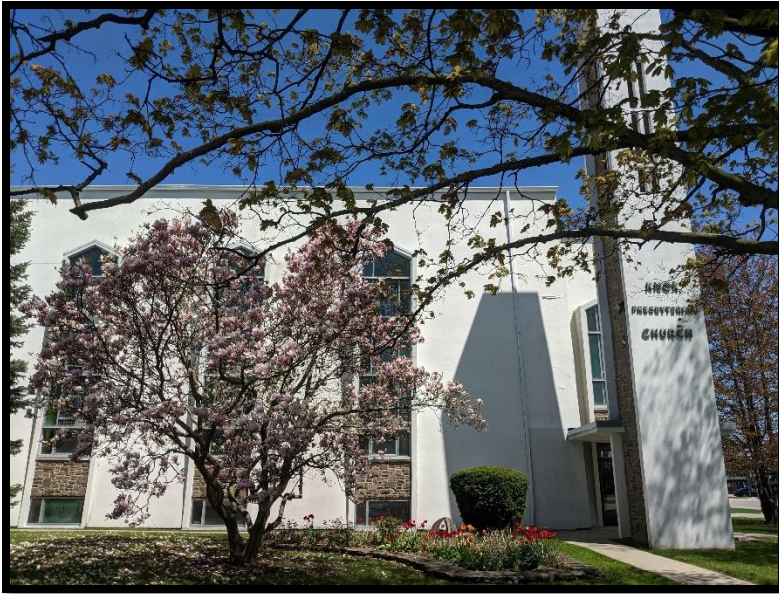


Spring & Summer 2021



A Note from Amanda...

It's hard to believe how fast the last year went. But in a lot of ways, it was very slow. I joke about leaving in the middle of a lockdown and now I have returned in the middle of a lockdown. To say that COVID fatigue is real is an understatement as I know you're all aware.

But my time away wasn't all bad and there were some blessings with the lockdowns and limited gathering events. As most of you know, my husband, Mike, is self-employed and as such was not able to take paternity leave. But with the lockdowns over the past year, he was home more and able to spend a greater amount of time with Amelia than would have been allotted during "normal" circumstances.



Knox Presbyterian Church
9 Victoria Street North
Goderich, ON N7A 2R4

519-524-7512 (phone)

e-mail: knoxgoderich@hurontel.on.ca

web: www.pccweb.ca/knox-goderich

livestreaming: [Knox Presbyterian Church Goderich-YouTube](#)

Inside this Issue

Minister	1
Interim Moderator	3
Finance	4
Live Streaming	5
Worship Committee	7
Mariners' Service	8
Arthur Circle WMS	10
Loaves and Fishes	11
Prayer Group	13
Welcome Project Syria	14
Mark Your Calendar	14
Knox Connections	15
Profound Thoughts	20

I would have to say this has been the greatest blessing. Amelia has grown so much and is now this somewhat walking, somewhat talking ball of energy wanting to explore everything. And while Mike and I try to return to a more normal routine, Amelia gets to enjoy her adventures in day care.

The other piece of news is we adopted a puppy. His name is Murphy. He is a 10-month-old Great Pyrenees. He is going to be a big boy as he is already as big a Charlie was. Amelia and Murphy are the best of friends already. He comes to greet her in the morning when she gets up. They sit and watch TV together. When we're out for a walk he walks with his head beside her and if she drops a toy she wanted to bring, he picks it up and carries it. Or at least until she takes it back. To say our house is a busy one is not an exaggeration. But it is one filled with love, some sleepless nights, some temper tantrums, and a lot of giggles.

To say I will miss my time being at home, well there is some truth in that. But Amelia is enjoying her time with her day care "family" and she is able to explore new things and make new friends. And I am able to get back to the work I find such fulfillment in. I was called to serve God. And I was called to be a mom. Now I get to navigate the waters of how to do both. And to that I say, challenge accepted.

I want to thank everyone who helped out around the church during my time away. It helped me enjoy my time away knowing everything was okay here. It was still challenging reading of the changes in our church family as we lost loved ones. I truly hope a new normal comes soon where we are able to gather as God's people in community. Worshipping, praising and even grieving together about all that was lost. May we continue to find strength and peace in God's love.

In peace,

Rev. Amanda

Interim Moderator

My dear friends in Christ,

It was a unique year to be Interim Moderator at Knox Goderich. It has been a distinct honour working with your congregation during Rev. Amanda's maternity leave. A year marked by significant change within our homes, our faith communities, and around the world. I write this final newsletter entry as the provincial shut down is extended yet again. Yet, just as the warmth of the spring sun coaxes our gardens and trees to blossom, there is hope with the increased distribution of vaccines.

During this past year we have not been able to meet in person in the traditional ways. I am thankful to have met with several of you on the phone, through email, and in Zoom gatherings. We are fortunate in our ability to connect despite physical restrictions. In our discussions you have demonstrated that you are a resilient people, resilient in your faith, in your love of God, and in your hope.

The leaders within your faith community have put much time and effort into adapting to the needs of this unusual time. In particular, I celebrate the dedicated efforts of your Session and the additional responsibilities they have shouldered. The important work of building maintenance continued with many challenges. A new sub-committee of Session was formed to ensure a sound knowledge as COVID protocols were developed. The protocols are in place now with the reduced use of the church building. Appropriate measures are ready for the re-opening of the church. A small, dedicated team, led by Colleen Maguire, created the ability to live-stream worship services each week from the Royal Room. Your church is blessed with talented, generous, dedicated individuals who work well together.

Blessings on your community as your faith journey resumes with Rev. Amanda leading you.

Peace,

Rev. Lisa

Finance

I would like to thank you for your continued support of the church throughout the pandemic by dropping off your envelopes or mailing them into the church.

When I became treasurer in December, there were a few members who use Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) who wanted to change their contribution. While making these changes I was very surprised at how simple the process was. At the beginning of the pandemic, I had been dropping off my contribution at the church every month or two. Seeing how simple it was I decided to sign up for PAR myself. To sign up all I had to do was fill out a one-page application and send a void cheque (or in the future all you have to do is call or email me!!). I was able to decide which of the church programs I wanted to support as well.

The PAR program is beneficial in a number of ways:

- ☺ For me: I now do not need to find an envelope, write a cheque, or search for cash.
- ☺ For the church: It makes less work for the church and congregation volunteers (less envelopes for the counters).
- ☺ When church members are away on vacation or sick or the church is closed, your contribution will always get to the church.

I am hoping that in the future more members will sign up for PAR, it truly makes a big difference for all involved.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. I hope to see you all again soon.

Stay safe,

Deb Bell

I won \$3 million on the lottery this weekend so I decided to donate a quarter of it to charity.
Now I have \$2,999,999.75.

Live Streaming at Knox Church

Knox Church went live for the first time on April 1, 2021 with the Maundy Thursday Communion service, led by Rev. Lisa Dolson with Mary Smith as the pianist.

Colleen Maguire worked for six weeks to make it all happen. First, she created a Knox Presbyterian Church Goderich YouTube channel. Using her own laptop, camera, microphone, and other equipment she began testing. Over the next six weeks she had small victories, along with some complete fails and did a lot of troubleshooting. The streaming software is well known to have a steep learning curve but she eventually mastered it. Just four days before the first live streaming event was to occur a test was less than satisfactory due to the church's internet upload speed being too slow. Ultimately, by upgrading the speed to 10 mbps the problem was resolved and we were good to go.



For the Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday services there were only three people in the Royal Room – Colleen, pianist Mary Smith, and either Rev. Lisa Dolson or Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee. The Maundy Thursday service has been viewed by over 130 people and Easter Sunday has been viewed by over 146 people.

Easter Sunday: Mary Smith in foreground, Colleen Maguire middle with headphones on, Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee

To add to the complexity of the logistics we were next placed in COVID-19 lockdown. So, to make it all work together Colleen meets each pianist at the church the week before and records digital stereo audio of the prelude, hymns and postlude. These recordings are then dropped into the software at the correct spot in advance. Colleen spends approximately an hour to 90 minutes ahead of each service recording audio, typing in song titles, lyrics and captions, adding graphics and cueing up the service in the software. Next, she will practice the transitions until they are smooth. On Sunday morning Colleen arrives an hour ahead to set up her equipment and test. The officiant and Colleen are the only two people in the Royal Room, wearing masks and distanced approximately 15 feet apart.

Five minutes before the go-live time Colleen starts the live stream so that those at home can connect and be ready for the start of the service. Each service is approximately 30 minutes long. Once the live stream is finished it takes approximately three hours for the service to



Colleen Maguire minutes before go-live.

automatically upload to YouTube so that it can be viewed on demand.

Currently, we are only able to live stream from the Royal Room but we are working on the next steps to make it possible to live stream from other locations like the sanctuary and McMillian Hall. Knox will eventually have to invest in buying its own equipment in order to do this.

So please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am. This is the permanent link that will always take you right to the live stream:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcJ8pGlXpvqi1HZmrVYV6pw/live>

Worship Committee

As we journey further into 2021 and find we're still battling the COVID virus, we would like to sincerely thank those who have freely donated their time and talents to keeping our Congregation together. It is not an easy thing to do under the stay-at-home orders we have been living with.

Terri has been attending to the Church business and keeping us updated on what is happening to our various members as time goes by. Rob and Chris Evans have stepped in on several different fronts to help out: Rob has organized a group of volunteers who have kept themselves very busy fixing everything that needed fixing, so that when we return, we will be in a state-of-the-art building. Chris has helped in the office, and kept us busy reading her funny e-mails. They have become great friends with Cedric, making him part of their family.

Sadly for us, Cedric had to resign because of poor health. We will miss him a lot – he added so much to our Services and was very generous with his talents. He has gone to the Bluewater Seniors Home in Zurich, which, along with the rest of us, is in lockdown. Cards and notes would help.

Brenda Shea and her helpers have been working overtime cleaning our wonderful building. Annie has kept the Session active, using Zoom meetings to keep members informed about what is going on.

One person who has worked unstintingly for the Church during this pandemic is Colleen Maguire. Colleen has always worked hard for Knox, but her help in our present situation has been remarkable, and we certainly appreciate it. She has voluntarily taken on producing the YouTube Church Services that we have enjoyed for the past couple of months, using much of her own equipment and all of her know-how. It has been a big job, but Colleen doesn't let that deter her. We certainly are a blessed Congregation, and would like to thank everyone for helping our Church get through this trying time.

Bonnie Dunn

Mariners' Service

107th Annual Mariners' Service Cancelled

For the first time in 107 years, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, Knox Goderich was unable to hold its annual Goderich & District Mariners' Service in February.

At this time, the Mariners' Service Committee would like to remember contributions to our service by two very special women who passed away in 2020-2021.

Marion Warner, wife of George Warner who was a Mariners' Service Committee member for many years, was a quiet behind-the-scenes worker. In the days before Committee member Keith Homan invented and built a device to keep our flags wrinkle-free while in storage for the year, Marion used to iron the large flags for hanging in the sanctuary during the service, keeping our nautical décor looking pristine. No doubt, she baked some cookies over the years for refreshment time after the services too. Marion passed away April 9, 2020.

Whenever we called on Jan Hawley to read the scriptures at our Mariners' Services, her enthusiastic response was that she'd be "delighted" to participate. She'd ask for a copy of the scriptures in advance so she could be prepared and "put the right emphasis in the right places". She always did a stellar job using her strong, clear reading voice. Being Jan, she also went the extra mile, promoting our service to those beyond Goderich through her Huron East economic development job, even designing a beautiful on-line poster for us one year. And with her marine heritage connections, she put us in touch with people who could supply items and artifacts for our MacMillan Hall displays. Jan passed away unexpectedly March 16, 2021. We will certainly miss her presence, along with that of our other scripture reader Glen Gardiner, at future Mariners' Services.

With the shipping, fishing and recreational boating and swimming season now upon us, we ask that you pray for God's guidance and safety for everyone involved in these pursuits. We also ask you to remember those who have lost their lives on our waters over these many years. Next February, when we can hopefully all gather together as a community again, the Mariners' Service will be back at Knox as a time-honoured tradition in our port town.

If you would like to watch the 2019 Mariners' Service, you can find it on Knox Presbyterian Church Goderich – YouTube. Jan Hawley is not reading the scriptures at this service because bad weather prevented her driving safely from Seaforth to Goderich. Committee chair Colleen filled in for her at the last minute.

Joanne Walters

Mariners' Service

100th Annual Goderich & District

Sunday, February 23rd, 2014 ~ 2:00 pm
Knox Presbyterian Church
9 Victoria Street North, Goderich Ontario

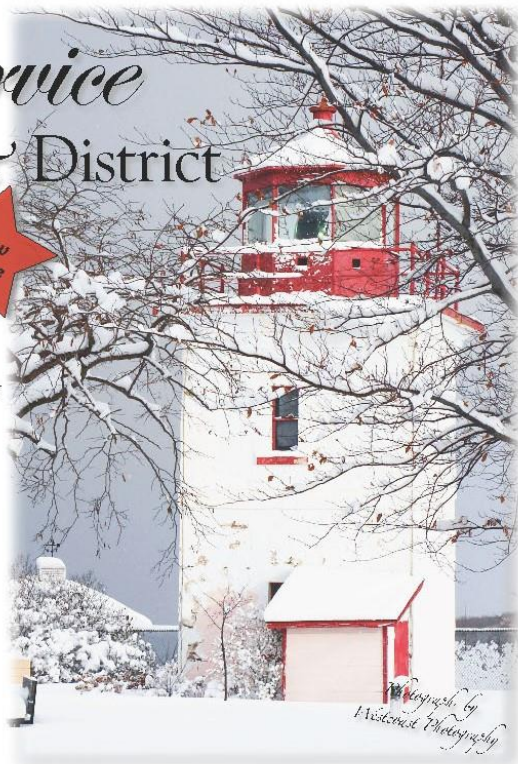
60th Guest Appearance by Goderich Harbouraires
Men's Choir & Featuring a Special Musical Performance by
Captain David MacAdam

Guest Speaker:
The Reverend Ted Nelson

Everyone Welcome

"Nautical Decorations & Displays

Refreshments to follow service
Call 519.524.7512 for more information



poster designed by Jan Hawley

Arthur Circle WMS

On April 21, 2021 I attended the virtual WMS Synodical of Southwestern Ontario 74th Annual Meeting hosted by New St James Presbyterian Church, London. It was a one-day meeting that opened with prayer by President Margaret McGugan, greetings from Council by Cathy Reid, Moderator of Synod Rev. Mavis Currie, Moderator of Presbytery Rev. Shelly Butterfield-Kocis. Communion Service followed led by The Rev. Dr David Clark, Minister at New St James. Virtual Communion has become common, not the normal, but what we need to do during a Pandemic. Reflection was "Live Together in Unity"

Afternoon Session started at 12:30. This session was the business meeting. The speakers Cathy Reid, Janet Brewer and Sarah Kim talked about their trip to India. They were there just before the pandemic. They were in the area that Ida White served as a Missionary from Knox. A highlight for me was a picture of her piano. I grew up with stories of her from my mother.

Camp Kintail Report by Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee – Life at Kintail has changed, they have come up with ways to cope during a Pandemic. They have been able to take advantage to the Government Wage Subsidy. They have bees at camp now. They offered Sunday Night suppers, Ski Days, and sold 270 Easter baskets with activities during Easter. They did end in the black. Rev. Theresa has been doing a story time on the Kintail Site for children/young at heart.

Business/New Business

Election and Installation of Officers by Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee

Invitation to Synodical 2022 – Host Maitland

Will be held at Camp Kintail (if possible) April 19, 2022 – Daily cost is \$60/day for food and snacks. Accommodation costs \$60 per night for Nest, \$50 MacDonald Lodge, \$40 Cabin. More will be coming in the future.

Barb Hainsworth

Loaves and Fishes Meals



The following information was obtained from Kim Burgsma who heads the Trinity program:

“The Salvation Army is doing the first two weeks of the month, Trinity the next two weeks and St Georges when there is a fifth week. Things are going well. Attendance is good. The packaging is a considerable additional cost of time and finances but we're working through that as best we can. On average there are 30 to 40 people picking up meals. We will continue and ask for your church family's prayers as we bless the community that needs and appreciates the meals.”

Hopefully Knox will be able to resume our actual Loaves and Fishes dinner by September, but as we have all learned over the past 18 months, nothing is certain.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynda Rotteau, Coordinator

Thank you, Knox Congregation

Dear Members of Knox,

I want to extend a very sincere thank you to everyone who so generously donated to my “retirement” gift. Your kindness has quite overwhelmed me, and I want you to know how much I appreciate both this gift, and all the love, support and encouragement you have given me since moving to Goderich.

God Bless you all,
Cedric



Prayer Group

The Prayer Group is still carrying on. We are in touch with each member every Wednesday and share prayer requests and praises. We have now added a scripture verse of the week to our calls.

Concerning the COVID-19 situation, we should certainly be praying for all the needs involved but I have a new request. Throughout the Old Testament, we see how the Lord allowed bad things to happen to His chosen people when they had wandered away from Him, in order to draw them back. My prayer is that many will be drawn to the Lord as a result of COVID -19, both those who have never made a commitment to the Lord and those who have wandered away. We are already hearing news of revival in Asia, Africa and South America. Praise the Lord!

Prayerfully submitted,

Ginnie Willms, for the Prayer Group



*The things you take for granted
someone else is praying for.*

Welcome Project Syria

Our two last sponsored families are settling into life in Canada. We can't imagine what a learning curve it is for them, but they are doing remarkably well, and so thankful to be here.

Abdallah's, Marwa's and little Hussein's monetary sponsorship officially ended at the end of February, but of course we still provide guidance and hands-on help when needed as they continue to integrate. Abdallah and Marwa are functioning well in English, considering they've only been here a little over a year, and have spent most of it under COVID restrictions. Little Hussein, now two, is doing what dual-language kids do, mixing his languages together in one sentence. Surprisingly, they eventually get it all sorted out. Abdallah continues working fulltime at General Coach. Their exciting news to share is that they're expecting a brother or sister for Hussein in the fall.

Saleh's, Duaa's and little Watan's sponsorship doesn't finish until the end of October. They too are putting in a remarkable language performance after only six months. They spell each other off babysitting while one does language class in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. Watan is already learning the alphabet and numbers in English. He celebrates his second birthday this week - cake and ice cream for the first time! Like the rest of the family, they too are looking forward to warm weather, gardening and trips to the beach (if/when allowed). Also like the rest of the Alali family, just the kindest, most generous, loving people you could wish to meet, and an asset to the community.

We are now going into the last six months of sponsorship, after which time Welcome Project Syria will cease to exist. It has been such a positive, if monumental, undertaking, but “many hands make light work”. It will be a lasting legacy of humanitarian, Christian response to a world crisis.

The only sad note is that Welcome Project Syria is a little short on funds to finish out the sponsorship. Firstly, the eight-month delay (during COVID) between the two families who were supposed to arrive together cost us dearly. No one in their wildest dreams could have seen that coming, much less plan for it. Several people generously contributed to help with that unforeseeable cost, and it was reduced by two thirds. Secondly, these two families had way more serious, necessary dental work to be done than is the norm sponsors need to plan for, or the government helps with. Again, a few generously helped out with some of that. Fundraising, as we would “normally” have done to offset this shortfall, has not been possible during COVID, nor will be over the summer – there is just nothing “normal” about these times.

That brings us to today, when we reluctantly appeal for public donations to help Welcome Project Syria over this last hump. If you feel you can make a donation to this last push, want to know how to go about helping, or have any questions about the sponsorship, you may contact either of the co-chairs:

Moe Nickles 519-524-7067 or email moe.nickles@sympatico.ca

Carol Egener 519-524-6806 or email caroegen@cabletv.on.ca

With our heartfelt appreciation for your generosity, past, present and future.

Mark Your Calendar

June 20 Father’s Day September 6 Labour Day (office closed)

July 1 Canada Day (office closed) October 11 Thanksgiving (office closed)

August 2 Civic Day (office closed) November 7 Daylight Saving Time ends
November 11 Remembrance Day

Knox Connections

Having just read the Knox Fall/Winter newsletter and inspired by Richard Madge's submission about the great fire of 1950, I decided to submit my grandfather's connection to the fire and Knox Church.

Tom Sandy 1882 -1959, submitted by grandson Keith Salkeld Homan.

Tom Sandy, who built concrete bridges in the early 1900's (eg. Saltford Bridge), retired in 1940 and moved from Ashfield Township to Goderich. Tom soon found time on his hands and instead of retiring he established a machine shop that became one of the best on the Great Lakes for servicing ships. As many as 30 ships anchored one winter for repairs from his shop. In February he would visit all the ships wintering in the harbour and invite the crews to the Knox Mariners' Service. The first Mariners' Service was in 1903 and was originally known as "The Sailors and Fishermans Service". The purpose of the service was to ask for divine guidance and safety in the spring.

In 1950, Knox Church was destroyed by fire and a talented architect from London, Philip Carter Johnson was designing a new church for the Knox congregation. Tom asked the church architect to give him an opinion on an old house he had just bought north of Goderich called The Ridge which had been vacant for 30 years. Philip Carter Johnson's remarks were "Tear it down and use the view for a new building." That remark helped Tom make up his mind. He would restore the house! Johnson was to see a lot of Tom during the building of the new church.

Following are some comments from Beulah Homan's biography of Thomas Sandy.

"On Sunday morning you would always see Thomas strutting down the street in a neat suit and overcoat depending on the weather, topped off with his bowler hat. Ruby was always by his side. Her favourite hat trimmed with a large ostrich plume. They were a handsome couple. In those days almost everyone walked to church. The four children followed behind."

My parents were fatally injured in a car train accident on February 1, 1942. Thomas and Ruby donated a baptismal font to the new Knox Church in memory of their daughter Margaret and her husband Jim Salkeld. Many infants have been baptized using the font, but it was not until 1997 that a baby from the Sandy family used the font. She was Ainsley, the great, great granddaughter of Thomas and Ruby, daughter of Scott and Kathy Homan.

In 1949 when the church needed carillon bells, Thomas and Ruby stepped forward and donated the bells. I remember playing a selection at the dedication. After the old church burned down, the bells found a home in the new church with a lower tower. The sound of the bells did not seem to reach out as far as when they were higher and the Sunday morning sleepers objected to them being played.

As a member of the church Tom watched the building of the new church daily!!! He knew his gravel for concrete mix and did not like the material going into the mixer. But the workers turned a deaf ear and finally told him to go home and stay there. He took the rebuttal to heart and turned his energy and know how to restore the old house called The Ridge.

When the new church was being built, Thomas argued the entrance was too narrow. The architect wanted to slow down the traffic and allow the parishioners to stop and visit, but Thomas made mention of a fire and the entrance was widened to accommodate double doors.

Thomas did not like the stairs leading from the narthex to the lower floor where the men were supposed to hang their hats and coats, so he drove a nail into the cement wall of the narthex and the following Sunday, instead of using the stairs, he hung his hat on the nail. The next Sunday a proper clothes hanger, with hooks, properly mounted on the wall awaited his arrival.

I hope you enjoyed reading this reminiscence about the old and new church and my family as much as I did putting it together.

Keith

Spring Reminiscences

When I saw Terri's request for material for a Spring & Summer newsletter, I realized that the last issues have contained updates on the state of things at Knox ... building-wise. So, I thought that I would avoid that altogether and do something that I seem to be doing a lot of these days.

I used to be both intrigued and amused when my father would talk about his younger days (the good old days!). Now that we have so much time on our hands, I seem to be doing the very same things myself. Springtime on the farm in Wales was busy with the seasonal work. Our daily tasks continued, be it winter or summer, rain or shine - we were like so many of the surrounding farms, running a mixed operation which included a small herd of dairy cows. But come spring, we would set about the seasonal work. The cows produced copious amounts of manure, which was piling up in and around the barnyard, so one of the jobs was to load this on to our cart and take it out to the hay fields where it was deposited in small mounds, later to be spread around. And yes, the cart was horse-drawn, and the spreading was done by hand.

Starting in February, we would see the first of our newborn lambs. Our flock of sheep was not kept in penned areas, but rather roamed freely on the farm. Daily checking of the flock quickly alerted us to the ewes who were close to giving birth. A healthy lamb was always a blessing, healthy twins was a bonus. Fields were enclosed with hedges, walls or fences - so maintaining these was a winter and spring time chore. Likewise, in a country where rainfall is prevalent, drainage channels needed to be maintained - another springtime job.

If the land due for ploughing had not been turned over in the fall, then this would be one of the early jobs as the weather began to warm up. Then of course would come the harrowing and seeding.

Two world wars and the industrial revolution had taken most of the itinerant farm labourers, so farming families had to work a lot harder to get the work done. Unfortunately, there was often a lot of unavoidable neglect, that was visible at most farms. Mechanization was slow to arrive at many farms – in fact we did not have electrical power until the early 1960s. I read by candlelight in the evening, and at bedtime.

I have always sub-consciously appreciated the beauty of the natural world, God's creation. Working on the farm put me in constant contact with the wonders of the seasons, and because of this, Sundays, of course, were special – set aside for Sunday observances. No work – beyond that of tending the farm animals. Our Sunday mornings were quiet times, dinner was ready about 12:30. During my childhood I went to Sunday School in the afternoon, then the whole family went to the evening worship service. The little country chapel had about 75 members and many farm families attended. The singing was enthusiastic, and although the language of the service was English, our hymn book was 90% in Welsh. That is how I learned to pronounce the words – without understanding the meaning. There always seemed to be times of socializing afterwards. Farming people dressed for their work, which was often dirty and smelly – Sunday though, was the day when your best was worn – men in their 3-piece suits and their black shoes shined. Women in their good dresses and coats, and of course, hats.

The Weather Channel did not exist, so farmers were their own forecasters. My father could read the weather signs fairly accurately. We had a barometer that gave us air pressure readings and one of his daily routines was to check the “glass” to see what we might expect that day. The radio was a boon to him as he would “tune in” to the shipping forecast. In the summertime with hay harvest underway, the presence of high pressure in the area of the Azores was a good sign of several days of sun and warmth.

Growing up, I had no desires to travel – even though my brother and his wife had a “caravan” (camper) that they used to travel and explore the British Isles and France. I was content to be at home with all the familiar and comfortable things around me. Now, I sit in my comfortable rocking chair with my feet on the footstool, centrally heated house, airconditioned. All so far away from the drafty windows and doors and the coal fires!

Almost 50 years have elapsed since I left the familiar and travelled 3000 miles over an ocean to a new life in a country where everyone had an accent, and to a city with close neighbours and police and ambulance sirens to disturb the streets. But when I do look back, it is with a sense of pride that I have, in essence, another homeland. The place of my birth, childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. It will always be a part of me as much as Canada is.

So reminiscing is a satisfying thing for me to do. It certainly keeps my feet on the ground. Unapologetically, I am who I am, hopefully well-grounded with the gifts of my upbringing still guiding me as I set out on each days' journey.

Rob Evans



Profound Thoughts

Man and a Fork

There was a young man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So, as he was getting his things 'in order', he contacted his Minister and had her come to his house to discuss certain aspects of his final wishes. He told her which songs he wanted sung at the service, what scriptures he would like read, and what outfit he wanted to be buried in. Everything was in order and the Minister was preparing to leave when the young man suddenly remembered something very important to him.

'There's one more thing,' he said excitedly... 'What's that?' came the Minister's reply. 'This is very important', the young man continued. 'I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.'

The Minister stood looking at the young man, not knowing quite what to say. 'That surprises you, doesn't it?' the young man asked. 'Well, to be honest, I am puzzled by the request', replied the Minister.

The young man explained. 'My grandmother once told me this story and from that time on I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement.

In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say 'Keep your fork'. It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming ... like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!

So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them: 'Keep your fork ... the best is yet to come.'

The Minister's eyes welled up with tears of joy as she hugged the young man good-bye. She knew this would be one of the last times she would see him before his death. But she also knew that the young man had a better grasp of heaven than she did. He had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice his age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. He KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral, people were walking by the young man's casket and they saw the suit he was wearing and the fork placed in his right hand. Over and over, the Minister heard the question, 'What's with the fork?' And over and over, she smiled.

During her message, the Minister told the people of the conversation she had with the young man shortly before he died. She also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to him. She told the people how she could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either.

She was right. So, the next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come.



Submitted by,
Lynn Edward by way of Ted Royal

The Atheist in the Woods

An atheist was walking through the woods, thinking to himself,

"How beautiful the animals are!"

"How majestic the trees are!"

"How powerful the rivers are!"

As he walked along the river, he heard rustling in the bushes behind him.

He turned and saw an 8-foot grizzly bear charging towards him.

*He ran along the path as fast as he could, but when he looked over his shoulder,
he saw that the bear was closing in on him.*

*He kept running, but when he looked over his shoulder again, the bear was even
closer. Then he tripped and fell on the ground.*

The bear was right on top of him with his right paw raised to strike him.

At that instant, the atheist cried, "God help me!"

Time stopped.

The bear froze.

The forest was silent.

A bright light shone upon the man and a voice from the sky said,

*"You've denied my existence for all these years and have taught others that I don't
exist. You've even credited creation to a cosmic accident.*

Why would you expect me to help you out of this predicament?

Are you now a believer?"

The atheist looked into the light and said,

"Well, I would be a hypocrite to suddenly ask

*You to treat me as a Christian now,
but could you, maybe, make the BEAR a Christian?"*

"Very well," said the voice.

The light went out.

The sounds of the forest resumed.

*The bear lowered his right paw
and brought both paws together.*

He bowed his head, and said:

*"Lord, bless this food which I am about to receive
from Your bounty through Christ our Lord, Amen."*

