

# *West Plains United Church*



## *October 2019*

### *Minister's Message*

It's difficult to believe that four months have already flown by since I arrived at West Plains as your minister! I have enjoyed a very warm and generous welcome for which I am deeply grateful. Lately, as I travel along York Blvd and over the connecting bridges to get from Hamilton to Aldershot, I've been noticing unmistakable signs that a summer that was ever-so-reluctant to begin has quickly vanished. The vibrant shades of autumn are now appearing in the landscape. In the church we find ourselves in the long period of the liturgical year between the joyous red of Pentecost and the beginning of a new church year on the first Sunday of Advent (which occurs this year on December 1<sup>st</sup>). Our church calendar calls this lengthy chunk of the year "ordinary time"—a period of some thirty Sundays during which no particular event in the life of Jesus is celebrated in worship. The wisdom of those who long ago devised the Western church calendar is that the human heart can only take a certain amount of feasting and celebration without a compensating period of rest and replenishment.

But what are the qualities of this "ordinary" time that make it ordinary? The great festivals of Christmas, Baptism, Transfiguration, Easter and Pentecost are behind us and we find ourselves observing what theological writer Renita Weems calls the no-particular-reason Sundays when God seems quiet or perhaps even silent. Weems suggests that this long period, when believing hearts are left to grapple with the seeming silence of God, reflects the periods in all of our lives when we may feel ourselves alienated from God's affection. Our usual response to hearing God's silence, says Weems, is to be silent in return. She compares this pause in the rhythm of church time to the time-outs that sometimes get meted out to toddlers: the time-out gives the child time to compose themselves, gather their thoughts, calm down, think about what they are doing. At the end of this process, the toddler can then be invited back into intimate relationship. Perhaps, Weems suggests, God is actually waiting—waiting for us to

gather our thoughts, compose ourselves, regain our speech and find our way back to a give-and-take intimacy with God. Ordinary time is, then, a kind of creative waiting on the part of the divine, a sort of “hearing into speech,” a pause for breath that adds depth to the conversation.

And so we find ourselves in the fall of 2019 in ordinary time, in the period before the first Sunday of Advent begins the liturgical year’s cycle all over again. In our area of the world this is a time marked by all the natural beauty and abundance that a wounded creation still offers us. It’s my prayer that during this Ordinary Time, as the earth begins to cool once more, you will take some time to pause and to reflect. May you listen in the still silence of the universe for the heartbeat of a faithful and tender God who loves you toward renewed speech and positive, Spirit-filled energy.

Blessings,  
Philip

## *Finance*

### **A Note from the Board**

As of the end of September the Finance thermometers are indicating that neither regular donations nor renovation re-payments are in line with budget expenses.

We have had to borrow from the Memorial Fund to cover anticipated expenses for October and Finance is forecasting that we will have a budget shortfall at year end, resulting in a deficit situation.

Your financial contributions over the next few months are appreciated and hopefully this situation can be improved.

Submitted by  
Bev Biggley & Peter Fox

## *Property Committee*

The air conditioners, that had been purchased earlier in the year, were installed in May. A collective sigh of relief could be heard from the congregation on the first Sunday that the units were working. Thanks again to Phil Groves for doing all of the leg work on this project and the members of the Board for giving the ok for the purchase. Now all we have to do is keep contributing to the renovation fund, so we can pay off the debt, which currently stands at about \$5,500.00

The floors in the Sanctuary were cleaned and refinished in late winter. What a difference. Thanks to Peter and Ray for all of their work.

We welcomed Reverend Dr. Philip Gardner to his first West Plains property meeting in September. Thanks Reverend Philip for your contribution to our group.

A general cleanup of the church's interior took place on September 30th. Thanks to all who took part.

As always, the maintenance and appearance of the Church property is the priority of the Property Committee. Thanks to Reverend Philip, members of the Board and the Congregation for their ongoing support to make this happen.

Submitted by  
Murray Biggley  
Secretary

## *Community of Faith Working Group*

A small team (Bev Biggley, Peter Fox, Darlene Groves, Judie Langford, Pat Mifflin and Bert Posedowski) was formed in early summer to begin the process of preparing the West Plains Community of Faith, Living Faith Story. As the United Church transitions, this report becomes a step in the process of calling a permanent Minister. A key requirement is to seek feedback and get input from the congregation on our community of faith's direction and thoughts on the current and future needs of West Plains.

The team would ask you to reflect on the following questions so that you would be prepared to discuss them at our Annual Congregational meeting in February or please take the opportunity to submit your written thoughts to any member of the team, prior to the Annual meeting.

1. What should be West Plains' focus for the future?
2. What would you like to see:

**Stopped**

**Continued**

**Started?**

Your input is important and will be appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with anyone on the team.

Submitted by  
Community Faith Group

## *Faith Formation*

Rev. Philip is planning an Advent Lectionary Group to discuss the reading on which he will be basing his sermons for the season of Advent. This Discussion Group will begin on Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. and will meet weekly in the Stokes parlour through to Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in attending there will be a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board for beginning of November, or call the office to have your name put on the list at: 905-529-4871.

There will be a Book Study starting Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> after church and continuing every other Sunday. It will be a five-part series (4 parts and an epilogue) discussing the book, "How to Read the Bible & Still be a Christian" by John Dominic Crossan.

If you are interested in attending, please look for the signup sheet on the bulletin board in December and sign up so we can order you a copy of the book. Approximate cost of the book is \$20, at The Different Drummer book store here in Burlington.

The next Faith Formation meeting is on Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30 a.m., if you have suggestions or comments please do not hesitate to let Carol Eydt, Darlene Groves, Debbie Burford, Lynn Watson or Rev. Philip Gardner know.

## *Worship Committee*

In July, we welcomed Rev. Dr. Philip Gardner as our Supply Minister for the next two years.

If you have not heard one of his thought provoking sermons yet, then get yourself back to church to hear his powerful message on a Sunday morning.

In August, we welcomed the East Plains Congregation and enjoyed a variety of Worship leaders while Rev. Gardner was on vacation. Thanks to East Plains for the yummy refreshments following the service

Thank you to Mary Starodub, Christy Lamphier and Lianne Tan for filling in at the piano during the summer.

You may have noticed two bright new antependia on the pulpit and the lectern recently. Thank you to Judi Honsberger for her creativity and sewing talents. Keep watching for others upcoming as the church seasons change.

There is a "suggestion box" on the table outside the Sanctuary. If you have any ideas you would like the Worship Committee to consider please drop a note in the box as it is checked frequently.

## UPCOMING SERVICES

November 3<sup>rd</sup> All Saints Day  
November 10<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day Service  
December Special Advent Services

Submitted by  
Lois Lennon



## *United Church Women*

Though the UCW are no longer together, we would like to send out a special “Thank You” to all the women who were part of this group, for their many, many years of dedication and service here at West Plains United.

### *Prayer Shawls*

As most of you know, the Prayer Shawl knitters have been busy since 2008 in the parlour on Wednesday afternoons. We have created well over 400 Shawls in that time.

More recently we joined the Presbytery community project to “Chase the Chill” when we displayed scarves in Bolus Park, for those in need. Many community people joined us in that project.

We also made Twiddlemuffs and Dementia balls that we donated to the Alzheimer’s Society and we are hoping to make some more to possibly donate to local retirement homes.

Wesley Centre always welcomes our donated cozy hats at Christmas time.

We have a number of Prayer Shawls on hand, so-are now seeking a new project.....your ideas are welcome.

Please join us on the third Wednesday of each month, in the Parlor at 2 o’clock.  
Everyone is welcome! Knitters and or Crocheters!

## Music



### **Musical Ride**

The start to the fall has been a fun one musically.

We began a new monthly Singalong with Mary in September. Come sing songs you remember, in a relaxed setting in our parlour, with Mary at the piano jazzing it up! Tea and cookies follow. We have two more singalongs planned. Tell your friends and invite them along for a casual and fun afternoon of song.

***Tuesday, Oct 22, 2-3:30 and Tuesday, Nov 26, 2-3:30 ~ Singalong with Mary!***

***Invite friends & neighbours!***

In **October**, we had a concert by the Bucket List blues band, which shook the walls of the church with high energy. Turnout was good, and the Band is eager to return to West Plains! If you missed them, do check them out on their facebook page or website:

<https://hamiltonbucketlist.wixsite.com/band>. The band began because its leader, John Staley, had it on his bucket list to form a band when he retired. He's doing it!

We also had a guest group giving a musical message on the Psalms for our 148<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at West Plains, on Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>. George Hall composed all of the music and sings with such passion. His team of professional musicians back him up with such talent. On Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>, local flautist Seiichi Ariga graced our service with beautiful flute music, and accompanied the choir on the anthem. Seiichi is a physicist and retired United Church minister who is also a superior flautist to boot! Seiichi and I play in the Dundas Valley Orchestra (we have a concert on Sunday Nov 10<sup>th</sup>, 3 pm at St. Paul's United Church, Dundas – Showtunes from Music Man to the Sound of Music – free admission!)

**November** brings more special guests – a young student at Appleby College, Mattias, will play the trumpet for our Remembrance Day service on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>. On Sunday, Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm, the popular rock 'n' roll band, Frankie and the Fairlanes, from St. Thomas, ON, will return for another toe-tapping show in our Theatre. Get your seats as soon as you can! Tickets are \$20 and can be bought from Vicki or at coffee hour after church. You and your friends can also buy online now – check out the link at <http://westplains.ca/events> .

**December** brings thoughts of Christmas, and our now annual *3 Choirs Christmas Concert* at St. James' United Church in Waterdown. This very popular concert brings surprises like soloists, singalongs, choir and organ music. Freewill donations go to support Wesley Ministries in Hamilton. Come and bring friends and neighbours!

***Sunday, Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm ~ Joint Christmas Concert  
with West Plains, Carlisle and St. James United Church Choirs  
@ St James United, Waterdown***