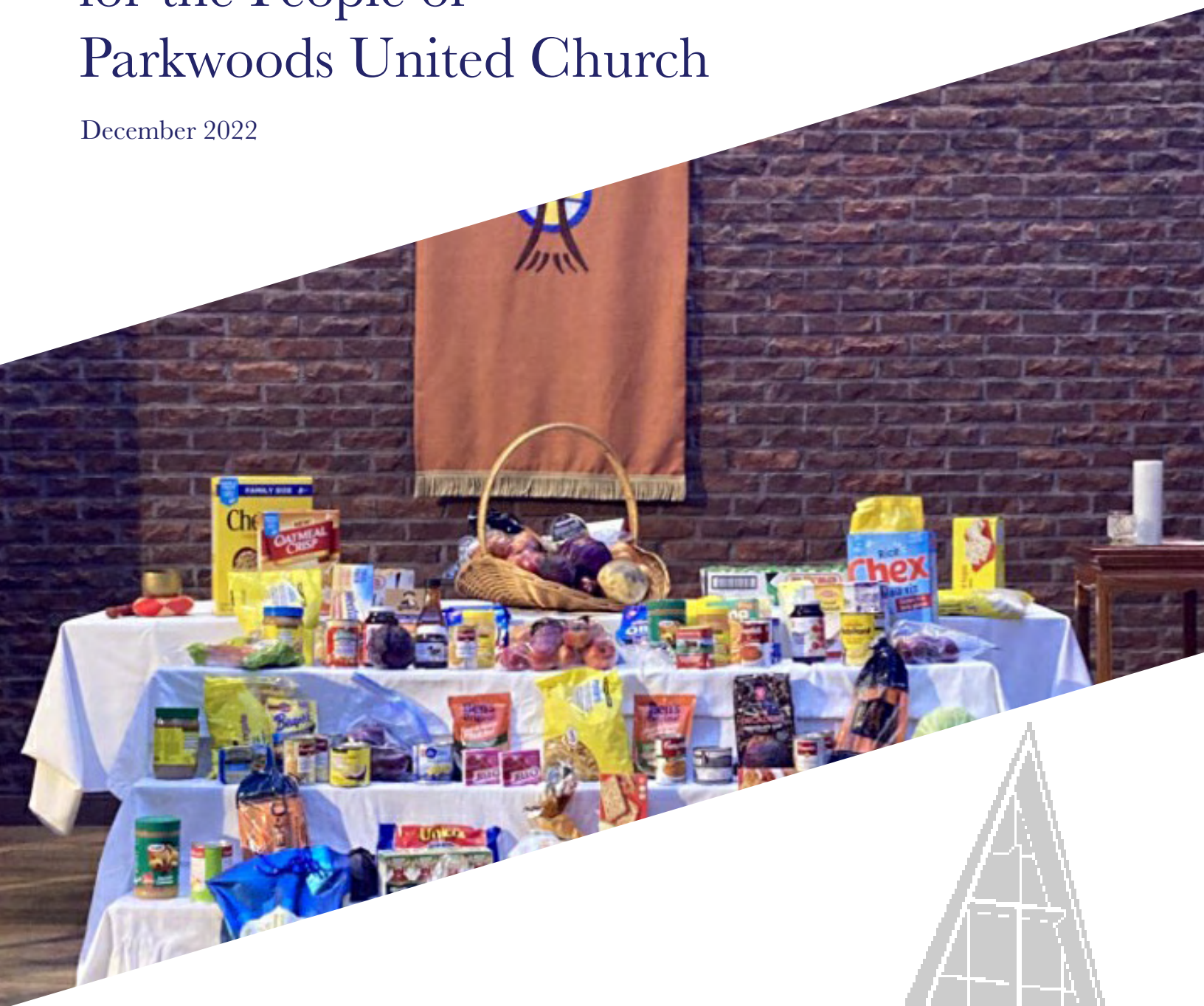


# A Newsletter for the People of Parkwoods United Church

December 2022



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## From the Minister's Desk...

The season of Advent is upon us. I find Advent a time of hope even as the war in Ukraine is raging on and the people are cold and hungry. It is a time of the year, in the bleak of winter, I can dream of a better world. Even though the days are getting shorter and people suffer with a seasonal affective disorder, we can turn to God for the light to shine in us. Such a journey of longing, dreaming, and hoping comprise this season of Advent. Yet, this is not a season of pipe dreams, but active preparation for God's sacred birth to take place within us. Though Christmas has been completely taken over by consumerism, we however, can remain steadfast and claim this season as holy and live into the sacredness.

A medieval mystic and theologian Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) reminded me what Christmas is all about. He said,

We are all meant to be mothers of God.  
What good is it to me  
if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly,  
but does not take place within myself?  
And, what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace  
if I am not also full of grace?  
What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son  
if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture?  
This, then, is the fullness of time:  
When the Son of Man is begotten in us.

This is the journey that we are invited to embark on, for Christ to be born in us. We are called upon this journey amidst all the secular culture that seeks to make profit off a sacred religious event. As such, Christianity is meant to be counter-cultural and we are called to ponder the meaning of what Christmas is for us.

Our prayers at this time of the year also reminds us of the reason for the season. Here is a prayer for the Season of Advent from the United Church of Canada's worship book, Celebrate God's Presence.

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, O Promised One,  
we come to this time of Advent  
awaiting your presence.  
Give us the wisdom to see meaning in these busy days.  
Give us the courage to wait in times of pain and trouble.  
Give us the compassion to wait for one another.  
Give us the faith to wait for the Messiah  
when we are threatened by the Herods of this world.  
Give us the hope to wait for the Saviour  
even when we cannot hear the angels singing.  
Give us the love that does not wait  
when it meets Christ in our neighbour. Amen.

May you have a meaningful and blessed season. May the God of light shine within you and through you. May the God awaken within you all the hope, peace, joy, and love this Christmas.

Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Won Hur

## Chair of Council: John Horton

**Is it really Advent already?** Our autumn at Parkwoods has seemed to be cram-full of enriching activities and programs, all this in spite of our being haunted for more than 1000 days by Covid 19.

There has been much concern expressed by the Parkwoods' congregation about the sad state of the many charitable agencies within Toronto and beyond. For that reason, you have responded **wonderfully well to drives** that have been organized to support Foodbanks, **Support Kits** for the people who live on the street, and earlier this spring, clothing and medical support for **Ukrainian relief**. Christmas cheer for shut-in folks in our own congregation is in the works, as I tap this out, as well as the Mitten Tree with its many contributions that go to the neighbouring schools. A tidal wave of support from you for the young mothers of **Massey Centre** shelter reached unprecedented heights last month.

We have had marvelous volunteer support for our **Church décor** on many fronts: Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day and now Advent.

**Our Choir** has kept our spirits high with their wonderful hymns, anthems and solos enriched every Sunday by organ and grand piano.

**A Zoom team** has made possible a hybrid service for those still hesitant about social gatherings. We are deeply grateful for this team leadership as they continually strive to smooth out the many-sided technical challenges of combining in-person services with virtual programming. We are fortunate that our Minister (and his family) have strong skill-sets that enable visuals to accompany the spoken word, and camera shots to blend when appropriate.

We have recently moderated our protocols to resume **coffee time** after Worship Services. Your safety is still an uppermost concern, and while we are changing from **mandatory masking during Church Services to strongly recommending masks**, we trust the congregation will space themselves in safe ways. To that end we will have one or more coffee tables in the main corridor, **stationed outside the Lounge area**. Historically the back of the Sanctuary became rather congested, and we feel the alternate setting will act as a curb to congestion.

Your **Parkwoods Council** continues to meet, at minimum, once a month and high on its list of priorities is how to get the protocols just right to maintain safety and still enjoy one another's in-person fellowship. **We prize comments coming from you**, and weigh them carefully, so please let us know your thoughts on protocols as this year progresses.

Our Worship Services have had many highlights, two recently being the presence of **Betty Hart**, the only remaining Parkwoods veteran of **WWII**. Betty was our specially honoured wreath-layer, a striking figure in her Naval uniform replete with medals. Fittingly **the late Brian Jeffs returned to us on tape** with his truly stirring rendition of the Last Post. Rev. Won conducted the service and our choir was in excellent voice throughout as was the organ and piano. It was indeed a moving service.

A second recent highlight was the reappearance in the pulpit of **Rev. Dr. John Ambrose**, who is internationally recognized for his contributions to Church Music. He was most warmly received on the occasion of our **62nd Anniversary Service** on November 27, that festive moment being further enriched with a return to post-service fellowship with **coffee and special cookies**.



Autumn also featured an interesting *book study* under the leadership of **Rev. Won**, one that featured lively discourse on theological topics and ran for some six weekly sessions.

We **share our premises** with two returning church groups, and with another returnee, the Toastmasters Organization in the George Connolly Hall. Other groups, the Burundi Drummers and the Brookbanks for African Grannies have been granted access for meetings.

A **telephone fellowship network** (pastoral care) has sprung into life this summer and fall, to enhance closer personal contact with our parishioners. If you wish further information contact **Rev. Won or Marg Crew**.

This fall we welcomed a new **Office Coordinator, Susan Ryman**, who is already making her presence felt in many positive ways.

Volunteers on many fronts are generously sharing their time and talent again this year, and while too numerous to mention here, are essential to keeping our Parkwoods' mission thriving. **To a person, they are enormously appreciated.**

## ----- 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!!**

### Growing in Faith — Coordinator: Marg Crew

#### Summer and Fall Services:

Over the summer, we worshipped in the George Connolly Hall where we enjoyed air-conditioning. During Won's vacation-time, four talented people provided pulpit supply.

Karen Chandler  
Rev. Linda Levin  
Rev. Dr. Michelle Von Roberts  
Glen Greenwood

Back in the sanctuary in September, we have had many special services with an average attendance of sixty, including in-person attendance and Zoom.

October 9 (Thanksgiving)	A celebration of thanks, with a great display of donated foods
November 6 (Remembrance Day)	The church was decorated with flags, wreaths and poppies. A tape of the Last Post, played by the late Brian Jeffs was presented. We were pleased to have a wreath laid by Betty Hart, a veteran of World War II.
November 13	A presentation was made by Ashley Carambelas on behalf of Massey Centre. She expressed her sincere thanks to Parkwoods for their very generous support of the centre.

<b>November 20</b>	Karen Chandler returned as pulpit supply while Won took his Continuing Education leave.
<b>November 27 (Anniversary)</b>	Rev. Dr. John Ambrose was our guest speaker as we celebrated our 62nd Anniversary.

### **Upcoming Services**

We hope you will join us for worship during the Christmas season. Services are listed below:

Sunday, December 4	Advent 2
Sunday, December 11	Advent 3
Thursday, December 15	Blue Christmas 7:30 p.m. ( On Zoom only)
Sunday, December 18	Advent 4
Saturday, December 24	Christmas Eve 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 25	A Celebration of Christ's birth
Sunday, January 1	New Year's Day - Communion

### **Christian Education**

A book study was held this fall, led by Won Hur. The book read and discussed was "*An Altar in the World*" by Barbara Brown. Those who participated found it to be worthwhile.

A Lenten Study will be held during Lent, which begins on February 22, 2023. Further information about participation in it will be forthcoming in the New Year.

### **Pastoral Care**

Did you know that Parkwoods has a great pastoral care team of volunteers? Volunteers send cards, make phone calls and pray for you. Visits are made when requested.

If you would like a visit from our minister or a volunteer, have a prayer request or need help with a ride, don't hesitate to call Susan in the office. She will direct your request to Won or the appropriate volunteer.

### **Music & Choir – Music Director: Ingrid Ziegler**

Choir practice at Parkwoods has temporarily shifted to a shorter session held before the Sunday Service, due to the continued masking requirements. When this changes again and we can leave our singing masks behind it will be much easier to sing for the extended time required for a full choir practice. We are fortunate to have specialized masks for singing that were custom made for us by Claudia of Wowza Masks in Markham. Although these masks have more room and are more breathable, it is still not recommended to sing for more than about 45 minutes at a time to limit any breathing issues that could arise.

With many choir members serving double duties on Sundays as worship leaders, welcome desk greeters and sound system staff to name a few, the choir remains a busy and much appreciated focal point at Parkwoods.

Since the summer, we have had to say good bye to Dean Pulfer who retired from choir in October, but is sorely missed in the Bass section. We wish him the very best.

As we continue to deal with all the lingering effects of the pandemic and ongoing Covid exposures, we nevertheless reach out to those choir members who have not been able to return yet, as well as to anyone else who would like to sing with the choir, to join us downstairs in the choir room for the 9:15 a.m. Sunday morning practice. We would love to have you!

Many blessings for the Christmas Season to all.

### **Communications — Chair: Carol Gurd**

After faithfully changing the Parkwoods information signs for approximately five years as a member of the Communications Committee, I have to say 'good-bye' to Jock Lumsden as he moves to Welland, Ontario. Jock has posted inspirational phrases and any current church activities to keep the community and church members informed.

Thank you Jock and all good wishes as you enter the next exciting chapter in your life.

*Photos courtesy of: Lynda McCowan, Won Hur, Susan Ryman, Barbara McDermott, Carol Gurd*

### **Property — Chair: David Gurd**

This fall, permanent repairs were made to the fascia surrounding the stained glass window and roof tiles secured from wind damage done last winter.

Sandra Martin has painted the handicap washroom at the back of the sanctuary this fall. Hopefully, the washroom outside the Nursery will be back in working order in the next few weeks. Many thanks to Sandra for her dedication.

Our precious boiler had two 'hissy fits' this fall! Repairs were made and it is now humming along, keeping our church building warm.

Rod Murphy, of Murphy Maintenance, continues to maintain the interior of our building. Rod, gratefully, is my 'right-hand man', always there to help me when needed.

My thanks to Cam Ferguson and his team of Marlon Joseph and Sandra Martin for taking care of the church lawns and gardens over the summer months.

**WANTED:** A 'Key Clerk' to take on the responsibility of managing the church keys. This involves keeping track of to whom church keys are allocated and being sure they are returned when necessary. Dean Pulfer has had this responsibility for a number of years and has recently retired. Thank you Dean!

Please speak to me if you can take on this task.



## **Growing in Service — Coordinator: Barb McDermott**

Since June, 2022 the Growing in Service team have been busy spearheading campaigns, collecting items for food bank drives, sharing Mission & Service education minutes, and lending our support for charitable organizations who embrace our collective mandate. For we are all called as Christians to “be the hands and the feet of Christ in our world.”

**Food Bank Collections:** We held two food bank drives: the 1st in June and the 2nd in October at Thanksgiving. Both produced a BOUNTY of food that was so very welcomed at ACSA (Agincourt Community Services Association) and SCHC (Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities). The outpouring was in a word MIRACULOUS! Thank you to everyone who contributed so all could come to the table and be fed.



**Citizenship for our Family the Al Khateb's:** On September 22nd via ZOOM link Mohamad, Ghassan and Batoul officially became citizens of Canada along with over 100 other people on that momentous, life changing day.

Their apartment was adorned with a colourful “sea of red and white.” A flag was affixed to their wall as the backdrop for the ceremony. A small Canadian flag was embossed on each of the brand-new white T-shirts they wore. Sheymaa had prepared a spread of food to feed “the nation” the centrepiece being a Canadian red and white cake. Even little Hady who had just turned 1 years old was bedecked in the maple leaf.

They spoke flawlessly and with such reverence as each of them took their oath. They sang the national anthem in both English and French. A hush came over us all for we knew we were bearing witness to something so meaningful and heartfelt. When Mohamad, Ghassan and Batoul were declared citizens their home erupted in cheers, smiles, laughter, hugs and even a few tears were shed.

Mohamad was so determined to make this happen for his family in 2022 and considering the backlog that immigration is presently trying to navigate, it is amazing that he managed to pull off his mission. Our family are wonderful, caring, grateful souls who are forging new lives for themselves here in Canada. They are a true SUCCESS STORY. Parkwoods partnership with the Al Khateb's has been so rewarding, purpose-filled, deepening our collective faith in humanity and the transformative power inherent in saying YES.



**Massey Centre Campaign:** The annual fall campaign in support of Massey Centre commenced on October 16th and concluded on November 13th. Massey Centre does pioneer work supporting pregnant and parenting adolescents 13 to 25 who either reside on site, or in the community.

We collected clothing, toys and toiletries for the moms and their children. The bassinette was overflowing within a week of launching the campaign. So, we brought in buckets and a table and before long these too were brimming with much needed items. During the November 13th Sunday service, we were treated with a speaker from Massey Centre, Ashley Carambelas, as we were wrapping up our campaign. Ashley shared some moving, emotion filled stories illustrating the great impact that Massey Centre has had on the lives of the young people whom it serves.

Thanks so much for your generous donations to such a good and worthy cause.

**Mitten Tree of Warmth:** As you are reading your Christmas newsletter the Parkwoods Mitten Tree is assuming its' rightful place in our sanctuary. This year we will collect mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks for school age children. We have not forgotten about hats but thanks to a few amazing knitters amongst us we already have a "bountiful storehouse" of hats. We will collect up until December 24th with delivery to the local schools planned for January.

AND you do not need to be a knitter. Purchased mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks are equally welcomed.

A portion of the donations will be shared ahead of time with ACSA as part of their Christmas Partners Programme in mid-December.

**Christmas Cheer Program:** Another annual tradition at Parkwoods is to spread a little cheer during the Christmas season with our shut-ins, those who are experiencing illness, suffering a loss or simply in need of remembrance and a lift. To that end the cheer packages will be ready and waiting for delivery after the worship service on Sunday, December 11th.

**Water First/Indigenous Community Project:** Many years ago, funds were raised with the hopes that a water well could be dug to bring fresh, drinking water to a small African community. A feasibility study was conducted with unfortunate results. This project would not come to fruition. These monies have remained in the Outreach account ever since.

In June with Council's approval \$2,000.00 (the amount previously allocated) was sent to Water First a Canadian organization to support their Drinking Water Internship, a 15-month paid Internship where young Indigenous adults are hired and trained to become water operators. To date, Water First has worked with 60 Indigenous communities in Ontario, Quebec, Labrador and Manitoba. Training and education are key components in solving local water issues plaguing so many of our First Nations reserves. We felt the work that Water First does honours the spirit with which these funds were originally intended.



**Milk Bags to Mattresses: GOOD NEWS!!** We have been given the green light to once again save milk bags for a wonderful cause. As you will remember, the outer multi-coloured bags are transformed into sleeping mats for folks in countries where beds are a luxury, and where many sleep on the ground. The milk-bags are cut into strips which are then crocheted or woven into attractive mats that are waterproof. Please bring your clean, washed milk bags to the church and drop off in the designated box outside the church office. This project not only helps the environment, but it significantly aids people in need. If you wish more information, contact Carol Gurd who coordinates the delivery of the bags.

**Wayne and Mary Linkert Memorial Fund:**

The Wayne and Mary Linkert Memorial Fund Committee held a meeting on October 7th, 2022 and the following Fall/Winter donations were proposed on behalf of Parkwoods:

Parkwoods Christmas Cheer	\$250
Toronto Christian Resource Centre	\$500
Anishnawbe Health Foundation	\$500
Sleeping Children Around the World	\$500
Daily Bread Food Bank	\$500
United Church of Canada Healing Fund	\$500
Interval House	\$500
UCofC Emergency Response for Pakistan	\$500
Roots of Empathy (for Indigenous Children)	\$500
To be held for Emergencies	\$500

At their meeting on October 12th, 2022 Parkwoods Council approved this list of Proposed Donations totaling \$4,750.00. Cheques were subsequently mailed to these charities.

On June 13 and again on October 25 “An Open Letter to the Members of Parkwoods United Church” was emailed to the Church’s membership roster, requesting financial support for the Fund. As a result, a total of \$4,300.00 was contributed to the Fund, maintaining its current Total Investment Value in the range of \$24,000.00.

Bud Bray,  
On behalf of the Wayne and Mary Linkert Memorial Fund Committee



**Brookbanks for African Grannies:** Brookbanks for African Grandmothers is proud to be a part of the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s Grandmothers’ Campaign since 2006.

Originally the campaign was for Canadian Grandmothers acting in solidarity with grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa who were raising their grandchildren whose parents had died from AIDS related illnesses. Recently, there has been an added urgency caused by the Covid pandemic.

Brookbanks for African Grannies has been tireless in their efforts to raise funds which go to grassroots organizations for African grandmothers and the children in their care.



## In Memoriam



### **Reverend Robert (Bob) Shorten**

was recently honoured at McMaster University

On August 19, 2022, Bob's life of service was recognized as part of a "Service of Gratitude" for those who had donated their bodies to medical research at McMaster.

Over 40+ years, Bob's ministry was one of compassionate care and it is fitting that this was his final gift.

The Shorten family has appreciated the many tributes and expressions of gratitude for Bob since his passing in December 2019.

In the latter part of his ministry, Bob was truly honoured to be named Minister Emeritus at Parkwoods United Church (Toronto) and to serve as Minister of Pastoral Care at Wellington Square United and EastPlains United (Burlington).

Gifts in his memory can be donated to a Church or charity of your choice.



## **In Memoriam**

**Lynn Ellen White**

Sister of Joan Palmer

**Ewen MacPhee**

Longtime member of Parkwoods & Husband of Mildred



*Our thoughts and prayers are with their families*

## **New Members**

**Edna Mathews**

Transferred from St. Mark's United Church



Happy 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary  
Parkwoods!

