

First United Church

*Seeking to be a welcoming community of Christian faith, proclaiming
and celebrating the love of God in Jesus Christ through the Inspiration
of the Holy Spirit*



March 22, 2020 @ 10:30am

Order of Service

Actually this is more like a "fireside chat"

Welcome (Life & Work of the Church)

Call to Worship

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,

We are anxious, sometimes even afraid, O God.

This pandemic and all the need for isolation is all new and beyond our comprehension. We have no map to show how we come to the place of safety and resolution. We do not know what is on the other side. We are unsure when to let go and feel secure that is once again safe to mingle together and clasp hands, hold each other tight in a warm hug.

We pray for all who await a diagnosis, or a test, or recovery for themselves or a loved one. We pray for all who feel anxious and alone while living in the condition called social distancing. We pray for all who yearn for company, laughter of friends, and reassurance.

Living God, giver of life to all, restore the hope of life to those affected by this pandemic ... which is all of us.

Help us to still ourselves, Holy One.

Our hearts, need rest from the constant din of news updates and fearmongering.

May we find in the centre of our hearts, those places where stillness pours over us, like a sparkling summer brook, that we might be refreshed and renewed.

As Light into Light, we pray, Amen

adapted from *New Prayers from the Iona Community*

Lighting the Christ Candle

If you would like please light a Christ candle at home (just remember to blow it out.)

Opening Prayer

God beyond boundaries of belief and nation,
in this unprecedented time of pandemic, we pray
for those who grieve
and those who are ill;
for those who work to bring relief to others,
and those who have influence through their words or actions.

And we pray
for peace and health to return,
that this newly morphed virus can be contained;
that we can patiently practice “social distancing” and
sheltering in place until the surety of wellbeing is established
and vaccines and cures are developed.

This is not an easy time.
Everything is different; routines and rhythms are disrupted.

We pray for vision,
that your way into the future may be seen.

We pray for wisdom,
that this path ahead may be taken, willingly and with love.

We pray for humility,
that pride and past wrongs may be left behind;
and that we can rightly admit, as Job was forced to do,
that we are not in control;

but you are.

We pray all this
believing that these are your will
for this, your world.
Amen.

Passing of the Peace:

While we are sheltering in place perhaps each of us could extend the virtual hand of friendship by calling up a friend or two or someone you haven't touched base with recently. If you have friends at some distance, why not send a friendly email or a handwritten note. Always a joy to get something in the mail...but use a sponge to close the envelopes or stick on stamps. Be safe, but stay connected.

Musical Offering: Blessing Jody McDonald-Groulx

Scripture Readings

Psalm 4

Answer me when I call, O God of my right!

You gave me room when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?

How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?

Selah

But know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself;

the LORD hears when I call to him.

When you are disturbed, do not sin;

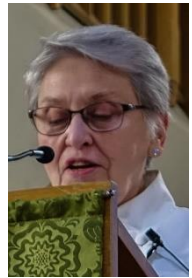
ponder it on your beds, and be silent.

Selah

Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.
There are many who say, "O that we might see some good!
Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!"
You have put gladness in my heart
more than when their grain and wine abound.
I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.

Gospel: Matthew 22: 34-40

The Reflection: "Sitting with Not Knowing"
Susanna Suchak



**Commissioning/Benediction*

Please blow out the Christ candle if you lit one.

Closing – a different take from our usual...

Stay home and make a diff'rence,
We can make a diff'rence.
Stay home and make a diff'rence...
in the world

Stay home and make a diff'rence,
We can make a diff'rence.
Let's make a diff'rence in the world.

*Credit to Jeff Suchak for all the image for the front of the bulletin

LIFE & WORK OF THE CHURCH
March 22, 2020

Happy birthday to: Ryan Buchanan.

This week:

Monday -2nd Quarter Auction! Cancelled

Tuesday: *EarlyON Playgroup cancelled

*First Youth with Chris Ross & Justin Chute cancelled

Thursday No choir practice

Next Sunday

We will continue to shelter and worship “virtually”

Invitation to contribute stories: We are inviting members of our congregation and community to contribute to the story that is First United Church. Perhaps you or your family have a special connection with the church, have an interesting story of your involvement or have a longer history as a member. We’d ask that you submit your story to Richard Auckland at rauck27@gmail.com. You may also handwrite your story and submit it (we may retype these to provide an opportunity for people to read them as they will be posted on the wall).

The intent is that your story will become part of a large timeline that will be posted in the hall on the way into the sanctuary by the Fellowship Room. Below are a couple of sample submissions, but you may have your own thoughts. If you have pictures feel free to include those as well.

Sample Church History Submissions

Please include the date (approximate is fine), your name and brief story or history of your family's involvement at First United Church. If you happen to have a picture to include that would be great.

1946 – Some members of the Auckland Family have attended First United since the 1940s. My parents were wed at Talbotville United Church in 1948, moved to Pearl Street and attended the church. Lloyd (my dad) served on the Board, the Trustees and was witness to the horrific fire in 1946 which burned the church beyond repair. As leader of the Argonauts and Argonettes (the youth group), and as a local teacher, he taught many of St. Thomas' future leaders. My mother, Phyllis, was an original member of the United Church Women (UCW) at the church. All five of us children were baptised and raised in the church. My sister, Sandra (& Mike), 1971 and our son Jon (& Laura), 2018 were wed in the church. A fond memory is coming to church and sitting in the south transept. It was always warm there with the heater on and the sun would often shine through. The Sandersons, the Parsons and other families sat in the same transept for many years as I grew up.

Submitted by Richard Auckland

1970s – A fond memory for me was growing up with Lloyd, my father leading the Argonettes and Argonauts. As a youngster, I was permitted to go tobogganing at Union Golf Course with the older crowd. After a really long run, I continued on into the creek and got a real soaker!

Submitted by Richard Auckland

The Anniversary Fundraiser is postponed. Please stay tuned for further updates.

PWCC

Registration is open for Pearce Williams Summer Camp Programs!

- June 26 - 29: Family & Alumni Camp Weekend (ages 0-99)
- July 5 - 10: Counsellor-In-Training Adventure (age 15 by July 12th)
- July 12 - 17: July All Ages Camp (ages 7-14)
Wilderness I (ages 10-14)
- July 19 - 24: Sports & Arts Camp (ages 7-12)
World Camp Week (ages 11-15)
- July 26 - 31: Girls All Ages Camp (ages 7 -14)
- Aug 3 - 7: Leadership Camp (ages 11-15)
Wilderness II Jr. (ages 9-12)
- Aug 4 - 7: Primary Camp (ages 5-9)
- Aug 9-14: August All Ages Camp (ages 7-14)
Wilderness III Girls Only (ages 10-14)
- Aug 16-21: Youth Camp (ages 11-15)
- For more info visit campisbetter.com

**Official Board Minutes are posted on our church website (www.1stunitedchurch.ca) under the "Official Board Hub" tab. Email Lori (office@1stunitedchurch.ca) for the password if required.*

Church Office Hours

Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 3:30pm
(Closed as we Shelter)

7 Curtis St., St. Thomas, ON N5P 1H3 Phone: (519) 631-7570
e-mail: office@1stunitedchurch.ca web: www.1stunitedchurch.ca

MINISTERS: ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Intentional Interim Minister: Rev. Daryl Webber

Music Minister: Jody McDonald-Groulx

Secretary/Treasurer: Lori Hoffman Custodian: Dave Luftenegger