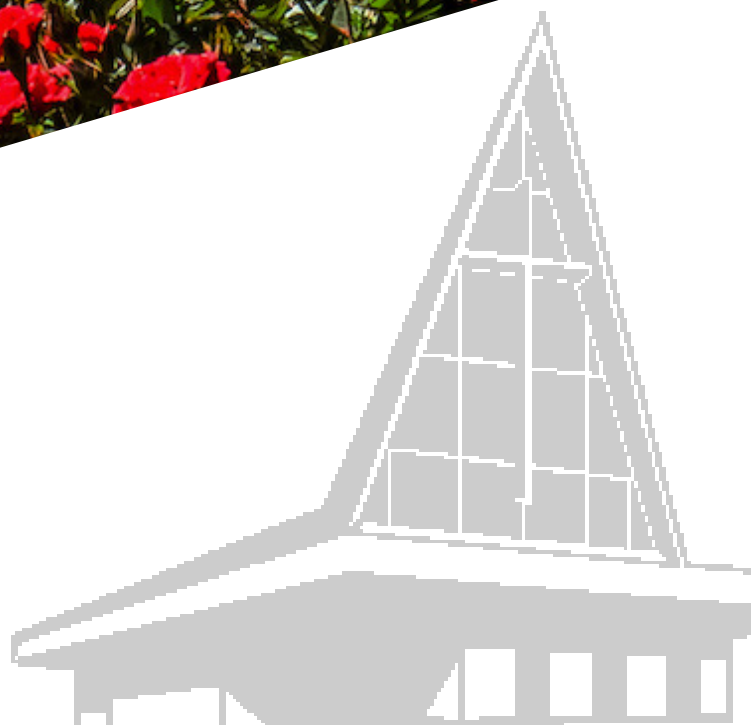


A Newsletter for the People of Parkwoods United Church

June 2022



85 Parkwoods Village Dr. Don Mills ON
M3A 2X9 (416) 447-5519
e-mail: office@parkwoodsunitedchurch.ca
www.parkwoodsunitedchurch.ca

From the Minister's Desk...

When I meet other ministers, they all ask me how I am doing at my new church. I tell them, "It is always hard to start at a new church. It is particularly difficult during this time of the pandemic, when we began to have services only on Zoom. Now that we have begun to worship in the sanctuary again, it is much better, but there are also others who join us on Zoom. Then, there are many others whom I have not yet met. It is kind of like trying to bond with a new baby through an incubator. So, it is pretty hard." Such is life these days. Things are less than ideal, and we all have to make due, and find a way to work with what we have. That is the challenge we are all faced with. At the end of the day, life still goes on. And, so do we.

I learned very early on, at the start of the pandemic, how to survive it. What I learned was that daily rituals can be really helpful. So, I decided to shave everyday even though I had nowhere to go, and no one to see. I have not missed a day in over two years. I also made my bed everyday. After I started at Parkwoods, I decided to write a prayer everyday as well. That practice gave me the spiritual discipline to sustain me, inspire me, and strengthen me. It also gave me a way to express all my sorrows, frustrations, and pain of what is happening in our world, as well as the challenges that come. Do you have any rituals? What new things have you done?

I am also suddenly aware that I am getting older and that retirement has come within my horizon. I will be retiring in eight years. As I have heard it said recently, "The days are long, but the years are short." So, I imagine the eight years will flow by. The question for me is how then shall I conclude my ministry, so that I can end on a high note? With all the years of experiences and especially with my constant wrestling with God, I feel that the best years are still ahead of me. I do not have the answer yet, but I am living with the question. What is interesting about the word "question" is that, within that word, there is "quest." So, questions lead us on a journey. What question are you living with?

Finally, I was asked to participate in the ordination service for the Shining Waters Regional Council annual meeting on May 29th. Three fellow ministers and a musician were brought forth as a team to design and lead the worship service. The team really worked well together. Everyone appreciated the service for the music, creativity, and depth. The service concluded with a hymn from Latin America that was so exhilarating. I would like to introduce it to the congregation. In the sermon, Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile stated that ministry is the only job in the world where the job description includes being "soaked in glory." The service did that for me. By the virtue of our baptisms, all of us are "priests of all believers." We too are required to be soaked in glory from time to time. That can be real even in a time like this.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Won Hur

----- **PLEASE JOIN US** -----

for our In-Person or ZOOM E-Worship service every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.
Call the Church Office at 416-447-5519 to register for ZOOM worship.

We look forward to seeing you IN church!!
We are missing you!!

Council Co-Chairs

Thank you, our Parkwoods' Family, for sharing in this our Spring Newsletter. Special thanks to all who have gone the extra mile to make sure that Parkwoods could keep the Sunday Services going and going well with both in-person and on Zoom.

THE EVENTFUL PANDEMIC AUTUMN OF 2021

Remember Remembrance Day? Mary Kishi brought her decorating talents to the fore, by decorating the Chancel for Remembrance Day Sunday Service. Won stirred us with his Sermon and the late Brian Jeff's trumpet provided a wonderful last post and reveille, a wonderful reminder of his many performances of bygone years and a heartfelt salute to the military heroes of our past.

A December highlight! Covenanting Service for Rev. Won Hur.

December 12th marked the celebration of Covenanting Rev. Won Hur to the position of full time minister that was effective September 1, 2021. An in-person service, this important United Church ritual unfolded replete with his immediate and extended family present, together with ecclesiastical colleagues who took official covenanting roles at the ceremony. Retired minister, Rev. Dr. Robin Wardlaw, a long-time friend of Won's was the guest speaker. Juanita Hogg-Devine, Chair of the Search Committee, played an important part in the service, and had organized the Presbytery involvement. It was wonderful to see Angie, Joshua and Emily as well as parents and other family members in attendance for this momentous occasion.

Omicron, a new Covid viral threat: suddenly a new variant of COVID began to sweep across Canada. Its rapid spread caused us to pause our reopening for in-person worship for the balance of 2021. Such was the severity of the new variant that closure was only lifted as we began to approach Easter, 2022.

New shut-down, Zoom Team to the Rescue. Fortunately, we had our wonderful Zoom team in place who had been broadcasting since early spring of 2020. They enabled us to have three Christmas Services on-line that year.

Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve, and First Sunday Service after December 25. The music was noteworthy, thanks to our Director of Music, Ingrid Ziegler and the choir members who have supported music throughout the pandemic and continue their gifted work halfway through 2022. The spoken word of our Minister, assisted by his wife Angie, combining Won's expressive words with powerful pictorial images.

The church was decorated beautifully with Mary Kishi at the helm of a volunteer team. Our annual Mitten Tree was resplendently decorated by Barb McDermott with largely hand knitted mittens, scarves and toques, donated by the Parkwoods family of knitters. Two Christmas trees in the Chancel, traditional and the Mitten Tree, complemented each other, both lifting our Yuletide spirits with their beautiful decorations.

Glory Wigle Retirement. Our church administrator for 20 years retired at the end of 2021. A great many tributes and best wishes were forthcoming to her early in the New Year. Happily, we still have Glory in our midst, since her loyalty as a member of our choir, and frequently as one its soloists, is undiminished!

Retirement of Liz McMulkin: retirement of our Fellowship Coordinator, Liz McMulkin, also came near the end of 2021. Working with seniors was made much more complex by Covid, as we can well understand. Her contribution to Growing in Fellowship was much appreciated.

A pop-up Partnership with North York General Hospital: Early in 2022, Rev. Won made us aware of a warm and promising NYGH invitation to partner in creating a 'pop up' vaccination clinic to be located in Parkwoods Church. With your Council's full support, the Vaccination Clinic came to life one day a week for six weeks starting in February. Parkwoods volunteers provided space and support in advertising and gave assistance to the hospital's medical and logistical support team. The project was deemed a great success by our NYGH leadership team as was by participants and our parishioners, all who praised the fostering of our church relations with community in this health-giving way.

With our Minister's leadership, we have had several through-the-week seminars and activities since his arrival: Mid-winter we undertook a study of a distinguished preacher, Henri Nouwen, whose life and insight into theology were the subject of his widely acclaimed book. On the lighter side, we had very entertaining Tuesday Night Games over several weeks, contests which Won both organized and emceed with skill and panache!

Annual Meetings were conducted in March via Zoom, with Bev Miller being the Chair for both Brookbanks Non-Profit Housing and Parkwoods United Church. We learned from our excellent Financial Team that despite Covid, our finances are in reasonable shape from the past year and that 2022 seems manageable financially. Both Reports received unanimous approval by our Congregation.

Council warmly thanked Norma Evans, as she stepped down from her chairpersonship of Ministry and Personnel and similarly welcomed Lynda McCowan as replacement. Tianna Forde, our Council Secretary, took the Minutes of our Annual Meeting.

The New Year brought a temporary newcomer into the Office Administration. Kaitlin Penton did excellent work in the three months of being with us, while the dedicated Search Committee completed their recruitment process.

Louise Barklay-David was warmly welcomed by Lynda McCowan: Parkwoods new Office Administrator was introduced to the congregation in April, her arrival largely coinciding with the much-anticipated re-opening of the Church to in-person Worship.

Easter Services: With both Zoom and in-person Worship Services on Good Friday, we expected a larger in-person congregation and Zoom audience on Easter Sunday. That indeed did happen and capped a memorably sacred Eastertide weekend for us. Organ, piano and choral music combined with the spoken word to generate success of both.

Zoom Team: A Shout-out to the Zoom and Audio Visual Team who skillfully blends our two modes of service so expertly every Sunday! Ken McKenzie, Sharon McKenzie-Bone and David Bone, assisted by Tianna Forde, Jock Lumsden and, most recently, Emily Hur. The team is looking for helping hands. Please let the team know if you would be willing to help.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER

Summer Worship Services Vaccination Protocol Beginning Sunday, July 3rd, with Parkwoods Worship services in air-conditioned George Connolly Hall, Council is suspending the vaccination protocol for summer services. Unvaccinated individuals would need to identify themselves to the Church Office in advance of attending worship services. The individual seating arrangements in the lower hall will make for appropriate spacing. Masking mandates will remain in place.

Zoom Services and in-person Services will continue to be blended. We do so while bearing in mind the health and safety of you all. Please direct any questions or concerns to the Church Office.

A special word of gratitude to all our Council members for their leadership contributions this past year; many examples of their excellence you will read about in this Newsletter. Special thanks also to Carol Gurd and Tianna Forde for once again compiling and editing our Newsletter!

John Horton and Bev Miller, Co-Chairs of Council

Music & Choir – Music Director: Ingrid Ziegler

The biggest development the Choir saw this season was of course the return to the Sanctuary for Sunday Services. The choir loft is barely large enough to hold the returning choir members, due to the spacing requirements, but that has not stopped us from quickly resuming where we left off over two years ago. With in-person rehearsals currently confined to a short half hour before the service begins we are limited in the repertoire we can prepare, but happily we quickly were able to resume singing for the Gift of Music every Sunday. Many thanks to Marg Crew for starting us off in this direction, as she took over during my absence through the Easter Services.

Choir practice on Zoom also continues on Thursday evenings, as several choir members are still unable to return to church as we wait for the pandemic guidelines to ease up fully, allowing everyone to safely return.

In the meantime, wishing you all a peaceful and restorative summer season.

Communications — Chair: Carol Gurd

The Parkwoods 2021 Annual Report was emailed to a large number of the congregation on February 27th, one week prior to our March 6th Annual Meeting. A quantity of these reports were printed and made available for distribution also at that time. If you still wish to have a copy of this important document they are available through the church office.

Photos courtesy of Lynda McCowan, Won Hur, Nancy-Jean Nickel, Hugh Ashton

Finance — Chair: Jock Lumsden

You may have noticed that during the Provincial election the church housed a simple advance voting poll rather than a full District Returning Office. We had been led to expect that, as in past elections, our building would be used as the DRO. That last minute, unexpected change by the Chief Electoral Officer meant that we received almost \$30,000 less rent than had been expected. Those funds were earmarked as part of the \$40,000 loan portion of the Canada Emergency Business funds received in 2020 and 2021 which was due to be repaid in December of this year. Fortunately the federal government has delayed the repayment of the loan until December 2023. As a result, our 2022 budget remains largely intact, assuming that there will be no other big surprises during the last half of the year. That being said, the loss of the rental income this year will most assuredly have a negative impact on our 2023 budget.

In the meantime, a very grateful thank you for your continued commitment to and financial support for our Parkwoods United Church.

Growing in Service — Coordinator: Barb McDermott

The Ukraine Relief Effort:

As a nation we were collectively horrified at the atrocities occurring in the Ukraine due to Russia's assault and invasion of this peaceful and democratic country. Feeling compelled to respond to the burgeoning needs of millions of people whose lives were being disrupted because of this devastating war, Parkwoods launched a one-week campaign in March, 2022 to collect much needed items. These "materials" were designed specifically to help address the immediate needs of Ukrainian refugees who had fled to Poland for safety.

Donations from our church community literally came "pouring in". We were able to send some of what was collected to a local grassroots organization in Whitby that had affiliations with the Ukrainian Congress. But soon they too became overwhelmed with donations and no longer were able to accept items to be shipped to the Ukraine. We made contact with an organization in Toronto called New Circles. Their mandate is to provide clothing to newcomers and they were in the process of making provisions for the 1st wave of Ukrainian refugees set to arrive in April. So, all of the clothing, coats, shoes, towels, blankets etc. found a home at New Circles.

Thank you so much to everyone who supported this campaign. Your generosity was heartfelt and limitless. This effort was a true example of our "faith in action".

Well Water Reallocation of Funds:

At least 5 years ago now the Outreach Committee at Parkwoods spearheaded a successful campaign to collect money to help build a well overseas. Unfortunately after a feasibility study was conducted it was discovered that this project would not be able to proceed due to a number of negative mitigating factors.

Fast forward to 2022 where most of the major news outlets were reporting about the pitiful, unsanitary conditions continuing to exist on many of our 1st Nations reserves. The government of Canada in cooperation with Indigenous Affairs is working tirelessly to lift boiled water advisories and create sustainable water treatment infrastructure that will better serve these communities. However, progress is very slow.

In Ontario 63 water advisories have already been lifted with 26 remaining affecting 20 communities. One such community is Marten Falls 1st Nation (Thunder Bay) Ogoki Post. They have had a boiled water advisory since 2005 becoming long term as of July 2006. This advisory affects 91 homes and 6 community buildings. In January 2022 Marten Falls Reserve declared an education state of emergency because so many children were missing school primarily due to water treatment issues. Now in May as the ice is beginning to break on the river some ice blocks have unfortunately shifted to the land putting additional pressure on the low-lying pipes cutting off their water supply. On a good day the people have a "1 hour window" to access water.

So with Council's permission the monies that Outreach has held in trust were re-allocated and have been sent to Marten Falls/Ogoki Post to ease some of their water supply issues. We can't fix their infrastructure seeing as project costs are upwards to hundreds of thousands of dollars (exacerbated due to being a fly in only community). However, we can ensure that for a short period of time people living on the reserve can have access to clean, safe drinking water.

Thank you to all those who contributed funds to ensure that clean, drinking water is seen as an alienable right.

The Al Khateb's:

Our sponsored family continues to thrive. Ghassan (14 years) will be graduating from Grade Eight at the end of June and heading off to George S. Henry Secondary School in the fall, while Batoul (12 years) will be completing Grade Six. Both children are presently attending Donview Middle School and excelling at their studies. They have accomplished much since arriving back in 2018. They are happy, kind, well-adjusted kids who are thrilled to be living in Canada.

Melike celebrated her 2nd birthday in December 2021 and is presently enrolled in a day care/preschool programme at Fenside P.S. She is very attached to her big sister Batoul but is learning to have fun playing and being with other children.

Hady is 10 months old and will be celebrating his 1st birthday in August. He is bright eyed, into everything and eager to be on the “move”. He loves to explore and has a “winning-melt-your-heart” smile.

Mohammad continues to be able to provide for his family and is actively pursuing the process of citizenship for his family. He is working for two different security firms Lyon Security Systems and Legendary Security fulfilling both security and surveillance roles, and leading, and conducting some investigations. And Sheymaa is equally busy being a stay-at-home mom, looking after everyone. Our family is doing very well indeed. They are a true success story!



Food Bank Drive:

Once again Parkwoods will be collecting food for various local foodbanks during the month of June. Food insecurity is a real issue for so many in Toronto and the GTA. More often than not people are faced with the difficult decision as to whether they pay their full rent or put food on the table for their family.

In 2021 1.45 million visits were made to various local foodbanks in Toronto representing the highest number of visits ever recorded.

Another alarming statistic is that first time clients are outnumbering existing clients at a rate of 67%.

So we are collecting the food from June 1st through to June 30th .

*canned meat, vegetables, fruit, soup

*pasta, rice, lentils, beans, cereals, crackers

*tea, coffee, powdered milk, juice, baby formula

*peanut butter, jam, jellies

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Food items may be dropped off at the church and placed in the bins provided in our lobby/foyer.

Wayne and Mary Linkert Memorial Fund:

The Linkert Memorial Fund committee held a meeting on May 18th, 2022 and the following Spring/Summer donations were proposed on behalf of Parkwoods:

• Camping Opportunities Fund (Sparrow Lake, Ryde Lake, Lake Scugog)	\$1,500
• Massey Centre	\$500
• Fred Victor Centre	\$500
• CAMH	\$500
• Indspire	\$500
• Parkwoods Benevolent Fund	\$500
• Covenant House	\$500
• Gord Downie & Chaine Wenjack Fund	\$500
• To be held in Emergencies	\$500
• Total Donations Proposed	\$5,500

On June, 8th, 2022 Parkwoods Council granted approval that the charities listed above be supported for the Spring/Summer session.

Special Note: A business donor supporting Covenant House offered to double donation amounts if received prior to May 31st, 2022. Parkwoods Council granted early approval via email and Bud Bray personally delivered the cheque to Covenant House so that we could capitalize on this promotion.

The Wayne and Mary Linkert Memorial Committee meet bi-annually, once in the Fall/Winter and once in the Spring/Summer. Per year donations totaling \$10,000.00 are distributed to worthy charitable organizations.

Reported by Barb McDermott on behalf of Bud Bray

Property – Chair: David Gurd

In February, Sandra Martin and Nancy-Jean Nickel started an upgrade of the upstairs washroom next to the kitchen. The work stopped when the NYGH vaccination clinic and the Elections Ontario people used our facilities, and then continued on when these activities were completed. Hopefully the work will be completed in the next few months.

During the winter months, tiles on the church roof sustained wind damage. An insurance claim is being processed to make more permanent repairs.

A few interior door locks needed replacement due to wear and tear. The three main entrance doors, facing Parkwoods Village Drive, were repaired so they would open and close properly.

The furniture in the lounge has been replaced and updated, with many thanks to Donna Leistner and her team. On either side of the communion table we have two new chairs that were graciously donated by Donna's niece.

In May, Elections Ontario rented the lounge for an advanced polling station for ten days.

Rod Murphy of Murphy Maintenance continues to take care of the interior of our building.

Thanks again to Cam Ferguson and his team - Sandra Martin and Marlin Joseph – who will be looking after the lawns and gardens this summer.

Thank You

Mary McCowan sends her heartfelt thanks for the many greetings and notes sent to her. She will be celebrating her 104th birthday on July 2nd and misses attending Parkwoods services so much. She is still out and about in the neighbourhood.

Lynda McCowan





In Memoriam

Harry Whalen

Longtime and active member of Parkwoods, Husband of Brenda

Foster Rhude

Longtime adherent of Parkwoods

Carol Milner

Longtime and active member of Parkwoods

Frank Hazelwood

Longtime member of Parkwoods & Brookbanks Communities

Ken Foley

Longtime and active member of Parkwoods

Donna Martin

Longtime member of St. John`s United Church

Zaya Odisho

Longtime adherent of Parkwoods United Church

George Hoskins

Longtime member of Parkwoods & Husband of Luisa

Susan Bell

Longtime member of Parkwoods & Daughter of Millie Bell

Jack Lumley

Longtime and active member of Parkwoods

Nancy Boden

A Member of Parkwoods, formerly of St. John's U.C. & wife of Ross



Our thoughts and prayers are with their families



