

The Messenger

**FOREST HILL
UNITED CHURCH
KITCHENER
December 2022**



In preparation for the upcoming Advent/Solstice stillness retreat, I purchased a copy of *Rest is Resistance* by Tricia Hersey. The irony is not lost on me that I haven't found much time to sit and read it. What I have managed has been inspiring, unsettling, idea-generating, tear-prompting, and has sparked a soul-deep recognition of a problem humankind has wrestled with since ancient times. The biblical answer to this problem is Sabbath, but since the advent of 24/7 culture, I believe many of us have found it difficult to practice.

Our culture no longer imposes a rest on us and many of us have discovered that we are not very good at making space for it ourselves. (Remember a time when screens went "off air" and the multicoloured bars/high whine of your television told you it was time to go to bed?) Those structures were admittedly problematic for certain marginalized folks, and I don't mean to romanticize the past, but it was easier for those of us privileged not to work on Sundays; to take it easy when very few businesses were open and schools were closed.

The enforced lockdowns of the pandemic, while experienced differently by everyone (some worked to exhaustion in essential services, others worked non-stop at home on zoom while providing infant or elder care and teaching/tutoring children through school closures, still others grieved or suffered from illness, isolation, anxiety or depression with little to no outside support) caused many of us to re-evaluate our priorities.

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For some it was a time of scaling back, simplifying, slowing down and consuming less. Perhaps this is why we are noticing in North America a significant and startling lack of volunteers, such that the programs and services we once provided are no longer sustainable or perhaps even desirable.

At the same time the proliferation and normalization of online content has expanded our choices exponentially. Seemingly infinite choices. Finite hours. Pushing the envelope of sleep to fit it all in. Perhaps even suffering from burnout and exhaustion.

This Advent I invite and encourage us all to examine our participation in this non-stop busy-ness. Let's revisit the concept of Sabbath and re-frame it for our circumstances. Experiment with practices that foster more time for rest and reflection. As we try to unplug from all that drains us, let's plug ourselves into the very Source of love and creativity and recharge our spirits.

If you would like to dive deeper, sign up for the Still, Still, Still online retreat (and yes, I understand the utter incongruity of inviting you to add one more item to your to-do list while just having encouraged you to scale back). In the new year I will be hosting an in-person discussion group on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm to explore what post-pandemic changes may mean for the future of "church". We'll look at the ways that our current model of church has been shaped by capitalism and consumer-culture and how it might adapt in ways more aligned with the vision of the realm of God where all are seen, welcomed, loved, and included; where Sabbath rest is honoured; where the yoke is easy and the burden light. (And I will not be offended in the least if you choose to take that time to nap instead!)

May you find time in these busy days to enjoy blessings of the season—the quiet of softly falling snow, the warm glow of advent candles on a child's face, the gloriously fresh smell of ice and pine, and the familiarity of Christmas carols on the radio. Rest in God's peace and love, friends.

Merry Christmas,

Lesley



FündScrip
powered by Fundstream Inc.
**Where shopping
is fundraising!**

**Order dates:
Dec. 11
(last one for
2022)**



Did You Know or Forget?

**There is Coffee & Conversation
every Wednesday from 10-11 am.**

On ZOOM!

**Check your email for the link.
Never used Zoom? Click the link and
download. Yes, you can!!**





FHUC Link Resource Centre

Coffee & Conversation-Wednesday @ 11:00am

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84323131175?
pwd=Z3MzcDNTOHQ0SmVQejFWTHY4MHI2dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84323131175?pwd=Z3MzcDNTOHQ0SmVQejFWTHY4MHI2dz09)

Month-long prayer calendar

<https://www.laurastephensreed.com/s/rejoicing-in-gods-saints.pd>



Summary of the Fall Council Meetings

Below are the highlights from the November 22, 2022 Council Meeting:

- Financial Update to end of October - Total Revenue - \$273,171 Total Expenses - \$281,263 Net Income - \$-\$8,092
- Givings have dropped slightly over the past two months. Over the last two years we have lost some of our members who were larger givers.
- Costs have increased due to inflation, so we are seeing the effects of lower giving's and higher expenses
- A Stewardship campaign is being researched and will roll out in the new year
- Sharing of our church with the Coptic Church will be coming to an end on December 4th.
- A number of functions for the congregation are being planned for the next few months - stay tuned!!

The Annual General Meeting will be held the first two Sundays of February.

The FHUC Council



Financial Update November- December 2022

A quick update to help plan your year-end giving's to Charity. Many groups ask at this time of the year and I would like to encourage you to help your church.

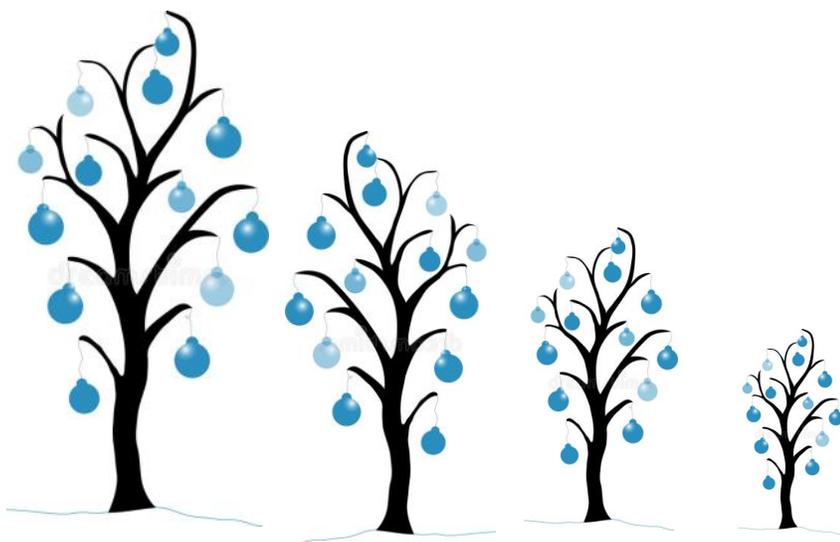
The approved Capital budget was created to fund projects to maintain our church. We are in a significant shortfall. The budget process is underway for next year and right now we are unable to fund necessary repairs to the church.

The Operating Budget income is tracking close to our expenses. We have seen a decrease year to year with offering, mostly due to members leaving us at Forest Hill United. We need to find new ways to create income in addition to fundraising, rentals and bequests.

Thank you for your support throughout the year.

Brian Clemens

Finance Chair/ Treasurer





Blessings Box

Thank you to everyone for keeping our Blessings Box fortified. If you have items to contribute to the Blessings Box, please drop them at the church on a Wednesday morning. We have some very generous people who donate their time to ensuring that the box is kept full.



Would you consider submitting something for our Guest Editorial? Is there something you would like to share - a new learning, easy recipe, a book you enjoyed, an opinion?

*Please submit your editorials to
office@foresthillunited.org.*

*Let's make this newsletter really
reflect Forest Hill!*



Spirit Saturdays:

Will take place the second Saturday of the month.

Saturday, December 10th — Candle dipping & Christmas eco-craft 10am to noon

Wednesday, December 21st — Longest night service of solace, 7pm

Saturday, December 24th — Christmas Eve all-ages service, 7pm

Sunday, December 25th — Christmas Day Potluck lunch (no church dinner tonight)

Looking Forward: January

SAVE THE DATES:

January 1 – New Year’s Day Worship Service

January 7 – Spirit Saturday “Arise, Shine” Epiphany Breakfast with Old Befana *note: one week earlier than usual

January 8 – Communion Sunday, Baptism of the Lord Sunday

January 15 – Dinner Church, 5:30pm

January 29 – Celebrating Candlemas during the worship service

Wishing you an Advent filled with hopeful anticipation and a very Merry Christmas!

from Rev. Gary & Lesley





**A BIG 'THANK YOU' TO BETTE CLEMENS AND KEN USHER FOR ALL THEIR
HARD WORK GETTING THE CHURCH READY FOR CHRISTMAS.**

IT LOOKS STUNNING!



WINTER WONDERLAND BAZAAR

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RESULTS!!!



WooHoo. Winter Wonderland Bazaar is behind us for another year. Don't misunderstand me - I am not saying this in a bad way. It was a wonderful day in many ways with awesome results as you will hear.

An event to this extent takes a lot of hard work, planning and involvement and Forest Hill United has done just that, and more.

Join me as we take this journey.

Early in the week before the bazaar, Bette Clemens with Ken Usher's help at getting the trees etc up from the basement, spent several hours, several days creating the beautiful display of trees in the foyer and the Christmas Tree in the Fireside.

Thursday evening, 8 Volunteers arrived to set up all the tables - ready for use on Friday morning.

20 Volunteers started arriving at 8:30 am on Friday for various jobs. Tables were covered and skirted, baking and preserves were all signed in and all items were put in their specified place.

And it begins.

Many ladies were busy preparing fruits and vegetables for the Preserve Table way back in June (Strawberry Time). These efforts, 2 volunteers on Friday and 4 on Saturday tallied a profit on the Preserve Table of \$1,193.00



8 of the Volunteers, 17 cookie bakers, 30 + dozen of each of the 6 different kinds of Christmas Cookies were placed with care, bagged and plated, 1 dozen at a time, onto 173 trays. From 9 Shortbread bakers, 55+ dozen Shortbread were also donated. Each dozen placed with care on 66 plates. 5 ladies volunteered on Saturday, selling OUT way too quickly and realizing a profit of \$1,295.00 from Christmas Cookies.

Baking, baking and more baking kept arriving as it was priced and placed by 3 volunteers on 4, 6' tables across the pew backs in the Sanctuary. On Saturday, 5 Volunteers sold all the baking very quickly and tallied a profit of \$1,102.00

Anyone who is crafty at all is constantly creating items and many were donated for this special day. On Friday, 2 of the Volunteers priced and placed the items and on Saturday, 3 Volunteers sold \$610.00 of Craft items.

Our Cafe was a big hit once again. 3 ladies worked Friday preparing sandwich fillings etc while a variety of muffins and Chocolate Chip and Oatmeal Raisin Cookies arrived to be sold as a part of the menu. On Saturday, 3 Volunteers circled menu choices and volunteered as cashiers. 5 ladies volunteered to work in the kitchen preparing and plating our lunch choices. 4 volunteers cleared tables after all enjoyed our coffee break or lunch. A busy place which had a profit of \$692.25.

Are you tired yet? Oh there is more.

The Vendors started arriving at 8 am Saturday morning as did at least 8 Volunteers to help them bring their items in to the tables that had been strategically assigned by Donna Dechert. Vendors rented their tables which generated \$750.00

We also had 3 Volunteers to run the elevator and 2 Greeters to welcome our shoppers.

Many folks returned at 1 pm to help the vendors take their wares to their cars and the clean up began with many volunteers - couldn't count them all.



As you have heard and recognize, this event took an enormous number of volunteers, donations and shoppers to have created the results. Folks, you have been amazing and very generous.

In order to make money, there are expenses which we had a few. They totalled \$486.64.

There were generous people who could no longer donate items or be a volunteer so donations of \$320.00 were added to our proceeds.

Our Winter Wonderland Bazaar sales as of Nov 12th totalled \$ 5,475.61.

The Bazaar Committee has recommended that the proceeds from this event (which will be the tally of Saturday and Sunday sales) be put toward the purchase of a new dishwasher in the lower kitchen.

This has been a wonderful event for this congregation. Thank you to all of you. A Special thanks to the committee members, to Donna Dechert for looking after the Vendors, Edna Bryce & Denise Ontonovich for convening the Bake Table, Robin Maxwell-Nunn for convening the Christmas Cookie table, Lynda Hammond & Marilyn Mylchreest for convening the Preserve Table, Sue Hummel for convening the Cafe and Lynne Couperus & Tammy Rowe for convening the Craft Table.

Lastly I want to Thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to convene this wonderful Winter Wonderland Bazaar once again. Thank you.

PS. Our Sunday shoppers were also amazing - \$322.20 from items remaining. Bazaar total profits

\$ 5797.81

Thanks to all. To me, this Bazaar isn't just about the dollar total but about working together, meeting new friends and the warm fuzzy feeling of being a part of this wonderful event.

Thanks to all. Betty and the Bazaar Committee 2022





Messenger Announcements from the Pastoral Care and Faith Formation Ministries

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If you regularly join our worship from home and would like to receive a monthly home worship package please contact Lesley: pastoralcare@foresthillunited.org or call the office 519-744-3481



Church Festivals & Observances:

November 27 – First Sunday of Advent (Happy New Year!)

December 4 – Advent II, Human Rights Sunday; St. Barbara's Day

December 6 - Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women; St. Nicholas' Day

December 10 - Human Rights Day

December 11 – Advent III

December 13 – St. Lucia's Day

December 18 – Advent IV

December 24 – Christmas Eve

December 25 – Christmas Day

Forest Hill Special Services and Events:

December 4 – Baptism Sunday, 10am

December 10 – Spirit Saturday Candle dipping and Christmas eco-craft, 10am to noon

December 11 – Communion Sunday, 10am

December 20-22 – “Still, still, still” Winter solstice virtual retreat

December 21 – Longest night service of solace, 7pm

December 24 – Christmas Eve All-ages service, 7pm

December 25 – Christmas Day Potluck Lunch, 10am to noon

Themes: Hope, Peace, Joy & Love; preparation, joyful expectation, becoming, celebration



"Still, Still, Still" a hybrid Solstice retreat

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Tuesday, December 20 through Thursday December 22

During the winter solstice the sun appears to rest for three days. We will follow the rhythms of the cosmos and take moments during the darkest (and busiest!) days of the year for intentional rest, relaxation, reflection and renewal.

The Solstice Spiral: a journey inward

Wednesday December 21, 7:00pm

A family-friendly contemplative service of candlelight and community.



Forest Hill United Church
121 Westmount Rd. E.

Safe in God's Hands:
a longest night service

A quiet and reflective in-person service
of prayer and candlelight for those
mourning the loss of a loved one.

Wednesday,
December 21st
7:00pm

Still, Still, Still

A self-paced Winter Solstice Retreat

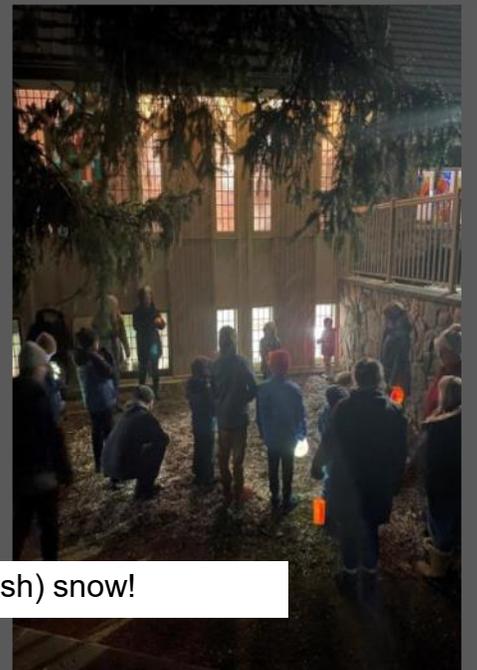
Sign up for this three-day contemplative online retreat by emailing Lesley:
pastoralcare@foresthillunited.org

You will receive 3 emails per day (a morning reflection, an afternoon practice, an evening prayer) from December 20th to December 22nd

Take a break from the busy-ness of the holiday season and give yourself a gift of self-care. We will explore themes of rest, darkness and stillness during this hushed and holy time of year.

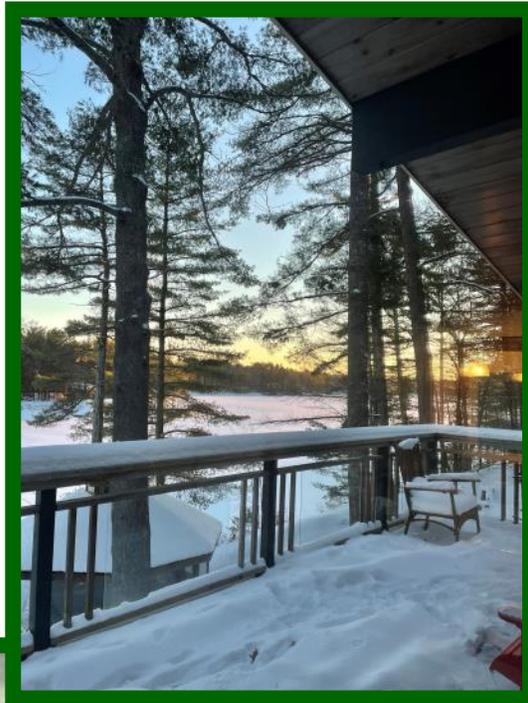


Looking Back: November



Memories of our Lantern Walk & the first(ish) snow!

**Winter is Coming!!!!
Let's keep cozy and
warm out there.**



"How many lessons of faith and beauty we should lose, if there were no winter in our year!"--*Thomas Wentworth Higginson*

Attention: Nature Lovers, Poets, Story Tellers!

Send me your art. Whether you love a good story, picture or poem, please share with us. I would also like to encourage anyone to send in what you interpret to be 'natures gift' to the FHUC office to be included in 'The Messenger' - Kelly.



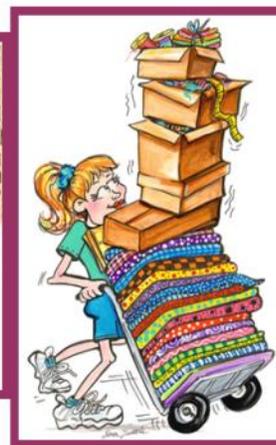
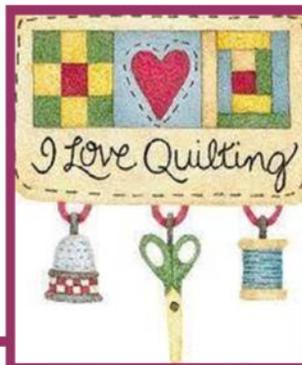
**ATTENTION: All QUILTERS
&
'WANNA BE' QUILTERS!**

Starting Tuesday September 13th 9:00am to 2:00pm

For those who love to sit and stitch come out to work on the quilt that has been sitting for the 2 ½ years. If you can put a needle up and down through the fabric you can do it.

Everyone's stitches are different but that is what tells the story in a quilt. If you are not comfortable being close with others bring something that you can work on but still able to join in the conversations. This is more of a time to catch up how everyone is doing and what is happening around them. If you only have a half hour, stop in to say Hi or bring your lunch if you want to stick around longer.

See you in the choir room
Bette



UCW Meetings

UCW is once again meeting every second Tuesday of the month starting at 1:30pm in the Fireside room



Ladies Christmas Program Tues Dec 13 at 1:30pm

The United Church Women (UCW) are meeting Tuesday Dec 13th from 1:30 – 2:30 in the Fireside room. All women are invited to enjoy a friendly chat, Christmas treat and program. If you can transport your favourite ornament safely, come and share what it means to you. Also, if you were part of the Secret Sisters that started in February, please bring a small gift so you can be revealed to your Secret Sister. If you'd like to be part of the next round of Secret Sisters where you send a few cards through the year, or would like to receive a few cards during the year, anyone can sign up. Hope to see you there! (Christmas sweaters, hats, jewellery welcome!)

Do you like to “Smile and Say Hello!”.....

I have a small job for you and that is “Greeting”.

All you have to do is sign up for a date on the back table and arrive on your Sunday at 9:30. Be in the entry, to say Hello to everyone coming and going through the lobby.

We also need people to sign up as coffee hosts in the Fireside room after Sunday morning service. If this is something you would be able to do, put your name on the list located on the table in lobby.

These are one-time jobs or multiple Sundays but this helps the Sunday morning service run smooth.

Being in Community

Hello folks, it's Sue Hummel and Rob Steele and we are your "Being in Community" Facilitators on the FHUC Council. As the name implies our role is to plan and coordinate activities which increase the sense of community here at Forest Hill. Given that we are now sharing our facility with three other congregations we have a unique opportunity to expand our sense of community. Look for an event in the early part of the new year that will do just that. In the meantime, we are interested in any ideas that you may have to help us fulfil our mandate. Please e-mail us with your ideas at slhummel@bell.net or rjsteele25@gmail.com. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

—Sue Hummel & Rob Steele



Baptism Schedule:

Forest Hill would like to include your family and friends for baptism on their chosen date. Simply contact the office to set this up.

519-744-3481 office@foresthillunited.org

Recent Baptisms:

Congratulations to the following families....

Shannon Brook & Jesse Ducroix parents of Hazel Ella Ducroix

Danielle & Gregory Bruce parents of Noah Wayne Bruce & Emily Rose Bruce
All baptized on November 20, 2022.

Also

Emily & Phillip Spademan parents of Clara Emily Spademan

Ratidzai Mafumhe & Scott Marshall parents of Chiedza Dawn Marshall

Breanne & Steve McArthur parents of Gabriel Brian McArthur

All baptized on December 4, 2022.



A Message from your Outreach Team.....

Your Outreach Team is inviting anyone from the congregation who has a passion, or an idea, to partner with the community to get in touch with Ron Morgan at 519-743-6044, coordinator of Outreach. We have a bit of money in the current budget reserves.

For anyone who has furniture, or an entire household, to donate and is looking for some to pick it up, you can contact 519newbeginningsprogram@gmail.com

Ron





What is this?... This service offers a **free gift basket** ordered by low-income folks so that they can give something special to the person of their choice, for whatever reason.

You may remember Marlene Pink who at one time attended Forest Hill United Church. She has started this amazing program to support low income individuals and families. This program allows them to give a gift to a friend or loved one at no cost to themselves. All items, baskets and wrap are donated to the cause. To date, Marlene has put together over 300 baskets. The applicant completes a short questionnaire about the person that the gift basket is for and a basket, specific to the recipient, is created.

IMPORTANT – These gift baskets contain all donated new/unused items. Any contribution to that supply would be appreciated. Even something as simple as a chocolate bar would help.

If you have items that you would like to donate please contact Marlene (or Sue Hummel). Perhaps you have received a gift that you are not able to use or have candy/chocolate left over from a celebration.

Thanks for your consideration to this wonderful program

Marlene Pink mpink@sympatico.ca

Sue Hummel slhummel@bell.net

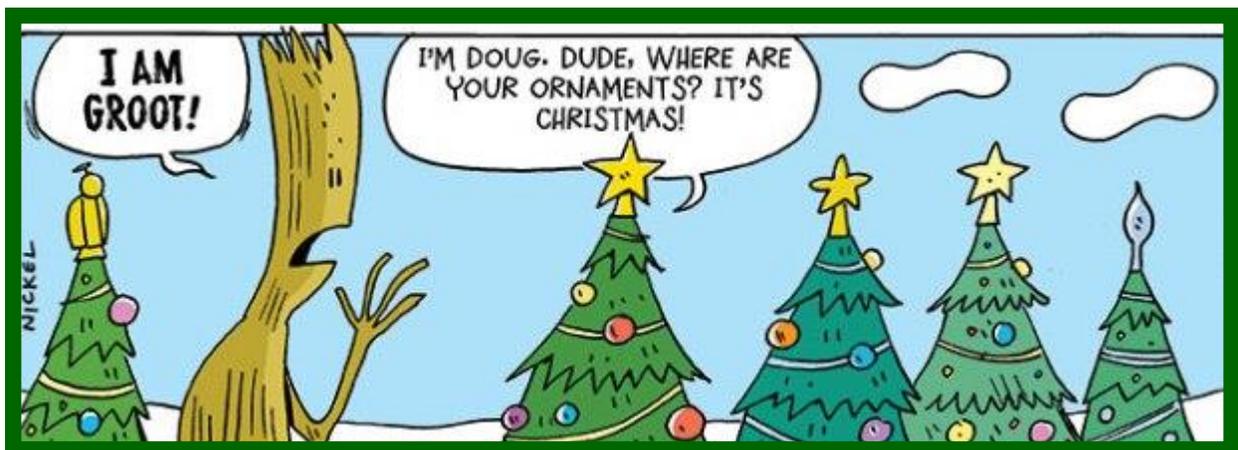
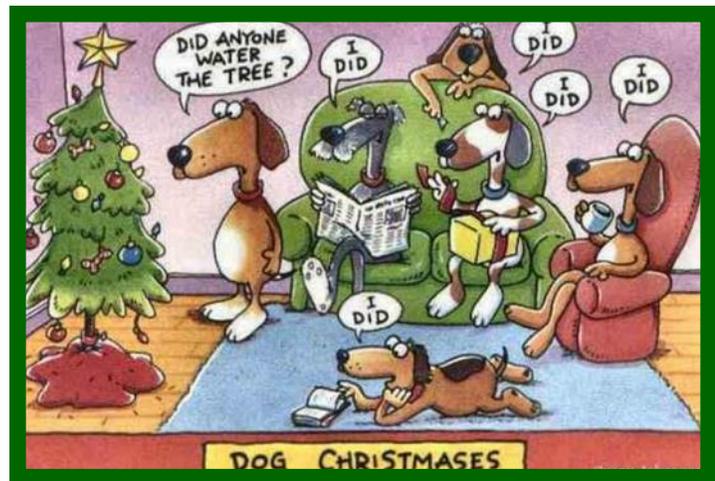
Here is a near year end Expenditure Report from your Outreach Team

\$5000	House of Friendship to support their inaugural 'Family First Program'
\$1000	Chandler-Mowat Food Voucher Program
\$4000	Ukrainian Refugee Help Program
\$1000	The Healing of the Seven Generations; a local Indigenous Program
\$1000	Native Housing Wigwam Project; a local Indigenous Program
\$1000	Our Syrian Family support for dental work
\$ 360	Muslim Social Service Dinner
\$ 500	Pay It Forward Project
\$ 153	Miscellaneous



Just helping out with the Christmas Tree decorations!

COMIC CORNER





Kindness is like snow—
it beautifies everything
it covers.

Kahlil Gibran



Christmas Eve Service

It's better to light a Candle.....

Christmas isn't happy for everyone,
This Christmas Eve
You are invited to light a candle
Instead of cursing the dark!
Come join us at 7:00pm December 24th

Christmas Day

You are invited to a
Potluck Brunch
10:00am - 1:00pm

Forest Hill United Church

121 Westmount Rd E.
Kitchener, ON



Holiday Lunch Thursday December 22nd @ noon - 1:30pm

Come enjoy a turkey dinner & excellent company!
Limited seating, please reserve your place
(by Dec. 19 @ noon) register at the office
email - office@foresthillunited.org
OR phone [519-744-3481](tel:519-744-3481)





Forest Hill United Church Choir

Rehearsals will take place on Thursdays 7pm - 8pm and Sunday mornings at 9:30am in the church Sanctuary.

The choir sings Sunday mornings at the 10am service supporting the hymns and providing anthems.

*COVID-19 protocols: Group singing is a high risk activity for contracting and spreading COVID-19. As such, masking is required at rehearsals and on Sunday. Distancing provided where requested.

Email M.J. at mjelina@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

No experience required.



Suddenly One....

This is a group for folks who have lost a loved one in their life and would like to share time with others in that journey. They meet the last Friday of every month at FHUC in the Fireside Room.



We offer condolences and prayers of comfort to the following:

- McCurdy family for the loss of Alvin McCurdy on October 22, 2022.
- Wilson family for the loss of John Wilson on October 22, 2022.
- Kocher family for the loss of Vern Kocher on December 5, 2022

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families as they go through these difficult times.



“Snowflakes are one of nature’s most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together.”

—Vesta M. Kelly

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.

—Edith Sitwell

“Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face.

—Victor Hugo

“Just remember, the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.

— The Polar Express

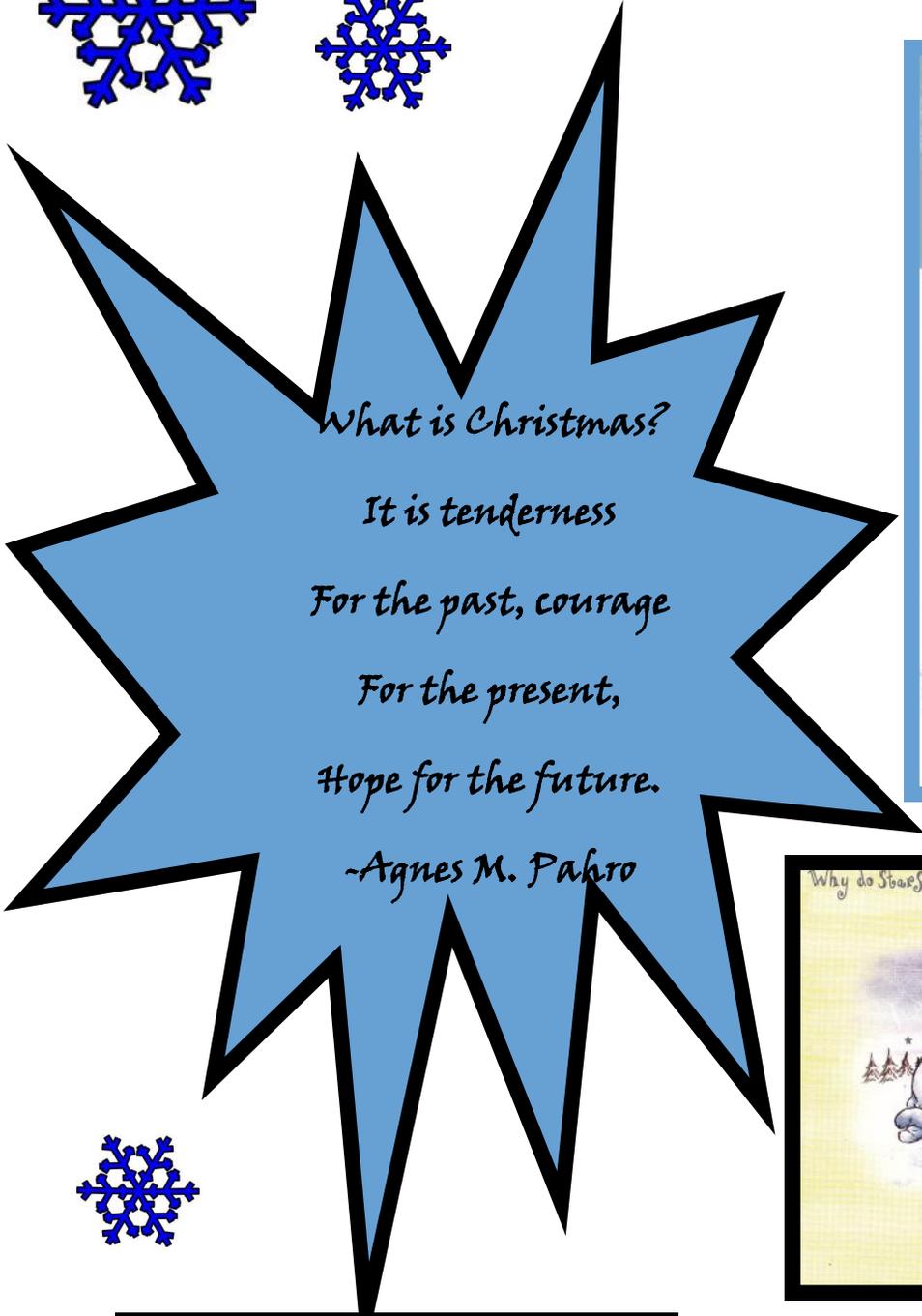
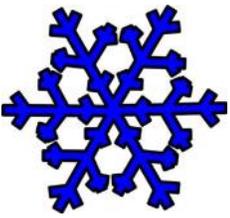




*Getting Reacquainted BBQ
&
Welcome Lesley Parsons*







What is Christmas?

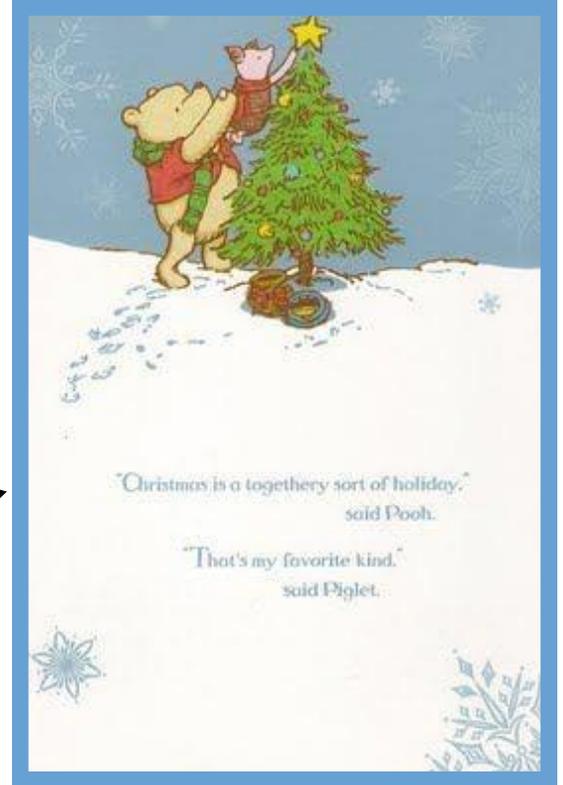
It is tenderness

For the past, courage

For the present,

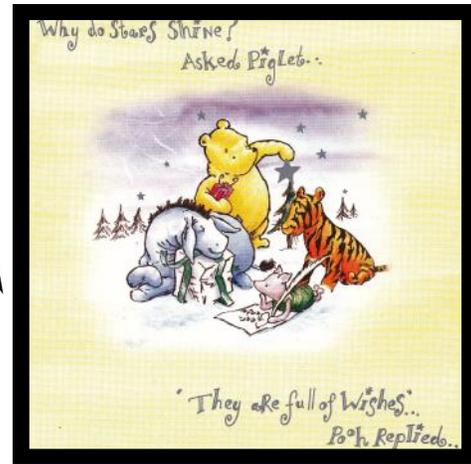
Hope for the future.

-Agnes M. Pahro



*"Christmas is a togethery sort of holiday,"
said Pooh.*

*"That's my favorite kind,"
said Piglet.*



*Why do Stars Shine?
Asked Piglet..*

*'They are full of Wishes'..
Pooh, Replied..*



*A friend is one of the best
things you can have,
and one of the best things
you can be.*

-Winnie the Pooh-



**It isn't the size of the gift
that matters, but the size of
the heart that gives it.**



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