



PASTORAL CHARGE
AVONMORE, FINCH
& GRAVEL HILL

Congregational Buzz

Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry

Volume 3, Summer 2021



God will meet you where you are in order to take you where He wants you to be. (Tony Evans)

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Service Times for 2021

- 10:30 a.m. – at least for June and part of July

Our Online Presence

Website:

finch-avonmore-presbyterian.ca/

Facebook: (Avonmore, Finch and Gravel Hill Presbyterian Churches)

facebook.com/PresChurchAFG

Youtube:

youtube.com/channel/UCGrk2bxJdUt-1RmqOWICmKg

(if links don't work, you may have to add: "https://www." at the beginning)

Journey through the Wilderness

A pastor was hosting a men's breakfast out in a farming community. He asked one of the older farmers to say grace before the meal.

The old farmer said, "Lord, you know I hate buttermilk." The pastor opened one eye to see where this was going. He continued, "And Lord, I can't stand the taste of lard." Now the pastor was worried. He figured this old guy had lost it. The farmer kept praying. He said, "And Lord, I don't really care for the taste of raw white flour."

By now the pastor was ready to interrupt the old man with a real prayer. But then the farmer prayer, "But Lord when you mix 'em all together and bake 'em up, I do love these fresh biscuits. So, Lord when things come up we don't like; when life gets hard, when we don't understand what You're doing, we just need to relax and wait until You're done mixin' and probably it will be somethin' even better than these biscuits. Amen."

(from Faith to Endure Tough Times • Hebrews 11:36–12:1 – November 26, 2017 • #1750 1 By Dr. David O. Dykes. Part 8 in "God's Faith Hall of Fame" - <https://gabc-archive.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/12/s112617.pdf>).

Faith is a wonderful luxury when you are facing good times. But faith is an absolute necessity when you feel like you are in the bottom of God's mixing bowl.

This past year has certainly thrown our faith into a mixing bowl – how has yours held up? What ingredients do you need to add to produce something tasty? Something that holds up when things go awry?

Contacts

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Our church buildings have been closed for almost six months – and in-person services have been sporadic for over a year, depending on where we were in the pandemic. Pre-recorded services and Zoom live virtual services have picked offered opportunities for worship but most of you haven’t done that for whatever reason.

But Church is more than a building – it’s people – it’s you and me and God. While we’re comfortable and used to worshipping in a church building, as the Church we are responsible for doing our part to keep our faith alive and growing. That’s something we’re not used to and it’s going to take a while to make that shift.

Church is wherever God’s people are gathered and doing whatever it is we do to praise God. **This summer, why not explore some of the ways you can worship in your own home, with your own family?** Whether it’s reading the Bible or other religious book, listening to (or singing) hymns, praying, talking with God while out in the garden, taking time out each day to meditate on God – explore different ways to anchor your faith. It’ll pay off when you need it to. Need help with ideas? Keep reading because I have some ideas you can actually try out

Take care and stay safe!

Rev. Cheryl

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is available. If you want or need to talk, turn to an Elder you know or call me (1-613-918-0506). You can text me, message me, email me – or even Zoom or Facebook me!



RE-OPENING BUILDINGS?

When will are buildings re-open? When will we be able to get back to worshipping in person?

Step 1 – Ontario enters Step 1 June 11 – we will hold in-person services **outdoors at Gravel Hill** starting June 13 at 10:30 a.m. (weather permitting)

Step 2 – The first Sunday **after Ontario enters Step 2** is when we will return to meeting in-person inside buildings.



Virtual Bible Studies

Our Virtual Bible Studies are coming to an end for the summer (i.e., last day for “Puzzles ‘n Faith” is Wednesday, June 16.

We’ll pick up again in the fall with:

- a quick 2-week overview of **the biblical timeline**,
- a short study **on angels**
- a look at **Revelation 12-22**

The studies will continue to be offered virtually for the time being and recorded videos uploaded to our Facebook pages and YouTube channel. **In the works – Christianity 101 (or “The Questioning Pastor”)** – a basic introduction to faith. **All welcome and you don’t have to be Presbyterian to attend!**



For Children and Youth

GRACEFIELD CAMP IN A BOX

The summer overnight programs at Gracefield have been cancelled for this summer, but they are introducing their “camp in a box” for children, youth and families.

Sample pages are found at the end. If you want more information, let me know or email campinabox@gracefieldcamp.ca.

FREE VIRTUAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

St. Andrew's (Ottawa) is planning on running a VIRTUAL VBS this summer, geared for children aged 4 to 12. If you are interested in learning more or to register, check out their website: <http://www.standrewsottawa.ca/vacationbibleschool..>



Summer Faith Formation

We each come to Jesus on our own, but we grow in our faith in community – families are, in a way, mini-communities. So why not use this summer to grow together in your faith?

TIPS FOR STARTING

New Year resolutions are great but often they are so big that we give up on them within a month. So the BIG TIP for summer faith formation? **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

Start something that is easy and fits in within the routine of your family life. Add in something that includes *anything away from the computer (and Zoom)* – e.g. something outdoors or creative that allows you to explore God, the Bible, your relationship with Jesus.

If you are interested, let your Elders know. We can customize a “Take Out Church” program for you!



Annual Meetings

No, you haven't missed them.

- **Gravel Hill** has held its Annual Meeting. If you want a copy of the report, please contact Bryce.
- **Avonmore** is holding its Annual Meeting Saturday, June 26 @ 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact one of the Elders if you need help with Zoom and would like to attend.
- **Finch** has postponed its Annual Meeting until the fall in the hopes that we can meet in person.



Finances

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have continued to make donations to our churches during the pandemic. People have been donating through our website, sending e-transfers from their bank accounts, and mailing in or dropping off cheques. **THANK YOU!**

AVONMORE (2020 figures)

Total Income/Donations	\$25,847.00
Total Expenses	\$27,391.82
Difference	(\$1,544.82)

FINCH (2020 figures)

Total Income/Donations	\$59,074.24
Total Expenses	\$60,120.97
Difference	(\$1,046.73)

GRAVEL HILL (2020 figures)

Total Income/Donations	\$6,270.9
Total Expenses	\$5,781.52
Difference	\$489.38

FINCH's SHORTFALL FOR 2021 – St. Luke's-Knox needs some major repairs on the building, estimated at \$24,000.00.



Upcoming Birthdays

Our apologies for all the birthdays we've missed – but getting your birthday info is one of priorities (not the top though). Help us out by letting us Rev. Cheryl / your Elder) know your date of birth (not year!)

SAMPLE SUMMER FAITH FORMATION (from Gracefield)

NEW CREATION

God created the whole earth - and is still creating today! For today, we'll explore just a small part of that good creation, and we'll think about how we too can be a part of God's new creation.

TODAY'S OBJECT

Every day, you will have something in your bag that has to do with the Bible passage that you will explore today. Take out your **magnifying glass**. Today we're going to be taking a magnified look at creation.

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- What do you think is the most beautiful thing in creation?
- What are things in creation that you think are not good?
- What does this scripture tell us about what God has made?
- Why do you think God made all of creation?

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Dear God, thank you for all the amazing things you have created. I know that you are still creating today! Help me to be a part of your new creation. Amen.



DEEP ROOTS | NEW LEAVES

SCRIPTURE FOR TODAY

From Psalm 104 (CEB)

God, you put gushing springs into dry riverbeds. They flow between the mountains, providing water for every wild animal—the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Overhead, the birds in the sky make their home, chirping loudly in the trees. From your lofty house, you water the mountains. The earth is filled full by the fruit of what you've done. You make grass grow for cattle; you make plants for human farming in order to get food from the ground,

Lord, you have done so many things! You made them all so wisely! The earth is full of your creations! And then there's the sea, wide and deep, with its countless creatures—living things both small and large. There go the ships on it, and Leviathan, which you made, plays in it! All your creations wait for you to give them their food on time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled completely full! But when you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to dust. When you let loose your breath, they are created, and you make the surface of the ground brand-new again.

A Psalm is a kind of song written about God. Do you know any songs about God?

The "Leviathan" was a big sea monster. Though scary to us, to God it was like a playful pet.

Read more: Open any Bible to the very first story and read about God creating the world.

MONDAY

MONDAY CAMP ACTIVITIES

CHECK OFF THE ACTIVITIES AS YOU FINISH THEM!

DO THESE ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE!



Ants-Eye View - Get on the ground and use your **magnifying glass** to see a whole new creation. What do you see close up that you can't see from far away?



Soil Inspection - Find 3 different kinds of dirt near you and dig up some of each. Take your dirt samples to a table or flat area and place on some white paper. Use your **magnifying glass** and look carefully at each sample. What do you notice about the different kinds of dirt? Are they all the same color? What do they have in them? How do they change when you add water to them? Even things as simple as two samples of dirt can be very different! God created different kinds of soil to accomplish different things.



Creation Alphabet - Find your **Creation Alphabet Chart**. Next to each letter write something that God created that starts with that letter! See if you can come up with something for every letter.



Psalm 200 - If you were going to make up a song praising God for God's good creation, what would you write? Would it be a fast song or a slow song? What words would you say? Make up your own psalm of praise and record yourself singing it!



My Unique Home - What animals can you think of that are specific to one part of the creation but not to another? For example, you don't find polar bears in Arkansas, but you would find lots of deer. What animals live in the desert, the forest, the rainforest, the mountains, the Arctic? On the **My Unique Home Page**, draw a picture of one animal and their unique home for each area: desert, mountain forest, rainforest, Arctic.



One Square Yard - See the One Square Yard Page for your directions for today!



Week-long Project - Check the Week-long Project Page for today's instructions!



Optional Family Challenge - Invite your family to do the activities on the Family Challenge Page for today!

MONDAY

DEEP ROOTS | NEW LEAVES

FAMILY CHALLENGE

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Play "In God's Hands" -- Have your camper select a number of items from nature that can be held in one hand and place them all in Monday's bag. Ask for a volunteer from your family members to select one object from the bag and hold it in their clenched hand. Invite the other family members to ask questions about the object to guess what it is.

For an extra challenge, have the other family members ask if the object begins with a certain letter, such as, "Does it begin with an 's'?" The person holding the object could respond, "No it is not a seed." If the object holder cannot come up with a response beginning with the letter, then they must reveal the first letter of the object.

Creation Charades - Play a game of creation charades. Let each family member take a turn and act out one of God's creations as the others try to guess the creature or thing.

FAMILY PRAYER

O God, creator of our land, our earth, the trees, the animals and humans, all is for your honor. The drums beat it out, and people sing about it, and they dance with noisy joy that you are the Lord.

- Ashanti prayer of West Africa

TABLE TALK

- How do we praise God for all of God's good works?
- What are some parts of creation you are most thankful that God created?
- What do you think is our purpose as a family God created? Why do you think God put us together?
- How could we, as a family, live together in ways that show that we are thankful for God's gifts of creation, or how can we live as if we are not taking creation for granted?
- What are some things we are already doing that show we care for our environment? What else could we be doing?

Consider making a plan as a family to change or add to your family practices a way to honor the earth. Even praying weekly for our planet is a great start! Take some paper and write down your 'new' plan to hang on the refrigerator. Give one person or two the role of reminding the family to do this new thing!

MONDAY