



The Reverend
Marianne Emig Carr

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the great joys of summer in our part of Ontario is the way creation opens up to us. The mighty St.

Lawrence River sparkles in the sun and becomes a magnet for swimming, boating and enjoying the 1000 Islands, the many lakes nearby become gathering places for family and friends, gardens burst with colour and life, and cottages offer a place to rest and reconnect. The beautiful words of Psalm 8 come to mind so easily in these moments:

"O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:1, 3-4)

The psalmist's words reflect that same awe we feel when we sit by the water at dusk, hear the wind through the trees and the call of birds or cicadas, or watch children playing with cousins on the beach. There's a holy stillness in these experiences - a reminder that God's glory surrounds us. And yet Psalm 8 does not just point us to the wonder of creation - it reminds us of our role in it.

*"You have made them a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honour."*

We are called to be caretakers of the world God so lovingly made, and that includes not only the rivers and gardens, but also the people we spend time with this summer.

May these summer months be filled with moments of gratitude—whether you are at the cottage, gardening in the backyard, enjoying a family picnic by the lake, or simply taking a deep breath after a long day. In all of it, may you sense God's presence and hear again the words:

"O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

Wishing you rest, joy, and renewal these peaceful days of summer.

In Christ, Reverend Marianne



SERVICES of WORSHIP in the Summer Months

Sundays, July 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

Minister: The Reverend John Wilderspin
First Baptist Church
at First Baptist Church - 10 am.

Sundays, August 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

Minister: The Reverend Marianne Emig Carr
First Presbyterian Church
at First Presbyterian Church - 11 am.

Rally Sunday, September 7th

at St. Lawrence Park - 11 am.

Minister: The Reverend Marianne Emig Carr

During the month of July, the congregations of First Baptist Church and First Presbyterian Church will come together to worship at First Baptist Church at 10 am. For this month, First Baptist will produce the order of service each Sunday morning, as well as provide music and musical guests, readers and greeters. This gives the many volunteers from First Church, who provide this support each Sunday morning during the year, an opportunity to have a break and worship with their families. In August, First Church will provide the volunteers and produce the bulletin, outreach deliveries, and the prayer calendar. During July, you are encouraged to pray for the health and safety of friends and family and for the care and well-being

of all those in need in our community and around the world. A note about givings: During July, envelopes from First Church folks should be placed on the offering plates each Sunday morning. The envelopes will be collected at the end of each service and brought back to First Church for banking. The loose collection at services in July will remain with First Baptist Church. The loose collection in August will remain with First Presbyterian Church. Etransfers will be available as usual, and envelopes can be left at the church office during the week.

Church School will not be offered in July or August or the first Sunday in September. Church School will resume on Sunday, September 14th.

Reverend Marianne is on holiday for the month of July. For pastoral care or assistance, please call [613-345-5014](tel:613-345-5014) or [613-340-3310](tel:613-340-3310) Email firstkirk@truespeed.ca Office Marianne will help you find the person to assist you with pastoral care needs.



BE SAFE!
BE HEALTHY!
BE HAPPY!
ENJOY FAMILY!
ENJOY FRIENDS!
HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

Pray for those in our church family who will celebrate a birthday during the months of **JULY:** Brenda Fisk (1st), Jim Barbour (9th), Tamara Chapman (14th), Finley Villeneuve (17th), Betty McNair (19th), Marianne Emig Carr (21st), Annis Moreau (24th), Andrew Duncan (31st), **AUGUST:** Roger Burke (1st), Persephone Antoniou (2nd), Frankie Chapman (3rd), Brian Barnes (3rd), Barry Carr (5th), Kathleen Howard (6th), Isabel MacDonald (10th), Elizabeth Robinson (10th), Kim Duncan (15th), Kaye Barnard (25th).

Pray for those in our church family who will celebrate an anniversary during the months of **JULY:** Ian & Mary Ellen Stephenson (1st), **AUGUST:** Michel & Debbie LaBonte (14th), Barry & Marianne Emig Carr (27th).

Welcoming our new Minister-in-Association!



On June 22nd, First Presbyterian Church welcomed the **Reverend Ian Johnston** as Minister-in-Association during the service. The Minister-in-Association role enables ministers without a pastoral charge, such as retired ministers, to associate with a particular congregation (a “home” congregation). They are also encouraged to be a helpful resource for both the congregation and the incumbent minister. This is in addition to the minister already being a member of the Presbytery in which bounds he/she resides (in this case, the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry). The congregation, in turn, is encouraged to treat the associating minister like it would any other member of the congregation: the minister may be added to the membership roll and are afforded all the privileges and responsibilities of membership. Reverend Ian, the First Presbyterian Church Session, and Reverend Marianne have entered into a short **minister-in-association agreement**, which sets out what Reverend Ian might offer on a volunteer basis, such as pastoral visits,

participating in worship or leading a Bible or book study. But the agreement is very flexible, depending on the needs of the church and Reverend Ian’s commitments. The minister-in-association agreement has been approved by the Presbytery. Reverend Ian’s wife, June, is already on the roll of First Church as a member. Now Reverend Ian has joined her. Welcome Reverend Ian, as Minister-in-Association at First Church!



The annual meeting of the General Assembly, the highest court in the PCC, met the first week in June. One of the highlights of the meeting was the discussion, led by a Working Group created by the Assembly Council in 2023, around new

Report from General Assembly Narratives of Hope and Possibility

narratives for the PCC, as it celebrates its 150th anniversary.

The Working Group was called to explore and recommend pathways that position The Presbyterian Church in Canada in an attitude of openness and possibility regarding its future. The Working Group used, as its theological foundation, the resurrection stories in John 20–21,

where the church is invited to move from fear to faith, from maintenance to mission, and from decline to divine possibility.

The Working Group looked at three areas of focus: Leadership, Structure and Focus.

Leadership: Too often, churches expect leadership only from the ordained clergy, while overlooking the leadership gifts of lay people. The Working Group is looking at new ways to equip all people for Spirit-led ministry, empower lay leaders alongside clergy, welcome diversity of all kinds, and train leaders, lay and ordained, for new ministry models, including intentional approaches to Christian faith formation.

Structure: A Change Leadership team is being appointed. With a focus on how God's mission must shape our future, the Change Leadership team is being empowered to imagine new models of ministry, envision congregations as hubs of mission, transition the focus of many congregations from maintaining buildings to creating communities, and reorganizing church courts to

facilitate the gospel mission and ministry.

Resources: We know that often in the denomination, the resources that God has entrusted to us are not used efficiently or effectively. With this in mind, the Working Group is proposing the creation of a prudent and urgent national framework across the PCC for property use. The framework would allow for buildings and land to be stewarded with a mission-first lens, consult Indigenous voices for faithful land use, align financial decisions with gospel priorities, increase transparency and responsiveness in fund allocation. There is more information on the PCC website at

<https://presbyterian.ca/gao/assembly-council/narrative-of-hope-and-possibility/>

As the PCC celebrates its 150th anniversary, the denomination is stepping out in faith, with the Spirit's leading, to renew and reimagine its mission in Canada to share the Good News of God's love. Instead of looking back at the past, the PCC is excited about the new narratives of hope and possibility for the future.

Bird Joke...

Two robins were sitting in a tree. "I'm really hungry," said the first one. "Me, too," said the second. "Let's fly down and find some lunch." They flew to the ground and found a nice plot of plowed ground full of worms.

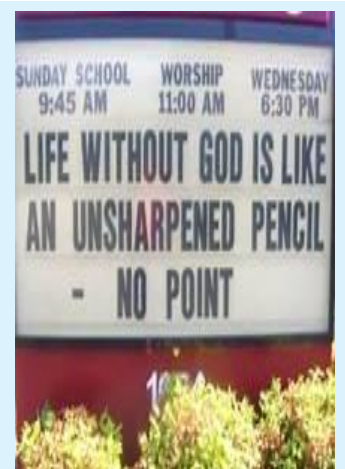
They ate and ate and ate until they could eat no more.

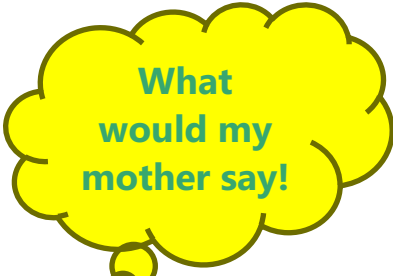
"I'm so full I don't think I can fly back up to the tree," said the first one.

"Me neither. Let's just lay here and bask in the warm sun," said the second.

They plopped down, basking in the sun. No sooner had they fallen asleep, when a big tomcat snuck up and gobbled them up.

As the cat sat washing his face after his meal, he thought, "I just love 'Baskin' Robins!"





What
would my
mother say!

My brother's wedding started it all! Our entire family made the long car trip to the Michigan city where his bride lived & where Dirk had just graduated from college. There was an American wedding - a real bridal party, a lovely service with special music, followed by an informal reception with a three-tiered cake topped with bride and groom figurines. Barely a teenager, I raved about it all summer after we came home. Mother, on the other hand, could not get over the fact that people could walk into a bridal shop choose dresses for the wedding party, the bride's lovely gown and accessories, and then just rent them for the occasion! Everything was returned after! What a strange country, America!

So smitten was I by it all that I had been promised a return visit later in the summer, if travel arrangements could be made. An older woman going to that same city offered to be my escort, so off we went by train. Dirk and Idamae would bring me home when they came for a visit before Dirk resumed his studies.

So much for my sheltered, boring life! Even though everyone worked during the week, Idamae's family were very kind and took me places. I visited my first eye-boggling museum, then a giant library with more books than I could read in a lifetime, and a zoo with exotic animals I had never seen before. We shopped and Cathy treated me to a dress. I was allowed to choose it all by myself! What would mother think?!

But my last week was epic! Apparently, the whole extended family pitched in to rent a cottage for the entire summer. Each individual family occupied it for a week, but weekends were open to everyone. I had never seen a cottage before and was a bit disappointed that it just looked like another small house. However, it was situated on a beautiful lake with turquoise water that shimmered in the sun. There was grass, a bit of pebbly sand leading to the water and a dock extending into the water with a canoe tethered to it. Inside the cottage there was comfy, well-used furniture, shelves loaded with books, games and puzzles to entertain us all on rainy days. There were not enough beds, but one closet was full of rolled up lumps of fabric they called sleeping bags. They were unrolled at bedtime and arranged on the screened porch - even outdoors on a warm night - then crawled into for sleeping!

Then there was the food I had never seen before. No one arrived empty-handed. Cooking was done outside on something called a hibachi with coal that came out of a bag. When the meat was done, they topped it with things mostly unfamiliar to me, then squished it between two pieces of bread they called buns. So, I was introduced to hamburgers and hot dogs accompanied by other edibles called potato salad, baked beans, delicious desserts - and we drank POP! Mother would never believe it!



I met two young girls who were both expecting babies. Idamae explained that June and her husband often took in girls who had been sent away by their parents because they were pregnant and unmarried. That seemed mean to me. They were both very nice and spent a lot of time with me. They coaxed me into the water although I always stayed within reach of the dock. Alice got me into the canoe and showed me how to paddle. Several mornings she and I made our way all

around the lake. The lake was not very large but had such clear water that we could see the bottom. We stayed close to the shore because there were no life jackets for either of us - me a non-swimmer and Alice not far from her due date.

It was all such fun! It was the best learning experience of my young life! I was so anxious to tell my parents everything. On second thought, maybe not quite everything. They might not let me go again.....

Love, Margriet

A Trip of a Lifetime ***Gwen Paul's Dream Come True***



On the 14th of September 2024, an Air Canada jet landed at Heathrow Airport, and Gwen Paul turned 80 years old in London, England. This was a trip many years in the making, and we could not think of a better time to fulfil Gwen's lifelong dream than on this milestone birthday. Together with her daughter - Dana Wren, son-in-law - Matt Wren, myself - her granddaughter Jena Wren, and my fiancé - Max Zimmermann, we started our big adventure in Vauxhall, a neighbourhood along the River Thames. We had the classic London experience of taking a black cab from the airport to our flat and followed by a pub lunch. Later, it was magical to see the London Eye, Battersea Power Station, and many monuments we had only ever seen in print or on television, lighting up the night sky along the river.

The next day was nothing short of magical. We took the tube to Green Park Station, and through the trees caught our first glimpse of Buckingham Palace. It was spectacular. We were all surprised to see how low the balcony was, as on TV it looks so much higher above the crowd. With the Royal Family in Scotland for the season, we were able to tour the State Rooms of the Palace. As we walked through the floors, we were taken aback by the magnitude and history of each room, and the beautiful art and furniture.

Following our Palace tour, we enjoyed a cup of tea on the patio. What a way to celebrate grandma's 80th birthday - tea at Buckingham Palace! We then had a tour of the Royal Gardens, seeing trees that were planted by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the gazebo where Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret participated in Girl Guides, and a new type of Hosta, the Orange Marmalade Hosta named for England's favourite bear, Paddington. Every plant in the gardens had a special meaning and reason for being in the garden, it was certainly a treat to see.

The next day we visited another historical landmark, Saint Paul's Cathedral. This was a special visit for the Pauls and the Wrens to see, being that it was built by Sir Christopher Wren. The Cathedral was spectacular with its beautiful domed ceiling and big stained-glass

windows. We were also able to see the crypts underneath, where Sir Christopher Wren was laid to rest along with other recognizable names such as Florence Nightengale.



After our tour we explored Covent Gardens and then were off for High Tea at the Wolsely! We felt like proper Londoners with our finger sandwiches, scones, desserts, and, of course, tea!

The following day, we set off to Paddington Station for our next journey. We made sure to say hello to Paddington Bear while we were there! We took the train to Reading, where Max was born and lived for the first year of his life. It was so special to see the house he had lived in with his parents and explore their neighbourhood - this was his first time going back!



The next day we visited the Tower of London. It was so fascinating to see the ravens that guard the tower alongside the King's Guard. We were very excited to see the Crown Jewels, with sparkling crowns, orbs, and scepters that had been used for generations. Following this, we saw two more essential London landmarks, Big Ben and Westminster Abbey (pictured right). We were blown away by the magnitude of the Abbey, the history that had happened there, and the prominent figures who were laid to rest there. It was very special to see the Coronation Chair, which has been used for coronations since 1308!



Our second-last day was incredibly special. We took the train to Windsor for a tour of Windsor Castle. Windsor was absolutely beautiful, with cobblestone streets and beautiful old buildings with giant flower baskets in the windows. Inside the castle grounds, we toured Queen Mary's Dollhouse, an impressive dollhouse made to be a visible representation of Royal Life during the 1920s. We then toured the Royal kitchen, the oldest working kitchen in England, having been used for over 750 years. It was quite a sight, with incredibly tall ceilings, and hundreds of copper pots lining the room. We toured the castle, and most special of all, we were able to visit St. George's Chapel where Queen Elizabeth II is laid to rest. We were very touched to be able to pay our respects to the late monarch.



On the last day of our trip, Max and I explored Notting Hill, the British History Museum, and Hyde Park. Gwen, Matt, and Dana took in one more palace tour, visiting Kensington Palace. They were able to see the Sunken Garden and the beautiful memorial to Princess Diana. Kensington Palace was also where Queen Victoria was born, and they had many fascinating artifacts from her reign.



Our London trip was certainly the trip of a lifetime. We walked an impressive nearly 70 kilometers while we were there and about 120,000 steps while we took in all the incredible history and culture. My grandma Gwen has talked about visiting for as

long as I can remember, and we could not think of a better way to celebrate her 80th birthday than seeing her dream come true!

Love, Jena Wren

The pilot and copilot are coming into Pearson Airport in Toronto, and they are nervous! Sweat pouring off their brows, they bring the 737 down quickly. "Stop! Please stop," they cried. The plane stops and inch from the end of the runway. The pilot says, "That was the shortest runway I ever saw!" And the copilot says "Yeah but look how WIDE it is!" 🤔



During King Charles' recent trip to Canada in May, I watched a lot of the news coverage of his visit. One of the stops that he made was to lay a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. The reporter covering this stop mentioned that it was the 25th anniversary of bringing the unknown soldier's remains back to Canada. I remembered that we had visited his original gravesite on our trip to France in 2017.

Here follows a bit of the history behind the Unknown Soldier: On May 23rd, 2000, a Canadian Forces aircraft flew to France with a Canadian Forces contingent including a delegation of a 45-person guard, a bearer party, and a chaplain. The Commonwealth Graves Commission had selected an unidentified Canadian soldier from the Cabaret Rouge British Cemetery in the vicinity of Vimy Ridge, the site of a famous Canadian battle of the First World War. The Canadian delegation returned to Canada with the casket of the Unknown Soldier where it was placed in the Hall of Honour in the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings. For three days Canadians were able to pay their respects. He was finally laid to rest in the tomb of the Unknown Soldier on May 28th, 2000.

In May of 2017, Michel and I took a trip to France which we timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary year of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. As expected, we stopped at many of the war grave cemeteries to pay our respects to those who were buried there and had fought in the First and Second World Wars. We happened to stop at the Cabaret Rouge British Cemetery and started talking to some tourists from Vancouver. ("Cabaret Rouge" was a small, red-bricked, red-tiled café that stood close to this site in the early days of the First World War. The café was destroyed by shellfire in March 1915.) Their tour guide heard we were from Canada and said this cemetery would be of special interest to us as this is where the Unknown Soldier was originally buried. We were able to find his original resting place - plot 8, Row E, Grave 7.

One thing that struck us about the war grave cemeteries that we visited in France, was how well they were maintained. There was not a piece of litter, a weed, overgrowth or anything to make the grounds look unkempt. It did not seem to matter what country these soldiers were from, they were all looked after with the same amount of loving care.

Love, Debbie LaBonte

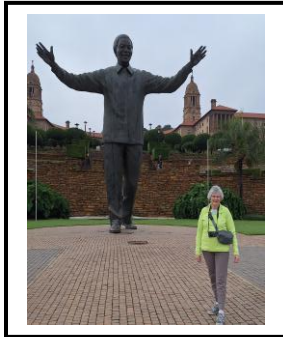


If you ever get locked out of your house, talk to your lock calmly.

Because communication is key.

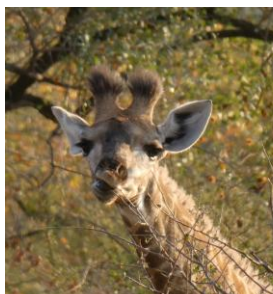


South Africa and Beyond - A Trip of a Lifetime



Over 18 months ago, a curling buddy sent me a link for a tour to South Africa to see the “Big Five”. It was not something that had been on my bucket list, but it was a chance to travel with someone I knew, so I took the plunge and signed up! Neither of us had travelled with this particular tour company, so another unknown! It was a long year and half waiting and wondering, but finally we set off on April 18th for a 20-day excursion with Approach tours. This was truly an “all-inclusive” tour. It included absolutely everything, from being picked up at my front door, to every meal (way too much food was consumed!), to all tips and gratuities, all entries and fees. We even had a “Group Guru” travel with us from Toronto for the entire trip! Sande coordinated each step of our trip, sending out daily itineraries, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries within our group, keeping our group of 28 on track. In each country, we also had a local guide travel with us, and they were so knowledgeable, we learned about everything from history, geography, politics, culture, local cuisine, to economics and interesting anecdotes. I have already forgotten 90% of all the amazing information I learned, I should have been recording everything! The local guides were also key in navigating our way through some rather scary border crossings, and their tips on safety were appreciated. This trip actually saw us travel to 5 different countries, including South Africa, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Zambia, spent our first five days around the Cape Town area of South Africa, where we visited the Botanical gardens, had a city tour, enjoyed a wonderful cultural evening which included 16 courses of local delicacies! We visited a colony of penguins, cruised to Duiker Island to see the local fur seal community (originating from the Antarctic), and visited wine country in Stellenbosch (wine sampling was of course encouraged!). We took a cable car ride climbing 302 meters above sea level for a sweeping panoramic view of Cape Town atop iconic Table Mountain. We also traveled to the Cape of Good Hope, the southwestern most point of the African continent, where we stood between two oceans.

Unfortunately, we were unable to travel to Robben Island due to rough seas. Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in prison on this island. However, Nelson Mandela was ever present during our time in South Africa, from our visit to the Apartheid museum in Johannesburg, to viewing his larger-than-life statue at the parliament buildings in Pretoria, to learning about his politics, seeing his home in Soweto, to viewing the statue at the prison from where he was finally released, and information about his long walk to





freedom. We had several visits to cultural villages, of the Zulu, the Matsamo in Eswatini, and the Mukuna village in Zambia. We were treated to traditional dances, customs, and were in awe of the fabulous singing. Those vocal harmonies would be the envy of any chancel choir!!!

Our safari experiences included 3 river safaris, and 8 land safaris, with stops in South Africa, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. Amazing, amazing, amazing!!! We saw the “Big Five”

and so many other animals in the wild. Our rangers were again very knowledgeable, and very adept at tracking the critters for us, we had so many up close and personal moments! An unexpected bonus on this trip was the birdwatching! We saw so many beautiful, colourful birds that of course were unique to the area. My Merlin bird app came in very handy, and I was able to add 30 new species of birds to my “Life List” of birds viewed!



We ended our adventure with a trip to the iconic Victoria Falls. It was the wet season, so there was lots of water, and we got absolutely soaked, but the experience was amazing. This certainly was a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, from sweeping panoramic views, stunning rainbows and sunsets, to rich and diversified cultural experiences, wildlife viewing, historical and geographical information, this was a winner! I will be forever grateful to my curling buddy for inviting me along on this escapade.

Love, Karen Mahon

Afraid of the Dark...

A little boy was afraid of the dark. One night his mother told him to go out to the back porch and bring her the broom. The little boy turned to his mother and said, “Mama, I don’t want to go out there. It is dark.”

The mother smiled reassuringly at her son. “You don’t have to be afraid of the dark. Jesus is out there. He will look after you and protect you.

The little boy looked at his mother real hard and asked, “Are you sure Jesus is out there?” “Yes, I am sure. He is everywhere and he is always ready to help you when you need him,” she said.

The little boy thought about that for a minute and then went to the back door and cracked it a little. Peering out into the darkness, he called, “Jesus? If you are out there, would you please hand me the broom?”

M.O.V.E. Update – Sunday Suppers, Saturday Lunches and Breakfast Bags!!



Our feeding ministries (Sunday Suppers, Saturday Lunches and Breakfast Bags) will be continuing through the summer, as we reach out to assist those in need (in body and spirit)!

Sunday Suppers

Sunday Suppers continue to nourish the community! Our partnership with First Baptist Church and St. Paul’s



Anglican Church continues with delicious community suppers being served on the 4th Sunday of each month in the First Presbyterian Church Hall from 2:30 - 4:30 pm. The three churches have been working together since January 2022 to provide food, warmth and fellowship to isolated and marginalized members of the Brockville community.

Meals are served in both eat-in and take-out format, with approximately 150 meals being served at each Supper. Leftovers are donated to the LLGAMH Drop-In Centre or the Cooperative Care Centre. Everyone is invited to attend – meals are FREE, but donations are always welcome. The summer Sunday Suppers are on July 27th and August 24th. If you would like to help with the Sunday Suppers, please contact Robert Walroth or Bonnie Burke.

Thank you to everyone who volunteers to help with food preparation, serving and cleanup, and to everyone who supports the Sunday Suppers with your offerings! During Sunday Suppers, we love how people come into the Hall, enjoy their meal and then stay to have coffee and community with friends and neighbours!

Saturday Lunches

In the beginning of 2025, the M.O.V.E. Committee pivoted from the Library Lunches program (which mainly fed library patrons, rather than those in need) to making loaves of sandwiches to deliver to the LLGAMH Drop-In Centre on Front Street (where Loaves & Fishes is located) to help feed the hungry and unhoused. On the second Saturday of each month, volunteers drop off three loaves of freshly made sandwiches for the Drop-In Centre's clients.

Breakfast Bags

Thanks to a generous mission and outreach grant from the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry, our Breakfast Bags program is now able to provide 30 bags 3 times/month (as opposed to 2 times/month). These Breakfast Bags are distributed on our behalf to the Brockville and Area Food Bank to help feed those who are unhoused and struggling to survive on our streets.



The need in the community only continues to grow, and we are thankful that we are able, through your support and prayers, to respond with Christ's love and compassion. If you are interested in volunteering to help with any of these ministries, please contact the Church Office.

"Gratitude is a vibration that resonates with mother earth."

The Big Give-Bigger than ever!! June 7, 2025

The Big Give is a Canada-wide (and now, international, with a church in Tasmania, Australia!) event, held the first Saturday in June, where churches bless their communities with extravagant giving. First Presbyterian Church was one of six churches to participate in Brockville in 2025.

The M.O.V.E. Committee, in partnership with C*Road Church, held a garage "giveaway" from 9:30 am. to noon. Many people in the congregation and the

community donated gently used clothing, books and puzzles, household and kitchen items, and sporting goods. The Committee, with lots of helpers, set up tables and clothing racks in the Church Hall and organized all the items for display. C*Road Church also donated over 120 snack packs of homemade cookies to hand out to our guests.

Many thanks to the members of the MOVE Committee and all those who volunteered to help make the Big Give a success. Mark your calendars. The next Big Give will be on June 6, 2026!



Little Shoppers

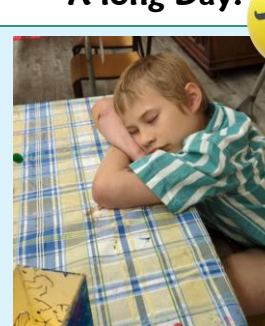
Set up and ready to go!



P. A. Day camp FUN! May 30th, 2025

Presbyterian Church hosted its final P.A. Day Camp of the 2024-25 school year, with 11 campers enjoying crafts, games, and outdoor play time. The Mission Project was in support of the Brockville and Area Food Bank for their children's Summer Snack Pack Program.

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers who so faithfully support our P.A. Day Camps, which have been hosted at First Presbyterian Church for more than eleven years!! Many thanks to the congregation for donating Snack Pack items as well. The first P.A. Day Camp of the 2025-26 School year is October 20th. Volunteers welcome!



A long Day!





The First Presbyterian Church Craft and Chat group wrapped up the first half of 2025 on June 24th with a wonderful potluck luncheon at the beautiful home of Brenda Fisk. Everyone enjoyed great food and fellowship, raised a toast in memory of Gloria Bates, a beloved member of the group who passed away earlier in June. The Craft and Chat Group is on break for July and August but will resume in September. The group meets on Tuesdays at 1 pm in the Church Parlour. Crafting skills not required, but chatting skills are a "must". Happy Summer, everyone!!



EASY CHICKEN DIVAN

- 2 bunches fresh broccoli
- 1 cup fresh cauliflower
- 2 cups sliced cooked chicken or 3 boneless chicken breasts, cooked.
- 1 cup long grain white rice
- 2 cans of condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon mild curry powder
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ cup soft breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

Cook broccoli in boiling salted water until tender; drain, cool and cut into small pieces.

Cook cauliflower in boiling salted water until tender; drain, cool and cut into small pieces. Cook rice according to package directions. Cut chicken into small pieces.

In a large bowl combine chicken, rice, broccoli, cauliflower, cheese, soup, mayonnaise and spices.

Place in casserole dish to fit.

Combine breadcrumbs and butter. Sprinkle over the casserole dish.

Place (uncovered) on middle rack in a 350-degree oven and heat for 30 minutes.

This is the basic recipe. You can double it, triple it, leave out the veggies...whatever suits your taste. ENJOY!



Capital Project Update**Third Party Review:**

The Third-Party Review requested by the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC) appears to be nearing completion. Bryson and Wood, the construction management company retained by FPC, has submitted quotes on all aspects of the construction. It is already clear that we will be encouraged to seek funding under two programs under Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). If we do, it is possible that we will get a great deal of funding for the project, however, CMHC will require additions to the budget which will make it much larger. Never-the-less, the funding provided by CMHC should more than compensate for the cost increases. Bottom line though is that we must come out of the project with the projected \$78,918 per year additional income for the church.

Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC):

Betty Kupeian, Chief Operating Officer, of PCBC passed through Brockville on June 26th and will drop by the church to see the plans and church first-hand. This will give us a good opportunity to brief her on the Third-Party Review.

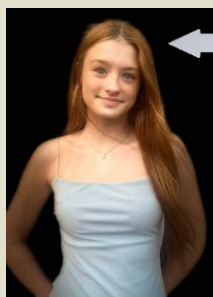
The Open House: Only two neighbours attended the Open House, but there were good conversations. Many thanks to Janet & Francis LeBrun who coordinated refreshments for the Open House.

When do we get “shovels in the ground”?

While we continue to be assured that we have most (90%) of the required studies and documents, the approval process for CMHC is a lengthy one, often taking up to eight months. As frustrating as this is, there should be more funds in the programs we are applying to in the fall federal budget ensuring that the project continues to be fiscally reasonable for the church.

Max Chapman graduated from St. Mary Catholic High School (Grade 8) in Brockville this June. He will be continuing his studies at St. Mary in the fall.

*Respectfully submitted, **Quentin Robinson***



Lilly Duncan graduated from North Grenville High School (Grade 8) this June. Lilly will be continuing her studies in the fall at the same school.

Brin Collins graduated from Meadowview Public School (Grade 6) in Addison this June. In September, she will be attending Thousand Islands Secondary School (TISS).



Gary Todd
Paul Beckstead
Gloria Bates
Ross MacDonald
Max Farrelly

**BAPTISM**

ANNITA JEAN MARIE BEAN
April 27th, 2025
First Presbyterian Church

A STORY of MISSION & OUTREACH at FIRST CHURCH

On December 5th, 2024, a former parishioner of First Presbyterian, **Hsiu Wen Houang Chao died at the age of 94. Hsiu Wen was predeceased by her husband Wan San.** Many people who are now part of First Presbyterian might not know about their church's efforts in helping resettle a family displaced by the Indochina Refugee Crisis of the late 1970's. At that time, Brockville saw the arrival of a number of families fleeing Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos due to ethnic persecution, economic distress, random arrests and charges of disloyalty to the new regimes that swept the region following the Vietnam War, and widespread violence. Indeed, the Chao family arrived under their Laotian names, in part due to travel documents. It was a while before the family felt safe and comfortable to legally adopting their Chinese names, becoming the Chao Family to all of us. Regardless of the names used, the congregation's initial commitment to sponsorship led to a wonderful opportunity to live in deep and lasting friendship with people who have enriched my life beyond measure and who many at First Church counted as dear friends and neighbours for years to come.



I reached out to my friend Ying Houg, the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Chao, for some memories he might share. He related how the family first arrived in Edmonton in early to mid-October 1979, for a period of quarantine at CFB Edmonton. They saw their first snow upon landing at the Edmonton Airport, which seems early but maybe a taste of things to come was in order, to lessen the shock of Canadian winter. Ying Houg recalls his first taste of Canadian food – baked beans, scrambled eggs, bacon, chocolate milk, apples and other unfamiliar fruit – in the

cafeteria at the base. In Edmonton, they were also suited up in Canadian winter clothing before they were flown to Toronto for the long car trip to Brockville.

As I processed Ying Houg's messages, I was struck by the fact that we were both kids when this all happened. Certainly, getting the house at 138 King Street East ready was an "all hands on-deck" enterprise. I remember my mother and Jack Carswell painting baseboards and wall-papering a bedroom, barely finishing when my Dad arrived, escorting the Chao Family to their new abode along with a Mr. Brown, a representative of Canadian Customs and Immigration, perhaps attached to the bridges at Johnstown and Ivy Lea most of the time, and, more interesting to me at the time, the father of my teacher at Prince of Wales. Only now do I understand from Ying Houg that Dad and Mr. Brown must have left early that day to pick the Chao family up at Pearson Airport in Toronto. There were so many people working on that house in the days leading up to the arrival of the Chao family but, in order not to overwhelm the family, many of the volunteers slipped quietly away when the phone call came, alerting us all to the imminent arrival of the family. Others finished what they were doing, offered a kind and polite welcome, and headed off. David Tripp, David Duncan, Mary Campbell, Harry and Betty Burke were there that night but there were many others. When the cars arrived, I came bounding down the stairs,

possibly, carrying a bucket as I had been tasked with cleaning the bathroom floor, and my soon-to-be friend Li Feng turned to her sister and asked if I lived upstairs.

Over the weeks that followed, my parents and other members of the congregation took members of the Chao family, primarily Ying Loung, the eldest son, and daughter Li Lan, who had the best English, to the bank and to grocery stores, to help them acclimatize and also just get around without a car of their own, with their parents in tow. Mr. Chao seemed overwhelmed by it all, though he was no stranger to change, journeying from China through Vietnam, where he and Mrs. Chao met, before settling in Laos and working hard to become successful merchants. However, to protect the seven of nine children still living at home in Laos, he and Mrs. Chao felt compelled to cross the river to Thailand under cover of night in small boats. Indeed, both Mr. and Mrs. Chao looked frail and exhausted when we first met the family and it would be such a wonderful thing over the next few months to witness their resilience and strength, love and humour emerge, leaving behind the time in a refugee camp and the fears of unknown futures that must have accompanied all their travels, enroute to Brockville. Of course, the stress of having their eldest daughter stuck in the refugee camp in Thailand must have been ever present. The hard truth of that situation was not revealed immediately but, as soon as the information was communicated by the family, my father and others at First Church spent most of the next year working with the family towards their happy reunion with Li Ming in Brockville.

That first Christmas in Canada, members of the congregation provided the Chao family with their first turkey dinner experience. The Chao siblings remember the event fondly, from the turkey to the pies and pudding. Ying Houg recalls being fascinated by my father carving the turkey with an electric knife, as was the way in the 70's, the first time he had seen one in use. Another standout memory of that first Christmas was the generous gift of a case of apples from Kyle and Shirley Hall and family.

The first winter, both the younger and older teen sets of church youth were involved in skating outings at Tunnel Bay and also The Back Pond as well as cross-country skiing outings on the grounds of the Country Club and at Buell's Creek which included the Chao "kids" for their first time on skates or skis. Skating at Tunnel Bay became a regular thing for some of us, not just when organized by the church, often ending



up back at 138 King Street East, where Mrs. Chao made sweet, hot pancakes and served them with equally sweet chrysanthemum tea or Ovaltine to chase the chill away.

By the second Christmas, dinner was cooked by Mrs. Chao, Li Lan, Li Mei, Li Feng and Li Ming, arriving at the manse early in the morning on a terribly cold Christmas morning, as had been pre-arranged, so that my parents could take them next door to the church kitchen and assist in the operation.

I suspect there were evening English as a Second Language classes through that first winter but I have photos of the family headed off to intensive daytime English as a Second Language Classes at St. Lawrence College in the summer, classes taken among other refugee families from Vietnam and Cambodia living in Brockville and Prescott. These classes

included a number of extra-curricular activities such as visiting Fort Edward, Ying Houg remembers. I remember how invested the ESL teachers seemed to be and also the honour bestowed upon them, our family, Vera Lawson, and other friends from First Church at a banquet at the Chao family home. A time that signified that the relationships forged and opportunities unfolding deeply mattered to everyone present.

At some point, very early on, eldest son Ying Lough obtained a job at Ross Laboratories, a great help to his family in those early months, even years. Once Li Ming got to Canada, she worked at McDonald Motor Coil Manufacturing on Parkedale Avenue near North Augusta Road.

In that first year or two there was a lot of fun had. There were nights spent gathered around notebooks of American popular songs from the 50's and 60's that Li Lan, Li Mei, and Li Feng had transcribed from the radio in the refugee camp in Thailand, with limited English but with a good dose of phonetics. Ying Peng had a cheap, red guitar that made the trip from the camp, I think. He accompanied these sing-alongs of outdated songs like "Mr. Sandman" and "Besame Mucho", and taught me a few chords in the process.

When spring and summer arrived there was a lawn in front of the Brockville armouries and a soccer ball, and we boys were off. Ying Peng and Ying Houg also spent a good deal of time fishing off the wall at Centeen Park, from Blockhouse Island, and Hardy Park, catching perch, rock fish, small mouth, and the odd pike/walleye.

Ying Houg recalls a fishing trip to Charleston Lake with David Tripp and David Duncan, his sisters and his brother and also First Church Youth Group camps at Charleston Lake with my parents, Dacie Mackenzie, and later, Susan (Bates) Clarke. The family also fondly recalls Thousands Islands boat cruises from Rockport and Gananoque and visits to Upper Canada Village with church groups and other refugee community friends as well as church picnics at the home of Bob and Bernice Stick, at Brown's Bay, and St. Lawrence Park. And Ying Houg made specific reference to Wilma Tripp's pies, particularly the rhubarb, gratefully received with some frequency!

Hallowe'en - I remember cycling out to choir member Mrs. Brownfield's residence on the river with the Chao boys to use the pool during the hours when she would be watching her favourite soaps, as was the arrangement. Ying Houg also reminded me of staying with our family at parishioners Ken and Nellie Landon's cottage, and playing a lot of Uno in the evenings, quite likely with Bill and Marion Clarke's son Scott.

Due to the longstanding relationship between First Presbyterian Church and Brockville's Chinese community, Chinese New Year celebrations were always held in the church basement. The events were marvelous in their display of traditional clothing, arts and food. Agnes Lor was the owner of the New York restaurant, president of the community association, a member of First Church, and a longtime friend of Vera Lawson, retired school teacher and principal, elder, and Brockville's Sesquicentennial Queen Mother. Vera had championed a Saturday Chinese Language School for local children of Chinese heritage and First Church had helped by providing space and sponsoring a teacher to come by train each week for years in the preceding decades, thus was born the long-lasting link between First Church and the Brockville Chinese Community Association. To achieve the integration of Indochinese refugees into the established Chinese community in Brockville, Mrs. Lor and

Mrs. Chao served as community pillars, modeling kindness, acceptance, and joy in new relationships and possibilities.

Mrs. Chao ended up working in the kitchen at the New York Restaurant for a few years. She was primarily in charge of the daily production of egg rolls. Her egg rolls were even sold alongside the shortbread at the Presbyterian Women's Christmas Bazaar for years.



Li Lan, who was a nursery schoolteacher in Laos, enrolled in nursing at St. Lawrence College. Bert Headrick was involved in championing her application but, very soon, Li Lan emerged at or near the top of her class. When Li Lan graduated from nursing at St. Lawrence College, she went to work at St. Joseph's Hospital in Toronto, where she has remained and has become one of the head nurses in the dialysis unit. Sisters Li Feng and Li Mei followed and went into business for themselves, running a hair salon on Dundas Street West. Li Feng has also studied theatre make-up and horticulture, and Li Mei does Chinese calligraphy and flower painting. Ying Peng

left Brockville for studies at Seneca College and worked for many years for a company producing aircraft parts in Etobicoke. Ying Loung moved to join his family, becoming an insurance broker and Mr. and Mrs. Chao followed, to be near their children. Li Ming remained in Brockville the longest, but, ultimately, followed her family to Toronto where she found similar industrial employment.

Through all the years that have followed, our families' connection has endured. We have shared holiday visits in Toronto, Ottawa, and Prince Edward Island, wedding celebrations, and the arrival of children, theatre outings, and so many dim sum meals. When Mr. Chao died, it was my honour to represent the family. When my mother died, Mrs. Chao and several of her children journeyed from Toronto for the funeral and the committal in White Lake. Then, due to her own struggles with chronic back pain, she was represented by her children when Dad passed. But over the years prior, even when her English was slipping away, every visit included questions about friends in the congregation in Brockville, wanting to know about the health and also the deaths of those who had shown her family such kindness and had been blessed by so much kindness in return. To that I can only add my gratitude that First Presbyterian Church, Brockville, following its calling to respond to need in love, responded to the state of the world in the late 1970's and initiated a ripple of love still radiating outwards, still spreading, still being felt in lives and communities beyond its walls.

Love, Terry Duncan

EPIC SUMMER FAILS – Funny years later!

My whole family used to go on these trips to Lake Tahoe. We had these HUGE parties. The morning after one of our 'epic' parties, we heard a scream from the front patio. It was our aunt, who had remembered she left a cooler out overnight and had gone to retrieve it. We ran outside to see what happened. It looked like a Smurf village mass murder scene; there was liquid blue ice everywhere ... and blue paw-prints. Thankfully, the coolers were empty of food, so the bears had not stayed for long. My aunt earned the nickname Ranger Smith that year.

First Presbyterian Church

10 Church Street, P.O. Box 885
Brockville, Ontario, K6V 5W1
Phone: 613-345-5014
E-mail: firstkirk@truespeed.ca
Office: Marianne Bimm Cell 613-340-3310
Custodian: Brian Barnes Cell 613-340-2724

Minister

The Reverend Marianne Emig Carr
Cell 613-449-5042 Office 613-345-3708
Email: rev.marianne@myhighspeed.ca

Director of Music

Kathleen Howard
Email: kmaryhoward@live.ca

Children's Ministry

Denise Kent
Email: denisekent1957@gmail.com

Clerk of Session: Quentin Robinson

Email: thesession@truespeed.ca

- * **Website:** pccweb.ca/firstchurch-Brockville
- * **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Firstkirk>
- * **Twitter:** [Twitter.com@firstkirk](https://twitter.com/firstkirk)
- * **Instagram:**
www.instagram.com/firstpresbrockville/
- * **YouTube Channel:**
<https://www.youtube.com/@firstpresbyterianchurchbro482/>
- * **Cogeco/Channel 10/700 Services**
every Sunday 7 am. and 5:30 pm.

First Presbyterian Church is a dynamic, inclusive and historic church in the heart of downtown Brockville. The congregation, which has been praising God for over 200 years, is committed to creating a vibrant family in Christ and sharing the Good News of God's love with all.

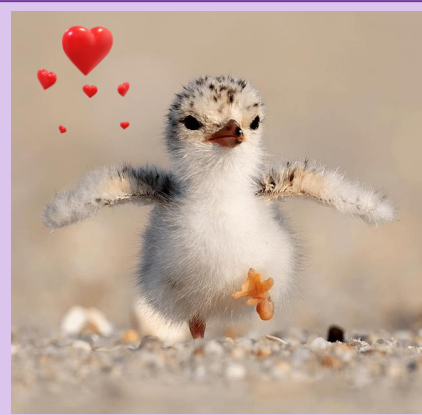
First Presbyterian Church is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabe and the Haudenosaunee peoples. We acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live, upon it.

First Presbyterian Church continues to record and provide services of worship on YouTube and on Cogeco Cable 10 or HD700 (Sunday mornings at 7 am. and 5:30 pm.). Links to the recordings of our services are available on our website and social media accounts.

Many thanks to Reverend Marianne (pgs. 10-13), Mark Leslie, Moira Gilmer, Margriet Westendorp, the Craft & Chat gals, Quentin Robinson, Karen Mahon, Debbie LaBonte and Terry Duncan for their contributions to this issue.

You can give.....

- by pre-authorized remittance (**P.A.R.**) (<https://presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/pre-authorized-remittance-par-program/>). Contact the Church Office.
- by **mail** to First Presbyterian Church, P. O. Box 885, 10 Church Street, Brockville, Ontario, K6V 5W1
- by delivering your offering envelope through the mail slot in the Church Street door. The envelopes are collected regularly.
- By **e-transfer** to firstkirk@truespeed.ca



A SUMMER CHALLENGE!
Put a brave foot forward and do something new and different!!

