



Our Oasis

September 2010

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The Off-Site Pulpit

“Welcoming Prayer”

There’s a spanking new sign stretching over Main Street in our little town. In colourful letters it reads “Grand Bend”. Years ago, there was another sign in the same spot. It was two letters shorter and a bit simpler: “Welcome”. Imagine a sign like that stretching over your heart, your life that reads “Welcome”: welcome to others, welcome to God. We can erect that sign every day with a simple devotional exercise called “welcoming prayer”.



Some of us had a run at this in one of our summer services of worship recently. It’s very easy. Get comfortable. Feet flat on the floor; or lie down on a bed, a stretch of grass, the beach, wherever. Close your eyes.

Go inward. Seek to shut down the chatter in your head and regard all outside noises as just part of the environment in the now of these few moments. Start saying or singing some simple, welcoming chant like “Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus”, or “Kum Ba Ya (Come by here), or even the first verse of Psalm 23 in a version you like. After a few rounds of singing or speaking, just hum the rhythm as you settle into inviting God to be with you. After a few rounds of humming, be still, silent, imagining those sounds still continuing and opening yourself to divine visitation. Don’t ask anything of God in this time: make no requests, raise no concerns, offer no petitions or thanksgivings – just seek to be in relationship keeping company with God. Rest there for ten or fifteen minutes or more.

Flora Slosson Wuellner calls this “soaking prayer”, a time for bathing ourselves in the healing light and energy of God. Seek to make time each day for this warming, affirming experience. Enjoy! Rub-a-dub-dub, find joy in this tub.

Blessings and peace, Reverend Harry Disher

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Green Cathedral Volunteers



(Bench set up crew: Peter Challen, Carey & Sherwood and Ethan Eddy, Trish Challen and Bruce McFadden)

It's a multitude that brings us worship outside. Dennis McIntyre, Bob Illman and John Hoffmeyer set up the sound system. Pairs of volunteers brought out the keyboard, communion table, cushions, chairs, programs, and refreshment tables:

John Scott, Jake Janzen, Larry Taylor, Bill Green, Al Penny, Keith Harvey, John Love, Joan Love, Jim Joyce, Dave Gibson, Gerald Douglas, Roger Truemner, Todd Mellin, Max Morden, Lee McCutcheon, and Gavin Jones. There were Wilma Harris and her host of greeters. Mary McFadden's bulletins, with all the photo art, are like mini-newsletters. Some of our choir members led our ministry of music: Paul Seagrave, the Gill family, Frank Loscombe and Chris Bregman. We're thankful for Reverend Harry's, backed by the whole choir's "Hallelujah". The women of the UCW, with their homemade cookies, organized the fellowship receptions. Bruce McFadden organized the set up system and made sure the area was clean and organized each Sunday. And Grampa Jim Love organized the parking, the traffic flow, and rang the bell that called us all to worship. Thanks to everyone - it has been wonderful to worship God outside.

Peter Challen



Peter Challen and Pam Walker assist Jean Cassidy in the draw for the winner of the gourmet barbeque for four! The winners (from Port Franks) are Ina and Leo Koper – they brought friends, Henny Doppenburg & Ginnie Koning



This is the second year that the Worship Team has hosted a gourmet barbeque to raise monies for on-going activities and for the new Church building. The event, both years, was held at the home of Peter and Trish Challen. Approximately thirteen to fifteen people were present on each occasion (four guests plus the Worship Team and spouses/friends) . Our efforts have raised to date, a total of \$2,000.00! A mighty thanks to ALL who helped in supporting such a worthwhile endeavour.

Susan Linden

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Concert Series Team

Exciting news from the CST - at the end of September, the choir is producing a CD of Spiritual music. Sharon Adams, the guest concert organist previously hosted by the CST, will be featured on the CD. The CD will feature solo performances by members of the choir, with accompanists Paul Seagrave, Sharon Adams and conductor Elva McIntyre providing expert leadership for this project.

The CD's will be available for purchase, as we get closer to Christmas at a cost of around

\$20.00/CD. This is a first for GBUC. We hope that you will enjoy it. For a sneak preview of the anthems on the CD, the choir will be performing several of the selections as anthems during the weekly church service. We hope you will be there.

On Sunday, December 12/10, Eduard Klassen, harpist and speaker will be performing in the sanctuary of the church. He will be here to share with you his testimony, lively music on the harp, and unique stories of growing up in the wilderness

of Paraguay. Eduard's concert will be on a freewill offering basis.

There has been some talk within the CST that there will be a Christmas cantata again this December. It's still just talk but we will let you know if it's going to happen. Lets hope so. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season.

Carey Eddy



Pastoral Care Team

To further connect, nurture and care for our G.B.U.C. Church Family a new umbrella ministry --"Pastoral Care" (PCT) is being created. In the beginning under this umbrella will be our current Intercessory Prayer Team, Congregational Prayer and Card ministry, Membership, and our new "Sunshine" Call

Team. As time goes along we hope to add other areas to further care for those in our congregation. If you have any need where the Church might be able to assist you please call Lynda Holmes at 519-238-8071, PCT Chair or let Mary McFadden in the office know.

Lynda Holmes



From the Office

Our last Oasis was newly formatted to easily send via E-mail and to efficiently copy. Since then, we have replaced our copy machine – not new, but to us, newer and better! This newsletter will not be sent out E-mail – it will be posted on our (sort of) new website! Our website has been up and running since March. It is a wonderful tool to “let the world know that we are here”! Please do visit our site (if you haven't already): www.grandbend-greenwaypc.com. Can't come to church? The weekly bulletin, upcoming events and lots of information is posted to keep you informed! If you have an item that you would like posted, let me know. Watch for upcoming slide shows of a couple of summer “happenings”!

Mary McFadden

Our Oasis



New Church Steering Team

Lasagna Info Dinners: Held in late June, one hundred and thirty five attended to learn about plans for the new church. Thanks to Trish Challen for organizing, to Joyce Thompson and Beth Tedford for helping, and to Lynda Holmes for washing up. Bryan Beattie, Paul Seagrave, Ron Holmes, Bob Illman, Don Tedford, and Peter Challen provided the info.

Folks raised questions; answers were provided:

- Why not stay in the current building? It would cost as much to remodel as it would to build and we would still have an old building, no parking and stairs.
- What will the new building cost? \$2,400,000.00
- What are our assets? A little over one million: \$125,000.00 on hand; current church property worth about \$700,000.00, and a lot worth about \$200,000.00.
- How can we afford a debt of \$1,400,000.00? If each of our 200 households gave \$700.00 for ten years the debt would be paid (after taxes \$700.00 represents \$420.00 out of pocket).
- How can we afford a new building when we can barely afford the one we are in? Most of us who attend this church give to many charities. That is what church people do. However, seventy one percent of Canadians give only one tenth of one percent of what they have to charity. For this building period we might consider giving to build this new church and postpone giving to those other charities until the debt is paid. Moreover, while there are many worthwhile charities there are thousands or millions of people who support them. Our church has 200 households who support this project.
- Is it wise to build when so many United Churches are closing? Many United Churches are in rural areas. With farms increasing in size, and small towns declining in population it is not surprising that these churches are closing. As a town, Grand Bend is increasing.
- Some urban Churches are struggling with declining enrolment? Vibrant churches are increasing in enrolment.

Peter Challen



**Mark your calendars now for the annual United Church
Golf Tournament and dinner or just come out for dinner!**

When: Sunday, September 26

Where: Sandhills Golf Resort

Time: 1st tee off time - 1:00 p.m.

Look for information/registration sheets at the church or on our website.

Contact Lois Gill 519- 238- 5871 for more information

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Information from New Church Finance Team

The scenario that was shared with those who attended the dinner meetings in June set out what support would be needed to make the New Church a reality and to pay for the project.

Projected cost	\$ 2,500,000
Less cash on hand	115,000
Outstanding pledges	105,000
Sale of Main Street	700,000
Sales of extra lot on highway site	<u>180,000</u>
Total	\$1,100,000
Balance to be raised	\$1,400,000

Raising the funds to pay the balance could be done by 200 contributors pledging an average of \$7,000 spread over ten years. This requires a commitment of \$700 per year from each contributor, which when offset by the income tax credit for making the annual donation actually costs a net of about \$420 per year or about \$8 per week.

Is it worth \$8 per week from each of us, over and above current givings to have a beautiful new church for the Glory of God and to be enjoyed by ourselves and future generations in Grand Bend? *We think it is.*

This and other considerations will be shared with our congregation members as part of an every family visitation program this Fall. Two after Sunday service sessions are planned for September 19 and October 3 for those folks who would prefer that format to receive the information and materials for private review. Alternate will be an evening visit at home or in a smaller group. Sessions will be no more than 30 minutes in length.

Bryan Beattie

One Person's Ponderings

Worship is a Group Covenant

Worship with others is the only activity in town where we can consciously choose faith and receive God's peace. In none of our other activities do those things happen. Certainly we can do good things for others in our volunteer activities as well as through our church. We can have fellowship in community activities as well as in church. We can even watch inspirational TV services in the privacy of our own living rooms to learn lots about God's influence in our lives, as well as we can at church. We've all probably walked through a forest, or sat beside a lake or stream and felt especially close to God. In the privacy of our prayers we have both God's ear and voice. But none except worship as a group leads to renewing our faith and receiving God's peace. God didn't say "I will be your God and you will be my person". That is quite different from, "I will be your God and you will be my people". Renewing faith and receiving peace is a covenant between God and us as a group.

Peter Challen

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Donor Recognition

Donor recognition will occur in two ways – a book, and a plaque. A book, will record the names of all those who contribute to the new church building.

A plaque, entitled "*Walls of Faith*" will record those who contribute at least \$500 to the project and wish to be recognized in this fashion. The title of the plaque joins the walls of our new building with our motto, "Faith Issuing in Action". Our own Keith Harvey constructed this plaque – much thanks to Keith. The plaque represents the walls that form the front view of the new church, similar to the painting in our sanctuary by Bill Nieuwland. Each wall is made of blocks of clear finished oak and cherry. Each block is to have an inscription recognizing the donor according to the following guidelines:

- A minimum donation of \$500.00 is required for an inscription: e.g., "Fred and Margaret Smith".
- If smaller donations occur over time, the inscription may occur when a minimum of \$500.00 is reached.
- Donors' names may occur only once on the plaque.
- Donors may choose not to have their names inscribed.
- Unrelated persons may join to form one inscription: e.g., "Sandra Smith and Louise French".
- A business may have an inscription: e.g., "Fran's Bake Shop".
- Each inscription is limited to four lines with fourteen letters per line.
- Deadline dates will occur for each group of inscriptions; donations received after that deadline will be inscribed at the next deadline date.

Peter Challen

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Strategic Plan Update

Our current strategic plan, “Faith Issuing in Action”, is several years old. Rethinking what we do should be ongoing to ensure our ministry stays current, especially as we move towards a new building. All our teams and each of us are asked to analyze what we do to determine if we should do it differently – more effectively. In August the Council reviewed a host of our activities. Is there a better time for worship? Should we also have worship on a week night? When there are a few small children could they have activities in the sanctuary during worship? Could we have a different church government? Could fellowship receptions occur in the sanctuary?

Should we set up our own mission project? Should we change the order of our services? Should we make our offerings by walking to the front of the sanctuary? Could we expand our Prayer Team to a Pastoral Care Team? Should we have “real” bread for communion? Would power point enhance worship? Could we have a computerized sign on the front lawn? These and other questions will come up frequently in the next months. To be relevant we need to ask ourselves if what we are doing fits what God would have us do.

Peter Challen

Grocery Cards – A Win-Win Proposition

Our grocery card fundraiser continues to be the easiest way imaginable to make a donation to the church without costing you a penny. Since every one of us must buy groceries, we may as well be doing so with a Gift Card purchased through the church. The church can purchase these cards in large quantities at a discount so the church benefits by the amount of the discount, while you as the purchaser, get a receipt for your share of the discount. This charitable donation receipt applied to your income tax return has the same effect as buying your groceries at a discount.

Since its inception last December this program has made \$3,176.75 for the church with the average order size being nearly \$11,000. For the rest of the year, order deadlines are Oct. 10, Nov.14 and Dec. 12. Cards can be used at most grocery stores in the area and are currently available in denominations of \$50, \$100 and \$250. In December, smaller denominations will be made available to those who would like to use them as Christmas gifts.

It would be great to have all members of our church family taking advantage of this great opportunity. There has never been an easier way to augment your church givings. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Doug Procter
Project Co-ordinator

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The United Church Women



(The group at Westland Greenhouse)

This year has been one of transition. Where we used to have meetings every month, this year we have had events lead by teams of ladies.

Edna Frampton held a “silver” party where the women brought their favourite piece of silver. The April get-together, headed by Anne Marie Lord’s team, featured Marilyn Topham speaking on sewing. Followed in May by Mary McFadden’s team with a brown bag lunch at the church after which we car-pooled to Westland Nursery to create a patio planter.

In June we had our annual pot luck lunch held, this year, at Lynda Holmes residence. In September we had a fashion show, hosted by Norma Baird’s team at Grand Bend Clothing Store followed by refreshments at the church. In November there is a Jewellery Party planned in the church and in December we will have our annual Christmas Pot Luck lunch.

We still had, or assisted with, the various events such as Winter Carnival Soup & Sandwich Lunch, Soup Tasting, Women’s Thank Offering Service with Jacklyn Rader as special speaker. In July we had our annual Birthday Party at Blue Water Rest Home and in August, instead of a Yard Sale we opted to have a Bake Sale in conjunction with a Trunk Sale. These two events earned a total of \$758.50. In October we will be making meat pies, and in November we will provide lunch after the Anniversary Service.

As you can see, it has been a busy and exciting year. Thank you to all the women who have worked hard to make their events interesting and fun!

Marian Ogilvie

Sunday Nighters



We have started a new Fun and Fellowship program. The last Sunday of the month we are meeting at the church for pot-luck dinners. Food and conversation are always a good combination. The first two Sunday Nighters were held in July and August. The next one is Sept 26th. Come out and enjoy a great meal and fine conversation and learn to do the Minnesota Shuffle - it’s not a dance.

Trish Challen

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Council Survey

As part of our process of reviewing and analyzing our Church activities leading to development of our strategic plan for the future, we have discussed a wide ranging number of topics. In connection with our Sunday services we looked at several ideas that represent possible changes. No decisions have been made and the brief survey below is asking for congregational input on the concept of some of the thoughts put forward. This is not a vote for or against. It is an expression of opinion of the possibility of making the changes.

Please mark your survey by circling the number that matches your opinion and return the survey form by putting it on the plate at a service or pass it to Mary McFadden in the office (Wed-Fri from 10:00 a.m. – noon).

Changing start time of Sunday services:

Have service commence at 9:00 a.m.

1	2	3	4	5
Favor	Maybe	No Opinion	Don't Like	Disagree

Have service commence at 10:30 a.m.

1	2	3	4	5
Favor	Maybe	No Opinion	Don't Like	Disagree

If only a few children at a service have them move to a location in the sanctuary for quiet Sunday school activities (reading, coloring) rather than have them go downstairs:

1	2	3	4	5
Favor	Maybe	No Opinion	Don't Like	Disagree

Conduct a fellowship reception in the sanctuary:

Prior to service

1	2	3	4	5
Favor	Maybe	No Opinion	Don't Like	Disagree

Following service

1	2	3	4	5
Favor	Maybe	No Opinion	Don't Like	Disagree