



Rowntree Acorn – Christmas 2021



From the Minister's desk:

Christmas wasn't always part of the Christian experience. There's no record that Jesus or his disciples or the early church celebrated Christmas at all, as they did all the Jewish holy days and holidays. In fact, the first Christmas or Christ Mass wasn't celebrated until the 4th

century. It's likely Jesus wasn't even born in the winter. Rather, it's thought that December 25 was chosen as a day to celebrate his birth because it coincided with a pre-existing pagan festival. That would make it easy for non-Christians to add a new layer of meaning to their old celebrations. Stuff happens in the history of religion.

December 25, however, wasn't merely the date of a pagan festival. It also overlaps with a festival that Jesus did actually celebrate.

Like Jews of his time, Jesus celebrated the Feast of Dedication, which occurs on the 25th of Kislev, a month in the Jewish calendar that most closely approximates December. "At that time," John's Gospel relates, "the Feast of Dedication took place in Jerusalem; it was winter. Jesus was walking in the Temple in the portico of Solomon. Tell us," the Jews said, "if you are the Messiah." Their comments were fitting, because the Feast of Dedication remembered the last time a deliverer had arisen to save them from



oppression. It was past time for another; the Roman experience was a cruel one indeed.

The Feast of Dedication commemorates the rededication of the second Temple in Jerusalem, after its utter desecration at the brutal hands of Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 or 168 BCE. Today, that feast is known by its Hebrew name, Chanukah. Although Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication) only gets a line or two in the New Testament, it actually plays a significant role in the birth of Jesus.

To explain, we look back in history over three hundred years before the birth of Christ. Alexander the Great ruled the ancient world around the Eastern Mediterranean. After conquering the Persian Empire, Greek culture, or Hellenism, spread like wildfire. The Jews living in Israel quickly found themselves surrounded by it, and then almost swallowed up by it.

Hellenism was to the ancient world what Western culture is to the modern world. Just as you can find a McDonald's in nearly every corner of the world, not to mention Western pop music, blue jeans, TV re-runs, Western style Christianity, and the English language, so in that day, you could find Greek culture, religion, and language permeating every other culture of the world. Needless to say, it wasn't all good, especially for those in the minority, like the Jews. It put their entire distinctive way of life at risk.

After Alexander died, his empire was split into quarters and the region including Israel and Syria was eventually inherited by Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Epiphanes means "face of God," but a more apt description was the moniker the Jews gave him: "Epimanes" or "crazy man." He was the Hitler of the intertestamental period. He was obsessed with wiping out the Jewish people. He began with the slaughter of the citizens of Jerusalem and the desecration of the Temple. All sacrifices, the service of the Temple, and the observance of the Sabbath and of feast days were prohibited; the Temple at Jerusalem was dedicated to Jupiter Olympus (a Greek god); the Torah was searched for and destroyed; the Jews forced to take part in heathen rites; in short, every insult was heaped on the religion of the Jews, and its every trace was to be swept away."

Antiochus was bent on genocide. The final straw was the slaughter of a pig on the sacrificial altar in the Temple. This occurred on the 25th of Kislev, the month that generally corresponds to our December.

A Jewish deliverer rose up, whose name was Mattathias. Even though they were outnumbered and overpowered, under his leadership the Jewish people began a campaign of guerilla warfare against Antiochus and his Syrian armies to reclaim the Temple. Mattathias died fighting, but his five sons carried on, including one whose name you might know: Judah Maccabee. He led the fighting till the Temple could be purified and its services restored.

Exactly three years after its desecration, the Temple was rededicated. This took place on the 25th of Kislev, approximately 165 years before the nativity of Christ. If Antiochus had carried out his plan for genocide of all the Jews, there would have been no Mary, no Joseph, and no Jesus. There would have been no Messiah of Israel, no Savior of the World. Bottom line: without Hanukkah, there would probably be no Christmas.



As we prepare for Advent, let us remember the minor Jewish holiday that celebrates freedom of religion and which makes possible the major Christian one. Let's do like Jesus did and rededicate ourselves to freedom of religious expression, to the freedom that allows our devotion to God, to the freedom that motivates us to truly love

each other.

Blessings to you this Advent and Christmas Season!

Rev Wendy



Doggie Tales from Madagan:

“Are we there yet?” Do any of you remember hearing or saying those words? I hear my Mommy, Rev. Wendy, say that people seem to be impatient to get to Christmas and forget about Advent. I think she likes to savour the journey and hang on to all that each season brings.

I know that I like to savour the journey of each walk. I want to discover all there is to learn and know on my way. And each journey is its own adventure. I’m like that about walks. Not so about car rides. I am too excited for the destination that I can’t really enjoy the journey. So, I sometimes miss out on what I might see along the way.

I understand my human sister was like that as a child as well. She would be heard to say on the edge of the city, “are we there yet?” I guess I am not alone, but I would like to enjoy the journey more as we travel through Advent to Christmas.

Even during Covid times there are still special times and traditions to hold on to. One such tradition at my house, which started long before I was here, is to put up outdoor lights in a snow storm. I am looking forward to that tradition! I think I enjoy the snow more than anyone!

Please take time to enjoy the journey and to celebrate the time.

Christmas is coming, but for now we walk the Season of Advent.

Walking sounds really good to me!

Doggie hugs and kisses!

Maddie ^..^



On the Lighter Side

What if dogs fetch the ball back only because they think you really like throwing it? ✓

contributed by Doreen Carrothers

Official Board Report Dec. 2021

Once again time has gotten away from me. I have seen some decorations lit up, our mini-Poinsettia bazaar is being held next week and of course Christmas music is on the radio stations. However, it wasn't until I listened to the readings (done very effectively by Julie and Val) in Sunday's service that I remembered this week signals the end of the church year. I look forward to the appearance of the Advent Wreath with the candles of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love waiting to be lit. The first Sunday of Advent next week begins a whole new year for us. A year of Hope that better times are ahead. The return to services in our sanctuary is one sign of that hope. Although Rev. Wendy may be speaking to us from behind the plastic shield, it does not diminish the inspiration that her reflection provides and the comfort of seeing her in person. Another sign of hope is to hear Pam sing our beloved hymns along with Glen's inspiring accompaniment on the organ or piano. I don't know about you but sometimes I want to get up and move about when Glen plays but for now I will content myself with trying to tap my foot in time with the music. You'll notice I said "try" as my musical abilities are extremely limited and keeping time with the song being played does not always happen.

Another sign of the season is the Rowntree Christmas Hamper program. This year as Brianne's announcement indicated, more people than ever lined up to register. I must admit, that as I handed out the form with hamper number 37 at the top and then saw that there were more than a dozen people still in line, I was concerned. The weather was not quite as warm as last year and some people had waited in line for 2 hours only to be put on the wait list as we had reached our number of hampers. This year, there was an increase in the number of requests

for singles and many of them were seniors from an apartment building in the area of the church. It was this demographic that encouraged the hamper committee to consider, while not being able to provide a complete hamper could we provide some food support to everyone who stood in line and graciously accepted the news that our allotted number of hampers had been filled but that we would put them on a wait list. Phyllis and I recorded phone numbers for the wait list and Brianne is going to contact each person. Although, it may appear that the use of gift cards means less work for the hamper committee that is not true. The knitting done for the hampers is truly amazing. The hamper recipients will be really pleased with the work and talent of our knitters. I still remember one gentleman telling me last year that he did not use the mittens provided but gave them to his granddaughter. She was thrilled with the mittens. The cookie bakers will soon be providing the products of their talents for the hampers. One hamper may be reaching and helping more people than we ever anticipated. From the number of hamper donation envelopes I've seen in the offering plate the last two weeks plus the ongoing support of Bill Dunbar, I think that this year will again bring Joy to all the people who registered. Thank you to Brianne for once again leading the Hamper committee. Without the new ideas she's brought to the program, I do not think it would be so successful. Thank you also to all who continue to support this effort so generously every year. You are a necessary part of our successful Hamper program.

The Board continues to work on obtaining enough volunteers to fill committee and Board positions. In order to make it easier to fill positions, some committees were combined. With this step, each committee, except for Nominations, has at least three members. The Nominations committee currently has no members on it. This year's nominations are being handled by Lynn Patterson and me. Thank you Lynn for your offer of help. Apparently, Nominations is not a popular committee. With the current status of my Board and committee member chart, I think that our committees will be able to carry on for the next two years. However, the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Official Board still need to be filled. Perhaps the lighting of the Hope candle on the Advent Wreath this year will inspire someone to step forward and volunteer. If you have any questions about what is required of the Chair of the Official Board, I will be glad to chat with you.

The difficulty in finding volunteers for committee and Board positions is not unique to Rowntree. Our Zoom services not only provided continuation of services through the pandemic but have helped forge a closer bond with Dundas St. Centre. Brian Kominek proposed to the Rowntree Official Board that we explore collaborating with Dundas where possible. After Brian's initial investigation of whether Dundas was interested, Howard Rundle brought the suggestion to the Unified Board at Dundas. Much to his surprise three people volunteered immediately to be on a committee to meet with Rowntree. Brian, Phyllis and I volunteered to represent Rowntree. We have had one meeting and I must say I am pleased with the suggestions brought forward by everyone who attended. Our M&P and Worship and Music committees already hold joint meetings with Dundas so it was suggested that perhaps other committees may be interested in collaborating. The committee work is in the early stages. At this point we are compiling lists of the activities and programs at each church so we can investigate where collaboration may be possible. Rowntree was already offered some food supplies that Dundas St United would not use, with the end of their Out of the Cold meal, to the Hospitality Meal and the Welcome Wed. lunch. I am happy to say that the Rowntree meals are able to make use of all the food offered. Stay tuned for updates as our committee work progresses.

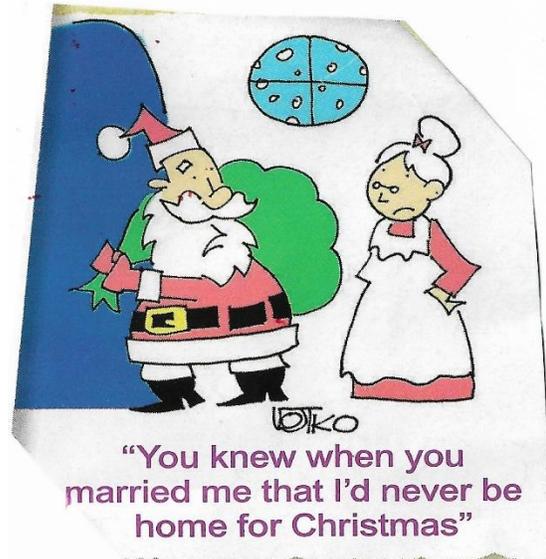


So far I've mentioned topics that I associate with the Advent candles of Hope and Joy. Without the Love candle none of what I've mentioned in this report could happen. What I hope that all three of these candles will bring about in our lives and the world at large is some Peace. There seems to be turmoil everywhere whether it is immigrants being mistreated at many locations globally, the ongoing pandemic, Covid vaccine not being shared equitably with poorer countries, the effects of climate change that we have to go no further than British Columbia to find evidence with the devastation caused by fire and floods, a new topic that is in the news daily- the supply chain. We, in Canada, until the pandemic have

not been used to seeing empty shelves in stores, empty new car lots or having to wait six months for a new refrigerator.

Our Advent Wreath supplies us with what we need to go forward in the new year. We have to not only carry with us the Joy, Hope, Peace and Love that the birth of Jesus Christ brought to the world but we have to live it out in our actions daily.

Submitted by Debbie Betchen



Contributed by Doreen Carrothers

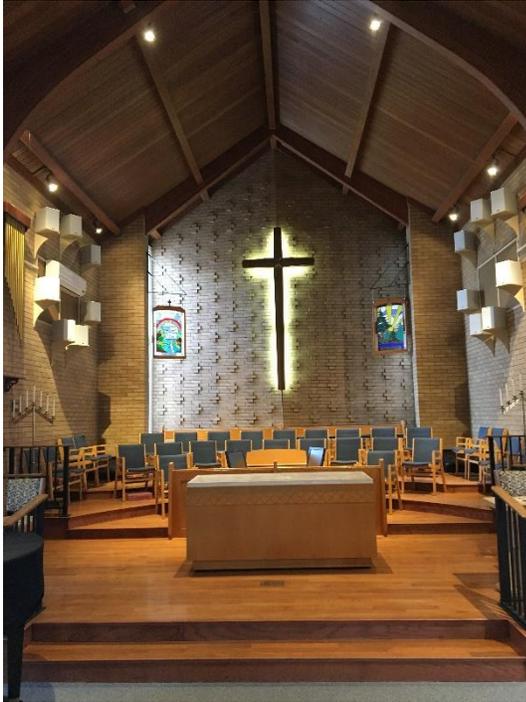
Worship & Music

As we enter a new year in our Church calendar at Rowntree we look forward to Advent and all the special memories to be made. Our memories of this Christmas will look different than last year's memories and I'm sure will be different than Christmas' in the future. We need to be grateful for the opportunities opening up in our Worship services.

We returned to in Church worship services on October 10, 2021 and our attendance has remained stable. We have a choice to worship in the Sanctuary or by zoom. Our average weekly attendance is 25 and zoom averages 10 people at our Sunday service. Dundas has a few that are zooming with us each week as well. I would like

to thank Glen Thompson for his weekly gifts of music and Pam Font for sharing her beautiful voice.

Sunday November 28, 2021 is the first Sunday in Advent and we will be sharing Communion in the Sanctuary. It will look different than before but it is still an important part of the Season of Advent. We will be decorating the Sanctuary and again this will look different but it will be beautiful.



We will be lighting the Advent candles each week and our Lay Liturgist will be doing the reading that will accompany the lighting of each candle and on Christmas Eve the Christ candle will be lit.

Rowntree will be having a Christmas Eve service, Friday December 24, 2021 in the Sanctuary at 7:30 pm. The capacity for in Sanctuary Worshippers is 60 so we will have registration for this service in advance. We hopefully will be providing zoom for the service as well.

Sunday December 26, 2021 will be our regular café style service. This will be a shared ZOOM service with Dundas at 10:30 am. We will be able to stay at home in our pajamas and have coffee and goodies while we enjoy worshipping together.

Sunday January 2, 2022 is Epiphany and worship will take place in the Sanctuary at 9:30.

We have made the decision that during bad weather when the decision is made to cancel in-Church worship we will meet by zoom. Once the decision is made everyone will be contacted with the information needed to join zoom for the service.

In January we will be celebrating the 12th Anniversary of amalgamation at Rowntree. Details to follow at a later date.

Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday season!

Darlene Burnett & the Worship & Music Team Margaret Thompson, Maureen Leonard, Laurie VanVrouwerff

**Can't believe someone
broke into my garage
and stole the limbo
stick. Seriously, how
low can you go.**

**Because of Covid for the
first time since 1945 the
National Spelling Bee is
cancel... cancel... cancel...**

It's been called off.



**I hate it when
people act all
intellectual and talk
about Mozart, while
they've never even
seen one of his
paintings...**



The pandemic continues to affect us all but for some in the Marconi Affordable Housing Community, East London, the isolation, and restrictions have been crippling, resulting in a steep rise in depression, anxiety, addictions, and violence. Nancy Howard, ELUCO's Community Outreach Worker, continues to provide support and counselling outside at a distance. She says 'As the months passed it reinforced my understanding that the most important aspect of my outreach is being present in the community. Living our faith, listening without judgement, encouraging, comforting, advocating, and teaching – these are the gifts ELUCO bestows to those most in need'. And there are successes! A youth from the Marconi community was hired as a counsellor at the Kee-Mo-Kee day camp this summer; a collaboration with the London Public Library Outreach program provided outdoor workshops including stories, activities and crafts; children received new backpacks with school supplies through generous donations from Rowntree United Church and The Royal Imperial Sovereign Court of London Ontario.



An enormous **THANK YOU** for those who donated to the ELUCO Walk & Roll for Families Fund Raiser in September. With your very generous donations we raised more than \$7,000. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Caption: ELUCO Board of Directors & supporters participating in the Walk & Roll for Families fund raiser in Sept, 2021.

ELUCO is the East London United Church Outreach, consisting of Rowntree, Siloam, First St Andrews and Richards United.

Submitted by Judy White, Rowntree member and ELUCO Board member

Welcome Wed. Lunch Dec. 2021

Since the first lunch served after the summer break, the attendance at the Wed. lunch has been steadily increasing. Currently, between 40 and 50 people are being served each week.

When one of the weekly organizers experienced an illness in September, the other weekly leaders and volunteers immediately stepped in to help with their week for Sept. and Oct. Thank you to everyone who so willingly contributed extra time. Fortunately, the weekly leader is once again well and a new volunteer has stepped up to share their weekly organization duties.

The Welcome Wed. lunch will be closed Dec. 22 and 29, reopening on Jan. 5.

The London Food Coalition pickup from the Salvation Army Centre of Hope each Tues. allows us to continue to provide fresh produce to our participants. It is greatly appreciated. Many have commented that this extra food allows them to stretch the food they have at home for several days. This ability is especially important with the recent increases in food prices that has reduced their buying power.



Pictured are the Valleyview Mennonite crew of L>R; Doris, Lynne, Gloria, Dave, Helen, Elma. Each week a different church runs the meal.

During the Collaboration Committee meeting between Dundas and Rowntree this week, Dundas indicated that their Out of the Cold dinner would not be resuming. They offered some bulk canned goods that had been purchased for

their meal to the Hospitality Meal and Welcome Wed. These items were a most welcome addition to our supplies for the Rowntree meals.

With my move to Montreal this coming June, Rowntree's week the first week of the month will be in need of a new organizer. If anyone is willing to assume that role, please let me know.

Submitted by Debbie Betchen

Jesus' Dad's Name

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?" One child answered, "Mary."

The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?" A little kid said, "Verge."

Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?"

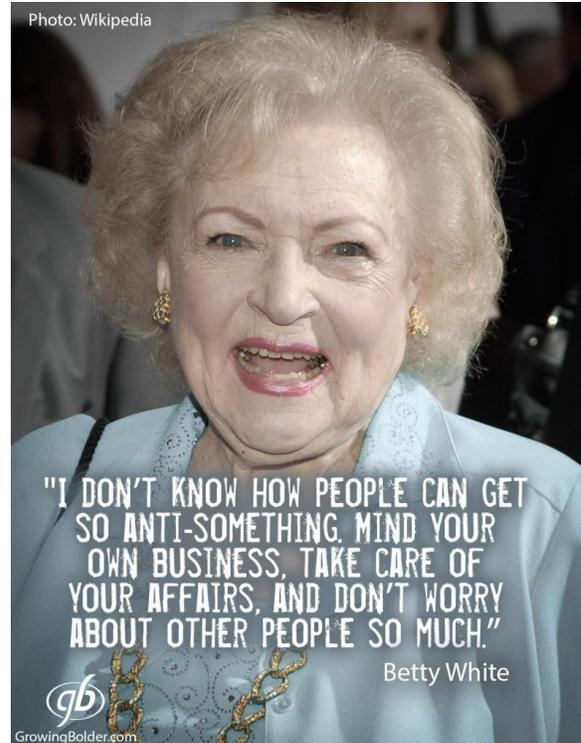
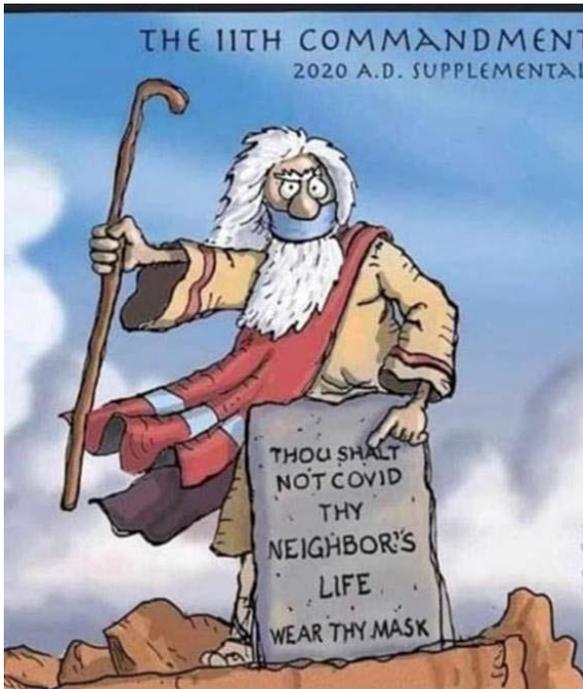
The kid said, "Well, you know, they are always talking about Verge n' Mary"

Kids in Church

3-year-old Reese:

"Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name.

Amen."



Antler River Watershed Region Fall Meeting 2021



Each of the three sessions I attended began with the lighting of the Flame Pot by Rev. Karlee Palmer Brown. A full summary of the meeting is at <https://arwrcucc.ca/highlights-of-the-fall-meeting-for-antler-river-watershed-regional-council/>

Opening session, Oct 29

Greetings for the first session were brought from Walpole Island by Elaine Jacobs. Elaine told us her spirit name is Red Cloud/Red Sky and she is from the Deer Clan.

Elaine told us that she prays each morning for reconciliation but it is not easy. She talked about the cuts to funds for Indigenous services. Elaine asked how non-Indigenous people would feel if, because of Covid, funding for their educational services were decreased by one third as they have been for Indigenous people.

Indigenous peoples have tried for years to get recognition of the abuses and deaths that occurred at residential schools.

She talked about the misconceptions of some terms with regard to Indigenous life. The term tribe often has a negative connotation to non-Indigenous peoples. However, Tribalism for Indigenous peoples is based on cooperation. All people within the tribe are considered to be equal. No one person is better than the others no matter what their title or position is. Prophecies are part of Tribalism. Their Prophecies told them that when the seventh fire was lit their culture and language would go to sleep for a long time. There is a time capsule to be opened in 2046. We need to work with the Indigenous peoples to fix and sustain creation instead of destroying it. If the eighth fire is lit, it will signal the end of all of us. We do not have a lot of time to fix the problems.

The Worship time for each session was pre-recorded music and a message.

A Community building time was done in small groups in break out rooms. Here we discussed something that we have heard on the news or read that affected us so much it caused us to stop and evaluate our ideas of Indigenous peoples.

Each session finished with the extinguishing of the Flame Pot.

Second session- Sat. morning Oct 30

The greetings for the second session were brought by Tarance Whiteye from Moraviantown. Tarance is a member of the United Church and actively involved in fund raising for 23 years to build their church. A group of his people cleared the land themselves. Tarance designed the church, confident that his help came from God. At the front of the church there is a combination of Christian and Indigenous symbols. With the church built, Tarance is back at fundraising to provide for the future of their congregation.

Tarance feels they have not been given a fair chance for their future of First Nations with the United Church. Moraviantown and other reserves have reached out to and begun working with non-native groups on not only church issues but other issues facing First Nations. Tarance said First Nations cannot isolate themselves. They need to connect with the outside world but still retain their way of life and their values.

The Community building time for this session was to name an Indigenous land space that has meaning to us and deepens our connection with God.

We were introduced to the proposed Mission and Vision statements for the United Church.

A corporation has been created within the United Church of Canada, the United Property Resource Corporation. The largest asset for many of our churches is our property. What can we do with it? The UPRC can help congregations to unlock their properties for the purpose of local ministry. The properties can be used to help fill the gap in the housing market with affordable, inclusive and sustainable communities being constructed. The goal of the UPRC is to create 5000 affordable housing units by 2037. The organization will help with research and planning, project development and long term stabilization. UPRC will even manage the property for a congregation. The vision of UPRC is to work together to build open, resilient communities that honour the land and create a legacy for future generations. It is a financially independent organization. Their website is <https://uprc.ca/>

Third session- Sat. afternoon

Greetings for the third session were brought by Chief Denise Stonefish from Delaware Nation at Moraviantown. Chief Stonefish spoke of her people's deep connection to the land where the village of Fairfield once was and their hopes to create an interpretation centre. Fairfield was known to residents of the area but lost to the record of Ontario's past until mid-20th century.



An archaeologist from the University of Western Ontario visited the area and started to find artifacts from the earlier village.

In 1946, Mr. McNichol sold the land where the former village had been to The United Church of Canada for \$2 to preserve this history. In 1959, the current museum was built. A local committee, known as the Fairfield Committee raised

\$8,800 and the Board of Home Missions of The United Church of Canada contributed a further \$18,000.

From 1959-67, the former Kent Presbytery managed the site. At that point, they asked London Conference to oversee it.

The records do not explain why the decision was made in 1981 to purchase the vacant property across the road from the Museum. With a loan from London Conference, this parcel was purchased at market value. Perhaps it was in hope of further development of the Museum but this did not happen.

The Museum was operated by retired clergy until the services of Curator, Chris Aldred, were secured close to twenty years ago. We thank Chris for his dedicated service.

During his term as Chief, Greg Peters, approached the United Church to raise the possibility of transferring the Fairfield property to the Delaware people. This was their story and not just the church's and they would like to develop the site to tell it. There was a mixed reaction to this suggestion. The Honorable Rev. David MacDonald, then working with the General Council on matters of Indigenous justice and reconciliation, facilitated events with leaders from Moraviantown, the Fairfield Committee and London Conference. All participants agreed that the Museum needed to be more than it currently was. The church did not have the capacity to make that happen. The Delaware had the desire to do so.

London Conference authorized the vacant land acquired in 1981 to be transferred to the Delaware Nation. Among the opening statements of the transfer agreement is this line:

And whereas the Delaware Nation, Moravia of the Thames, and The United Church of Canada share a common respect for the participation of the Delaware Nation in the historic community of Fairfield and the lengthy heritage of the subject lands as a site of historical significance to the Delaware Nation, Moravia of the Thames.

The importance of Fairfield to the Delaware Nation was evident at the official transfer ceremony in May of 2019 and at the feast and celebration at Moraviantown afterwards. Elders shared memories of the site. (Read more about

this on Broadview article from 2019 at <https://broadview.org/lenape-land-transfer-united-church/>)

Early in 2019, the Transition Commission met with Chief and Council over a delicious meal at Moraviantown United Church (many thanks Nadine Whiteye!) to discuss the Museum itself.

The transfer of the river-front property and Museum was completed earlier this year. The pandemic has kept us from observing this significant moment with the same ceremony as the earlier transfer.

The three presentations by the Indigenous members were the most meaningful for me. It is surprising that after all the trauma caused to the First Nations by churches that many are still devoted members of the United Church of Canada.

I was not able to attend the Celebration of Ministry that was live streamed from Byron United Church.

Submitted by Debbie Betchen



Reconciliation – Whats happening and what can I do?

The revelation of hundreds of suspected graves of Indigenous children found across our country this year has been heart-wrenching for Canadians. We can't quite wrap our heads around the country we thought was a decent place that has a much darker history. What's happening and what's next?

Our Antler River Region, which is the next governance level in the United Church, and much of the United Church itself, has been actively working on reconciliation for some time. In 1986 the United Church apologized for its part in colonization, the apology was acknowledged in 1988. In 1998 the United Church apologized for its role in Residential Schools. Locally, in 2019 the United Church returned the small village of Fairfield to the Delaware nation. Since 2008 the UCC have been actively engaged in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. More info at <https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/reconciliation-and-indigenous-justice/apologies>

What can individuals do?

1) First of all read about this history, about the history we were never taught in school. Learn about Willie Blackwater, a young Indigenous boy who confronted his white sexual abuser, the case went to court and he won. Or about the regimented life at the Mount Elgin institute, 30 Km from London, an 'Industrial' school later run by the United Church. Both these stories are in the Rowntree web site (<https://rowntreechurch.ca/>) under the heading Truth, Reconciliation and Justice.

There are many good books that have been mentioned at Antler River meetings; "Going Back Home" by Marie Hess, or Paulette Regan's , "Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada" <https://www.ubcpres.ca/unsettling-the-settler-within> , or "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer, which is a book that White Oaks United is studying as a group. All these books are available on Amazon, the Sweetgrass one is also at the London Public Library.

2) Read about the treaties. Do you know whose land you live on? Was there a treaty? Two web sites to check out are; Native-Land.ca (<https://native-land.ca/>) which displays a series of maps with the associated treaty and territory and secondly the Federal Government web site for treaties at <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1529354437231#chp4> and especially the

section <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1370372152585/1581293792285#ucls9> which is about the London Township Treaty.

3) Read about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Report, the summary is located at:

https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf.

(It is large, as there were approx 6000 witnesses interviewed)

The TRC's 94 'Calls to Action' are located at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf. This is a good roadmap to how we as Canadians can reconcile.

4) Get involved. Get involved with Rowntree, with our politicians, with local Indigenous groups and events.

Submitted by Brad McMurray

UCW Report

Months with three Mondays was always special to many of the women of the RMUC. From January 2011 until February 2020 the UCW (United Church Women) met for a time of fellowship, including lunch, worship and often a guest speaker. Nell Haldane, our secretary, and also our rep at Presbytery, kept us informed of the wider UCW news.

Many thanks to the fundraising committee who used our collection to support various church and community needs.

Two Mondays in the month a group met for Loonie Coffee which was started some years ago by Carol Ingleby. It included church members and was also an outreach to others in the community.

More recently Emily Gillis has been responsible for our get-togethers. She always greeted us with her smile and beautifully set table and tea and coffee served in

lovely tea cups or mugs. The snacks were supplied by different members. An enjoyable time together and a chance to make new friends. A high light was Emily reading several very humorous stories, followed by much laughing.



A few years ago Barb Luft used to lead us in a gentle workout in the Fellowship Hall- this picture just surfaced on my table. At years end a decision was made to whom our loonies would be donated. A gala luncheon was planned before summer at a nearby restaurant. This fall both Emily and Bill are residing

at Henley Place.

Submitted by Mary Dame

A little boy was overheard praying: "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!" Submitted by Dave Watson

North East Basic Needs Fall 2021

As of the Sept. 28 North East Basic Needs meeting, most of the churches involved in this group were back to in person Sunday Church services. Some have opened to rental groups again but not all. The same conditions applied for rentals as at Rowntree where proof of vaccination is required for rental groups with the renter responsible for enforcing the requirement. For those who have meal programs, the meals have continued as take-out only.

St. Michael's Catholic Church resumed its delivery from the Food Coalition to three London High Schools to assist in their food programs. The number of people attending their community meal is about the same as Rowntree's. They have a mixed population attending- families, seniors, young single men. St. Michael's is going ahead with their Christmas angel tree this year. They are handing out gift cards instead of gifts.

St. Jude's Anglican Church is continuing with their food programs. They have noticed an increase in families with a Muslim background and those coming from Central and South America.

Siloam UC's Urban Garden cared for by two students this summer produced 3,000 lbs. of fresh produce. The food was distributed to Crouch Resource Centre, Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre and the ELUCO Food Cupboard. Siloam has a Gift Card Collection Sunday. The money raised from this event goes to the Salvation Army, the city shelters and Children's Aid Services.

Valleyview Mennonite are still looking after one week for Welcome Wed. They were helping a newcomer family to settle who had arrived two weeks prior to the meeting.

I was not able to attend the meeting but sent in a summary of community meal programs with Welcome Wed. having resumed the beginning of Sept. and the Hospital Meal having continued all summer.

As of Oct. 20th, the Food Depot at the Salvation Army on Vesta Rd. is closed. LUSO (London Urban Services Organization, web site <http://www.lusocentre.org/>) is now a neighbourhood food bank site. The shift to neighbourhood sites is happening citywide. The sites are South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre, Crouch Resource Centre, Northwest London Resource Centre, LUSO and several YMCA branches. The LUSO site will be by appointment only. The updated

information has been posted at the Brampton St. door at Rowntree. Clients will receive, bagged milk, fresh produce, eggs and baby items as needed. Food restrictions such as gluten free and diabetic can be accommodated.

I attended LUSO's Annual General Meeting on Oct. 6. I knew about the organization but suspected I did not know the full scope of the services LUSO provides. I was right. I didn't.

The difficulties of the past year were the same as for other organizations. The opening address by Kasha McEwen-Doan, the LUSO Board Chairperson commented that "if nothing else, 2020 has taught us more about hope, perseverance, and the importance of human connection in our lives. It has really driven home the need for EVERYONE in the community to feel supported and connected; supported financially, supported in food/shelter security, supported in family and friendships, and supported in mental health. This pandemic has shed even more light on the vast disparities between different populations and neighbourhoods and I am very proud to say that LUSO is working daily to reduce that gap and working tirelessly to ensure that every person feels supported to meet their goals. Most people don't go into social service for glamour and fame but to make an impact in people's lives; this connection to each other and to our community at large is what LUSO provided to some of the most vulnerable citizens in London and that is nothing short of heroic."

I think these words can be applied to most groups who have continued to serve those most in need throughout this pandemic. Rowntree Memorial should be proud that they are counted among those who continued to serve.

LUSO supports an amazing number of programs:

- food,
- literacy
- youth
- co-creating neighbourhood stability where through special funding due to Covid-19, they were able to focus on engaging two isolated populations: Seniors & International Student Families
- multicultural outreach program,

- cultural sensitivity for the housing program which provides support, resources, and customized training to landlords, supervisors, maintenance, administrative support, and property managers about various cultural groups to ensure positive relationships between building staff and tenants with the goal is to create more inclusive and welcoming environments for all residents and settlement programming for newcomers.

Debbie Betchen

Merry Christmas to all from the Communications Committee; Lynn Patterson and Brad McMurray

The Acorn  is published quarterly by the Communications Committee of Rowntree Memorial United Church and edited by Brad McMurray. Articles for the next edition are due Feb 21,2022. Comments or articles can be emailed to wbmcmurray55@hotmail.com or left in the Communications mail slot at Rowntree. Stories are much more effective with pictures as *'a picture is worth a thousand words'*, so please try to include a picture.

You can also visit our web site at www.rowntreechurch.ca to find our weekly church service, more info on who we are, what we do, what we believe in and how you can support us. And look for us on Facebook.

Rowntree Memorial United Church is located at 156 Elliott St, London, our phone number is 519-432-8075.