared his love for them through praises, phone calls, and warm hugs. You could often find Lawrence proudly bragging about how successful his grandchildren were. No matter the age, Lawrence would find a way to connect with all members of his family. For example, he would often have conversations about going to space with his 5-year-old great grandson. He was the embodiment of the perfect grandfather, father, and husband. Although his family misses him dearly, they are at peace knowing he lived a full-filled life. He imparted his wisdom and guidance during his time with them.

I'll end here with the words of Frantz Fanon, "Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity." Lawrence Jackson fulfilled his mission on earth by leaving the world with more love and acceptance. He was a man of respect, integrity, love, and, most importantly, a man of God- very spiritual and full of reverence.

## Why I Give

By Linda Brown



As a long-standing member of the Church and as I prepare to retire as custodian after over 23 years of service, I reflect on the importance of giving. I have given my time and energy to the Church out of love and commitment.

You might have had me welcome you into Calder Hall with the offer of a warm cup of coffee. As part of my regular contribution to the Church, I have purchased coffee and milk and have made sure that a pot of coffee is always ready for those entering the building. It makes me feel good that I can do a little something extra behind the scene.

It is me doing my part to create community and friendship.

On cold, snowy days like those coming soon, something to warm the hand and a smile go a long way to make people entering through our doors feel included and it gives me a warm feeling to know this. This is just one way for me to express what our Church does regularly to say "you are part of the family".

Submitted by Linda Brown

## 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](http://sydenham-heritage.ca) includes links to past services (as well as future ones).
2. If you go to [youtube.com](http://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](http://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.

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**Sydenham-Heritage United Church  
ALL are welcome in this place**



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