



# Spirited Summerlea

United Church of Canada

## Newsletter

February 2018



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### CALENDAR

#### March

- 02 Fri 11am World Day of Prayer  
At Summerlea United
- 04 Sun 10:30am 3<sup>rd</sup> in Lent
- 11 Sun 10:30am 4<sup>th</sup> in Lent
- 18 Sun 10:30am 5<sup>th</sup> in Lent Food Sunday
- 20 Tue 2pm Executive Board Mtg.
- 25 Sun 10:30am Palm Sunday
- 29 Thu 6pm Maundy Thursday Supper  
followed by Service
- 30 Friday Good Friday

#### April

- 01 Sun 10:30am Easter Sunday  
with Communion
- 08 Sun 10:30am Sunday Service
- 14 Sat 10-3pm Artisan Fair & Book Fair
- 15 Sun 10:30am Food Sunday
- 22 Sun 10:30am Sunday Service
- 29 Sun 10:30am Sunday Service

The  
Season  
of  
Lent



#### EDITORS:

Jane Cowell Poitras,  
Susan Hawke & Lynn Closs

A Lenten movement has been sweeping the UK in recent years. Starting with 1500 people in 2011, last year over 100,000 Christians across all denominations participated.

Called the Lenten Challenge, the idea began with the notion of giving out instead of giving up -by giving out simple generous acts for 40 days. 40 days of random acts of kindness then becomes an antidote to our self absorbed lives with our to-do lists, agendas and me-first attitude.

Over the years, the acts have been as varied and diverse as the population. Purple clad Bishops handing out chocolates to amused commuters, and school children paying each other compliments are just some of the ways the acts of kindness have been demonstrated. This is an opportunity to create new friendships, renew old friendships, share one's skills, remove barriers, exchange love and make reconciliations.

This movement has gained sufficient traction over the last seven years that even the mainstream media in the UK are writing about it! In fact, that is how I discovered the movement. As stated on the web site [www.loveyourstreets.org.uk](http://www.loveyourstreets.org.uk) This movement is "about serving others and the wider community; about being the change, making positive steps to make life better for others (and yourself in the process!) The ideas are generally very simple and do not require much thought or pre-planning."

This web site even has a handy list of ideas to inspire people! Some of the ideas on the list:

- Say hello to people
- Smile at people
- Call on an elderly neighbour - take some cake and have a cup of tea and a chat
- Give away a book you think is worth reading
- Write a letter to the boss of someone who has given you excellent customer service to tell them so

I thought this was a wonderful movement and I wanted to share! I hope you will be as inspired by these ideas as I was.

*Jane Cowell-Poitras*



### A Word from the Minister

Just a few days ago, I returned from my study leave time, having spent a week at Five Oaks Centre near Paris, Ontario. Five Oaks is a United Church education and retreat centre, a place that has been near and dear to my heart for many years. I attended a spiritual retreat for men that I have been a part of for fifteen years now, and this most recent event was everything I needed it to be in terms of spiritual renewal and personal development. I know this is already sounding like those essays we all wrote when we were in grade school, entitled “What I Did on My Summer Vacation”, but my goal is not just to report to you how I spent my official leave time. I’m telling you this because I would like to share with you in some small way what a profound and renewing time this was for me, and to encourage you all to take advantage of the many opportunities we have to “feed our souls” and deepen our relationship with God.

This is essentially what the season of Lent is all about, and I believe we can observe this season

in a way that can lift us beyond ourselves and our everyday routines, and into a fuller and deeper experience of God’s presence in our lives. These opportunities are always before us, yet it is surprising how many of us miss them on a regular basis. One of the reasons we miss this opportunity has to do with our preconceived notions of what Lent is all about. For too many of us, Lent has not been a welcome observance because it has too often been associated with images of not being good enough, not being faithful enough, and not being worthy of the love of God (which means that we have to somehow earn it).

Mental health experts have long told us about the devastating effects of low self-esteem. Sadly, some people can only see the season of Lent in a way that makes them feel badly about themselves, or they ignore it all together because they do not want to spend time making a “laundry list” of their spiritual faults and shortcomings. Still others feel that denying themselves in some way will help bring them closer to God, but I’m not sure that most people find this a helpful exercise. I know that, when I deny myself something I really like, I usually just become cranky, not closer to God.

Ironically, the greatest benefits I gleaned from my spiritual retreat time was not in the group as we shared insights and personal reflections with each other, but rather it happened for me more between group sessions when I would go for long walks on the nature trails that meander through the woods on the Five Oaks property. It was there, with nothing but trees and birds and my own deep thoughts to spend time with, that I found myself transported to a place where I could feel the real presence of God in my life in a way that is all too rare for me. I know most people erroneously think that because I am a minister, I can spend all day with God in a way that brings me closer to God than anyone else. I must confess to you that however much I may wish this to be true, my days are as full of workaday routines and distractions as anyone

else's. Like most of you, I also need to intentionally set aside time to work on my faith and maintain a close connection with God, because most of us do not have the luxury of spending all of our time focusing on our walk of faith.

This, I believe, is why the season of Lent came into being in the first place – to take time, at least once a year, to re-focus and re-turn to God; not because we have been bad people and only God can pull us out of our badness, but because doing this reminds us of God's great love for us, and God's desire to be with us through all the events of our lives. During my walks through the woods at Five Oaks, I had some of the best conversations with God I have ever had. I was able, with God's help, to sort through some of my own personal issues and struggles, and I came away from that with a renewed feeling of how much God loves me, and indeed, how much God loves us all. Conversations with God, of course, do not happen in the same way that we talk to people around us, but I am thankful that I have learned how, not only to share my inner self with God, but also to listen for what God is saying to me. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was once interviewed by a reporter who asked her what she says to God when she prays. She said, "I don't say anything, I just listen." The reporter then asked her, "If you just listen when you pray, what does God say to you?" She responded, "He doesn't say anything, he just listens", then she added, "and if you don't understand that, I can't explain it to you." Indeed, this kind of connection with God cannot be explained. This kind of prayer was the experience of Mother Teresa herself, and not everyone is meant to copy it. Each of us must find our own way of communicating with God, and like my experiences at Five Oaks, they cannot always be adequately explained to others.

All I know is that opening myself to God's loving presence in my life in my own way led to a profound experience of God, and an assurance of how much I am loved as a child of God. It is

my hope that all of you can find your own path to deepening your faith and your connection with God, because I know that, whatever path you may take to get there, the destination is a fuller experience of the God who will always go to great lengths to let us know that we are loved beyond measure, and that each one of us is a beloved child of God.

*Rev. Scott A. Patton*

World Day of Prayer will take place at Summerlea United Church, Lachine, on Friday, March 2nd at 11am.



### Welcome Newcomers

If you are new to our church and would like to stay connected by receiving quarterly Church Newsletters from the secretary, loaded with current news and events taking place at the church, please look for a "Newcomers Contact Information Sheet" at the back of the church, and return your contact information to the Secretary's office. I will gladly add you on to our email list. Susan

### Music Notes

There will be a fundraising concert in the spring months. Octet Plus will be performing classical, gospel and folksongs to raise money towards the plane tickets for our refugee family. Please watch your bulletins and our website closely for the dates for this event.

*Connie Osborne, Music Director*



Lenten Loonies  
Midwives in Haiti



Haiti is a small country sharing an Island in the Caribbean with the Dominican Republic.

Every year 1 in 260 women die giving birth.

2-3 babies in every 100 do not survive the first few weeks of life.

Medical care is available only to the well off, and most women give birth without the care of any health care professional.

In 2008 a Haitian midwife, director of the only midwifery education program in Haiti, died on her way to London to receive a prestigious award for her work in Haiti.

The Canadian Midwives established a fund in her name with the objective of continuing her good work by supporting midwifery education in Haiti.

Since then this fund has enabled Haitian midwives to attend conferences in North America.

The fund also finances a very small office in Port au Prince for the Midwifery Association, employing a secretary as an administrator for the midwives.

The Midwifery School was destroyed in the earthquake of 2010... but teaching has continued and we heard in February that midwifery in Haiti has received a substantial grant from the United Nations to help fund the midwifery education. The Canadian midwives, in conjunction with the University of Quebec at Trois Rivieres will have oversight of the education program.

So you can see that a few loonies with other similar donations can go a long way to saving the lives of babies.

Family Life Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 at 19h00.



Roxboro United Church 116 Cartier, Roxboro  
Finger food and wine will be provided by the Board.

### **Pastoral Care Team Training**

**Friday, April 20 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM**

**Saturday, April 21 from 8:30 AM to 4 :00 PM**

at Cedar Park United Church

204 Lakeview Avenue, Pointe-Claire, QC H9S 4C5

Refresher for pastoral care visitors, clergy, and anyone working in caring professions. Training for those who might want to join a pastoral care team in their congregation.

This seminar will also be of interest to everyone who wishes to learn more about listening with the heart, honouring silence during conversations on difficult topics, and extending a compassionate hand to friends, family or acquaintances.



Learn more about listening, specifically to those in palliative care (and their families), those who are grieving or dealing with difficult diagnoses personally or with their loved ones (physical and mental health), those facing acute or chronic illness, and those who are housebound due to age or mobility.

The seminar includes presentations by experts, role-play (for those who feel comfortable), sharing of best practices on practical help, and small group discussions on connecting in meaningful ways in this fast-paced, largely technology-based world while maintaining safe boundaries.

**\$24 per person, includes materials, refreshments and lunch.**

**Open to all. Pre-registration is essential by April 16. Please complete the registration form and mail**

it to Cedar Park United Church with a cheque payable to Family Life Centre.

[www.familylifecentre.ca](http://www.familylifecentre.ca)

The Family Life Centre is a non-profit community resource supported by Beaufort United, Briarwood Presbyterian, Cedar Park United, St. John's United, St. Columba-by-the-Lake Presbyterian, Roxboro United, Summerlea United, and Union Church, offering referral services, short term counselling and workshops on issues affecting families, couples and individuals.

### Dominique Literacy project in Haiti.

We have been raising funds for the Dominique Literacy centre since 2011.

Up until December 2017, we had collected \$6,427.40 in the form of personal donations, donations on Soup Sundays, and proceeds from May plant sales. As a result, we have afforded these children an opportunity to acquire skills that would be otherwise unavailable to them. It costs \$1300 US per month to operate the school and in 2017 we raised sufficient funds for the school to operate for one month.

### William Hunter Memorial Fund

We appreciate your generous support for our three overseas children. Currently it costs \$468.00 per child per year. They are Alba Abigail Morales Cabana, a one year old little girl from Paraguay, Santiago also a little girl from Paraguay who is 3 years old and 16 year old Naomi from Ghana.

Our sponsorship allows these children to receive nutritious food, warm clothing, shelter, and access to healthcare and an education. Their families also will have access to programs that stress self-help and eventual independence. Thank you for your continued assistance.

*Dale Romagosa*

### Artisan Fair and Book Sale

**Saturday, April 14th**

**10 am – 3 pm**

Mark your calendars! Sponsored by the Girl Guides & the Outreach Committee. There will be over 30 artisans offering wonderful hand-



made crafts ideal for home decorating or gifts for Mother's Day perhaps, or a child's birthday. Also there will be a wide selection of slightly used books. Come by and browse. The menu in the Lunchroom includes Soup, Quiche, salad and dessert. Call Sue McKenzie 514-637-7605 to rent a table.

### Maundy Thursday Potluck March 29<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm

On Maundy Thursday, April 6, we will gather at 6pm in St. Andrew's hall for a potluck supper, followed by a short service in the Sanctuary.

### Good Friday Walk & Service – March 30<sup>th</sup>

The annual Good Friday Walk where Eastern Lachine and Western Lachine meet at Resurrection of our Lord Church will commence at 9am from Summerlea Church. This is a time of silent worship. All are welcome. Following a brief service at 10:15am, there will be a reception of Hot Cross Buns and water in the Resurrection church hall.



Easter Service, April 1st, with Communion will take place at 10:30am in the Sanctuary.

### Report on the Continuing Refugee Support Project

The idea that first saw light in September and October of 2015 for the sponsorship of a Syrian refugee family when the Summerlea Executive Board and the Outreach Committee started their talks is coming to fruition. Impossible to accomplish on our own, Summerlea, as you know, was joined by the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation and the Merging Waters Pastoral Charge to begin the necessary planning and considerable fundraising needed with the formation of the Summerlea Refugee

Support Coalition (SRSC) with Sheila Laursen of the LUUC as our chairperson.

Furniture and clothing and living essentials and well over \$30,000 were collected and stored in the time since late 2015. A three bedroom apartment was furnished by February 10 in time for their arrival on the following Saturday. Seven members from the three congregations were on hand for a truly joyful and emotional reunion between the family of six and the two brothers already here in Canada with their families. The two adults and four children (ages from 3 to 11 years) who had never experienced such a cold and snowy climate as ours were met with a complete set of properly sized winter coats and suits together with sets of new knitted mittens and scarves and hats

The newly arrived husband and wife (neither speaking any English or French yet) were at Summerlea on the following Friday choosing kitchen utensils, small appliances, dishes, cookware and many other donated new and used articles to complete their new home. The various sponsorship responsibilities of the SRSC (and hence the three congregations) continues for the full year following their arrival in Canada.

We can all be proud of the considerable efforts of many and be thankful to be in a position where we can offer such humanitarian assistance. Keep an eye on the Summerlea Website for further details.

## The Book Nook

By Jane Cowell Poitras

As spring is a popular time to downsize, to clean and to declutter, here are a couple of really interesting books from other cultures to that helped to move me from procrastination to action!

*The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* by Marie Kondo

Japanese cleaning consultant Marie Kondo takes tidying to a whole new level, promising that if you properly simplify and organize your home once, you'll never have to do it again. Most methods advocate a room-by-room or little-by-little approach, which doom you to pick away at your piles of stuff forever. The KonMari Method, with its revolutionary category-by-category system, leads to lasting results. In fact, none of Kondo's clients have lapsed (and she still has a three-month waiting list)

The stuff that enters our lives has its defined purpose ... sometimes it's just a fleeting moment to be enjoyed. The greeting card has done its deed when it conveys the feeling of love and warmth across a thousand miles from a loved one; and yet many of us feel compelled to keep them all, carting them from one residence to another, piled in boxes as if the recipient might somehow be secretly notified and then hurt at the moment that we throw them away. If anything, that person would probably be sad that their cards caused so much work instead of joy for the recipient!

Books are often meant to be read when the feeling strikes us to choose them and to immerse ourselves in reading their stories. Years later, their time to be read has passed, and it is okay to donate them to someone else, to move past that nagging feeling that we didn't finish something.

The purpose of the book could have been to convey one simple truth to the owner. That cocktail dress you never really wore? Though you loved seeing it hanging in your closet, a deep satiny blue, beckoning you to the life you dreamed of ... but maybe never quite lived? It's okay to release it, get rid of the guilt of never wearing it. You were changed by it just the same, because possibly it taught you who you were not going to be in this life.

*The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning: How to Make Your Loved Ones' Lives Easier and Your Own Life More Pleasant* by [Margareta Magnusson](#)

The title made me laugh, but it really does make sense. Döstädning is the Swedish word for the concept; dö is translated as death, and städning means cleaning. This can mean clearing out after a loved one has died, but it's so much more. Margareta Magnusson encourages people to downsize and begin to responsibly clear out their own things as they get older so relatives aren't stuck doing it all after they are gone.

The author writes with a wise, kind, humorous, and upbeat voice about how to begin, how to deal with clothes, books, collections, photographs, even pets, and how to death clean any hidden or secret parts of your life. She includes plenty of personal stories and anecdotes from her own life, and I valued her voice of experience. While this isn't a handbook or how-to, Magnusson helps the reader begin to think about death cleaning, how to approach the process, and provides motivation and helpful ideas like the throw away box. It's not exactly what you might think, but you'll need to read the book and find out for yourself.

I've made a start, but after reading this excellent little book, I have a much clearer idea of how to proceed, along with good reasons for carrying out my own death cleaning process. Death cleaning isn't about death. It's about the story of

your life and all its wonderful and lovely memories.

### Meals on Wheels

Are you available 2-3 hours a month to contribute your time to a local organization? Meals on Wheels takes place at Summerlea United on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are presently looking for cooks, delivery volunteers, or help to load up the dishwasher and wash a few pots and pans after preparation of the meals. If this interests you, please call Susan Ippersiel at 514-634-2651 or 514-634-4827, and I can provide you with more details. Our volunteers are a very friendly bunch, and most are from the Lachine community or Dorval area.

### News and Notes

Daylight Saving time begins on Sunday March 11th. Remember to 'spring' ahead 1 hour!

**Congratulations** to Erin and Ryan Kelly upon the birth of their beautiful daughter, Jayden, on January 15th. Best wishes as well to the proud grandparents, Sheri and Rick Moffat and Carol & Frank Kelly.

Sadly, it has been a very difficult winter for some Summerlea families. Long-time and well-loved members, Jeanne Moore who died peacefully last December, Lewis Guynan, Mary's husband who died December 24th, and Lois Pavlasek, wife of Tom, mother of Barb, Anne and Don, who passed away January 4th. Jeff Griffiths, a former member who relocated to Toronto many years ago passed away January 2nd. Rolf Christiansen, husband of Wilma, passed away February 12th. Our sincere condolences to their families and friends.

The office recently heard from dear Edna Lee, who left a voice mail letting us know that she was moving from her home in Dartmouth, N.S.

to a nursing home. Please keep Edna in your thoughts and prayers as she adjusts to her new home and recuperates from an illness.

Brian Maklan is recuperating after major heart surgery early in February, and dear Natalie Moreau-Wightman, despite many challenges and setbacks she has faced lately, continues to work hard in rehab at improving her physical movement skills. She may soon be moved to a new location. Joan McCauley recently moved from the 5th floor to the 1st floor, Room 160 at Le Savignon in Lachine, and welcomes visits from her friends. Please continue to keep these folks in your prayers, as well as Mia Laviolette, granddaughter of Lorna and Ray.

If you would like more information on Summerlea's monthly activities, please visit us at [www.summerlea.ca](http://www.summerlea.ca). You might even recognize some faces of many Summerlea members posted on the website. Thanks to John Osborne who keeps it up to date each week. If you are still receiving a paper copy of the Newsletter, and would prefer to receive an electronic version, please contact Susan at 514-634-2651.

*Until the next time.*

*Susan Ippersiel*

### Chuckle Corner



Four brothers left home for University, and they became successful doctors and lawyers. One evening, they chatted after having dinner together. They discussed the 95th birthday gifts they were able to give their elderly mother who moved to the west coast.

The first said, "You know I had a big house built for Mum."

The second said, "And I had a large theatre built in the house."

The third said, "And I had my Mercedes dealer deliver an SL600 to her."

The fourth said, "You know how Mum loved reading the Bible and you know she can't read anymore because she can't see very well. I met this Minister who told me about a parrot who could recite the entire Bible. It took ten Ministers almost 8 years to teach him. I had to pledge to contribute \$50,000 a year for five years to the church, but it was worth it. Mum only has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot will recite it."

The other brothers were impressed. After the celebration Mum sent out her "Thank You" notes.

She wrote: Michael, the house you built is so huge that I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house. Thanks anyway."

"Mervin, I am too old to travel. I stay home; I have my groceries delivered, so I never use the Mercedes. The thought was good. Thanks."

"Mark, you gave me an expensive theatre with Dolby sound and it can hold 50 people, but all of my friends are dead, I've lost my hearing, and I'm nearly blind. I'll never use it. Thank you for the gesture just the same."

"Dearest Mitchell, you were the only son to have the good sense to give a little thought to your gift. The chicken was delicious. Thank you so much."

Love, Mum.