

In the Orchard

Holy Week Worship Services

- Mar. 28 Palm Sunday**
10 a.m. In-person and
Live-Streamed
Worship Service
- Apr. 2 Good Friday**
10 a.m. In-person and
Live-Streamed
Worship Service
- Apr. 4 Easter Sunday**
7 a.m. Sunrise Worship
Service (outdoors,
pre-registration not
required)
- 10 a.m. In-person and
Live-Streamed
Worship Service,
Communion
- 1 p.m. In-person Worship
Service,
Communion

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Blessings in Uncertainty

Dear OVU and Covenanter Church Friends:

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. Mark 16:1-2

I am trying to imagine what it must have been like to arrive at the empty tomb. Mark's Gospel records these three women getting up early in the morning with a difficult but essential task on their minds. They needed to anoint the body of their loved one who had died. As much as I try, I cannot possibly imagine what that could have been like – arriving full of grief and despair, and then seeing an open tomb, an empty grave, our loved one missing. How could this ever become 'good news'?

Although trite in comparison, I arrived at our church on March 15 a year ago to find it empty. The true level of grief to come was not yet known, but like everyone else, I wondered just what had happened.

These two Marys and Salome from Mark's Gospel would soon learn and experience much more than an empty tomb, and their grieving would change to joy as they saw their loved one again.

This Easter I know a lot more now than I did last Easter. And although there is

still sadness to be experienced, we can also know joy. Our church, like so many others, responded as these women responded. We all ran to the people we could count on. For me, that was and is our church family. We celebrated our Sundays in a new way, first by recording, and then gathering in limited numbers, and then live-streaming to our community and beyond.

And we saw family and strangers, friends and neighbours, communities and of course our church, come together in love and support for one another, just as Jesus' faith family banded together despite a rocky start. We did not know where things were heading, and even now do not know how it will all turn out, but our blessings overflow in knowing that we are still together in all our faith and compassion and caring while we continue to love, love and love.

The women and men who came together around the knowledge of Jesus' death and the empty tomb found Jesus not only still amongst them but within each of them, and they found their ministry. And we have discovered in our losses all the great things that our centering faith in Jesus and our belief in each other has done and will continue to do as we live out the essential, undeniable, wondrous truth found in our faith – that it is all about love, hope and faith abiding within each of us, and the greatest of these is love.

Rev Don Sellsted



Celebrating a Traditional Bermudian Easter

by Peter Hardy, a member of Wesley Methodist Church in Hamilton, Bermuda (Bermuda and Nova Scotia are both part of Region 15)

Kites, many splashes of colours dancing in the clear blue sky. Others, holding steady in the breeze with streaming tails pointing out the wind direction. Crowds of people on the beach



holding taut kite strings, in competition to see who is judged to have the most attractive, the biggest, the smallest, the most original, and the most authentic in design. Confusion as strings and tails entwine and someone's kite crashes down. Kites, the symbol of Resurrection, straining to fly high – the Easter essential in Bermuda.

And what has happened to lead up to this day of painting of the skies? Bermuda's natural palms have been used in churches to see enacted by Sunday School children the frond-waving procession down the aisles on Palm

Sunday. The heavy scent of Bermuda Easter lilies is in the air. They have been used to create crosses and wreaths; some stand elegantly tall in vases on communion tables --nature's own contribution to Bermuda at Easter time.

In the church too we have celebrated Communion on Maundy Thursday to remember the Last Supper. On Good Friday, the Communion table is presented with

the Crown of Thorns and draped in purple. Inside the building we share the three hour vigil, or follow the re-enactment of the way of the Cross through the streets of Town of St. George, a World Heritage Site. The Minister of Ebenezer Methodist Church takes on the role of Christ, carrying his Cross to the end.

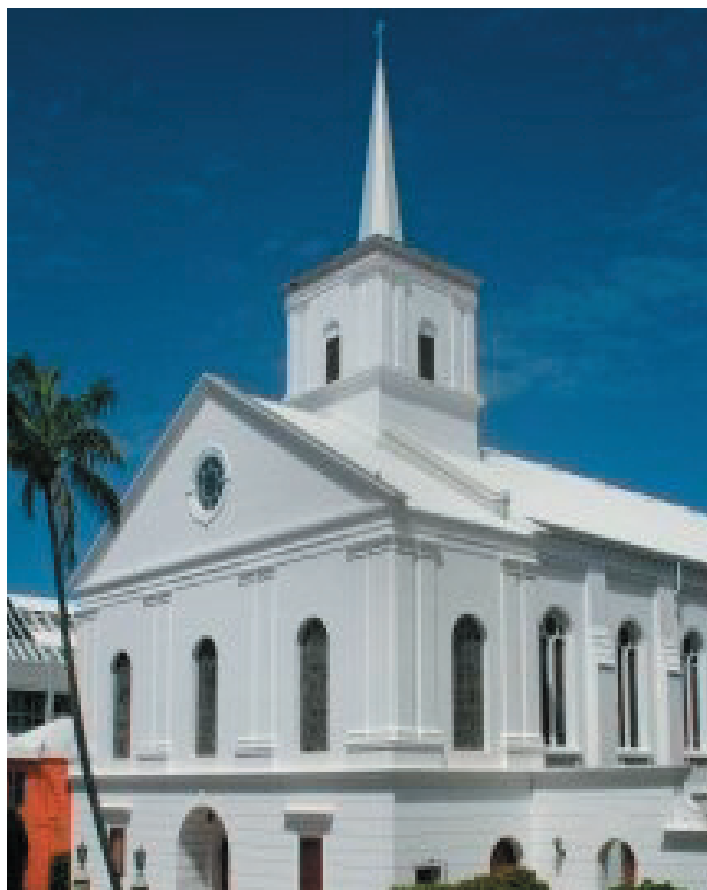
Finally, and wonderfully we gather on Easter Day to sing (masks and all) "Christ the Lord is Risen today", and listen to the triumphant Hallelujah Chorus pouring forth from the organ.

Again, Bermuda places its own stamp on the

Resurrection. Traditional hot cross buns are made by the dozens at homes or in local bakeries, each with their own "special" recipes, competing to be recognized as "the best". Eaten with codfish cakes, again each from competing recipes, and peas 'n' rice, this is true Bermudian Easter fare (if you're not out celebrating

in groups for brunches at hotels or restaurants!). Blame COVID-19 for taking away that opportunity this year!

After we've flown our kites, worshipped in church and eaten our Easter food, its down to a traditionally competitive game of marbles outside again, to complete a traditional Bermuda Easter.



Many thanks to Rev David Steele, minister at Wesley Methodist Church, for sharing these exterior and interior photos. The Church's foundation stone was laid in 1876 and it was dedicated in 1899.

The congregation had previously worshipped in Zion Chapel, which was the first church constructed in the city of Hamilton, and the first church in Bermuda to allow blacks and whites to worship under the same roof at the same time. It was constructed in 1810 and demolished in 1910.



Can We be That Church?

Blessings to all on this day! As we celebrate that Christ has Risen and what that means for each of us, let us be thankful. Let us be thankful that we wake up each day with hope. Hope opens the door for much in this world and if we are brave we can take on those challenges to make this world a better place.

We are very fortunate in where we live and what life looks like for the majority of us. As I write this on PIE Day, let us celebrate that we are awakening to who we can be as a Community of Faith and how welcoming we can be. Can we be that loving church that welcomes whoever comes to our door

seeking comfort? Can we be that church that finds ways to support those who find themselves in a situation of homelessness, are struggling with the possible lack of work because of COVID-19 or poor health, or someone who has no family for support.

God has likely shown each of us love and compassion

at some time in our lives and I truly believe and hope that as a Community of Faith we can pay it forward.

On Easter Sunday, rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord and be good disciples in loving and working to improve the lives of all around us.

Happy Easter,

Jane McDonald, Council Chair

Live-Streaming Provides Live Worship For All

by Sylvia Jacquard

When COVID-19 closed the church in March 2020, the church quickly pivoted to providing taped, online worship services. Over the summer, planning for re-opening the church included preparation, to live-stream the Sunday worship services since only about 30 people would be able to attend services on any given Sunday.

After some technical trial and error, the first live-streamed service took place on November 29th, the first Sunday in Advent.

The live-streaming setup requires a mounted light on each side of the sanctuary aimed at each pulpit, and one video camera mounted on the audiovisual corner

and one tripod at the back of the sanctuary.

Up in the AV corner, the camera switcher takes input from the two cameras and the Powerpoint and forwards it to the computer that shares the service via YouTube.

There have been 20+ live-streamed services in total since the beginning of December with an average of 194 viewers per service.

There were two funeral services that were live-streamed and they had an average viewership of 367 people. This service has been much appreciated by family members and friends.

Rev Don taped Lenten reflections again this year. These daily videos have had an average viewing of

90 people per episode.

As well, Rev Don has been sharing the work of the various ministries of our church through the taping

of Fruit of the Orchard ministries vignettes. Thus far 8 ministries have been highlighted with a average viewership of 141 people.



The Live Streaming team is Gary Dunfield on sound, Sylvia Jacquard managing the camera switching and Carol Dewar running the Powerpoint. Subs are Wayne MacDonald, Jane McDonald and Grace Marcoux.

“We Are Together and We Have Hope”

by Donna Murphy

It has been over a year since we heard of the COVID-19 virus and watched it travel around the world, right to our doorsteps. The fear, loss and isolation felt by so many is not to be underestimated; but, there is hope. *Psychology Today* tells us “Hope is not just a feel-good emotion,

but a dynamic cognitive motivational system”. We have that motivation system here thanks to the continuous and diligent support of many working and caring for one another. That motivation can be found in many ways: in our Sunday morning live-streamed worship service, the continuous communication

from church committees through our administrative assistant, the support of our custodian to keep us physically distanced and our meeting space sanitized, the weekly coffee time on Zoom, the Monday morning yoga group, the startup of the Steeple Strummers on Zoom, the monthly men’s breakfast,

the building committee working to bring our hopes for an expanded gathering space to be and more. We are here, granted in a different way; but, we are together and we have hope, in this strange time. In Mark 9:23 it is written “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

A Serving of PIE and Radical Hospitality

by Vicky Austin & Dale MacArthur
co-chairs, Affirming Committee
On March 14, Orchard Valley United Church centred our worship service on PIE Day. PIE means being Public, Intentional and Explicit. These are the standards we hold ourselves and our welcome to, when we become “affirming”. On PIE Day - a national initiative of the United Church - we acknowledge and celebrate the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people in faith communities and beyond, across Canada.

Rainbow Colours of the Pride Flag: Red – life, Orange – healing, Yellow – sun (or not hiding in the shadows), Blue – harmony and serenity, Green – nature, Purple – reflection and spirituality, Pink – a positive colour for Queer people.

Members of the OVUC Affirming Committee, under Rev Don’s guidance, developed and participated in the Order of Worship for this service. Scripture readings, special music, Rev. Don’s sermon (The Gates are Open Wide!) and prayers all focused on inclusion and welcome to “those who suffer from discrimination because of their gender identity or sexual orientation”. We are grateful to Micah for her recorded reading of The Little Red Shed during the Children’s Time. Everyone in attendance was able to take a little piece of the PIE home, thanks to Cheryl Sellsted, who made apple pie tarts (individually wrapped, of course!). Sandra generously provided the rainbow ribbons for us all to wear on Sunday . . . and every day.

Your Affirming Committee has been

making steady progress along the path to OVUC becoming a fully designated Affirm United Church (which will hopefully take place by congregational vote at the 2022 AGM). We plan to provide workshops and guest speakers along the way but will adhere to COVID-19 protocols as long as required. Until then, we will continue to share the blessings of “radical hospitality”, as Rev Don spoke of during his sermon. Please feel free to let us know if you have questions or concerns. Information and resources are available on the OVUC website under Committees/Affirming.

A display featured the Children’s Time book, a painting that supported it, Pride flags and Birch Bark/Two Spirit coffee.



A first for congregation, - a P (Public), I (Intentional) and E (Explicit) Service, was presented by the Affirming Committee.

Dale MacArthur read the candlelighting liturgy as Rev Don lit the candles.



Julien Davis and his children, Micah and Gabe Bornemann-Davis, read the Prayers of the People.



Dale MacArthur hands out the apple tarts prepared by Cheryl Sellsted.



Orchard Valley Building Update

by Harvey Gilmour

At its February 24 meeting, OVUC Council appointed an “implementation” Facilities committee to work with Tommy Duggan (representing OVUC) and B.D. Stevens’ architect Cory McFadden on the structure and engineering – the next phase of design - and to carry the project through to completion in 2022.

This new Facilities Committee is comprised of Gary Dunfield as Chair, Tommy Duggan, Brooke Anderson, Jane McDonald, and David Murphy. In addition, Council appointed Nancy Handrigan and Harvey Gilmour to begin to put together a team and plan to raise funds for the project to supplement \$1.4m available for the project from OVUC Trust Funds. An initial discussion of a campaign for funds was held March 3. The building renovations and expansion (\$1.75M) and related construction and financing issues are currently projected to total \$2M.

A campaign for funds can reduce the amount that will be required for a mortgage. The Committee is

examining the likelihood of success for an objective of \$250,000 over a five-year pledge period. In addition to Nancy and Harvey, Scott Sweatman, Jim Dewar, Ned Chase, Ian Godfrey, Chris Seymour, Bill Simpson, Jane McDonald, Susan Cater and Rev Don Sellsted made

up the preliminary discussion group.

The focus will be on participation with the ultimate objective to involve as many members, adherents and/or friends of OVUC as possible. Stay tuned for announcements from the fundraising team.



Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council: 50+ Years of Faith in Action

by Janet Roberts

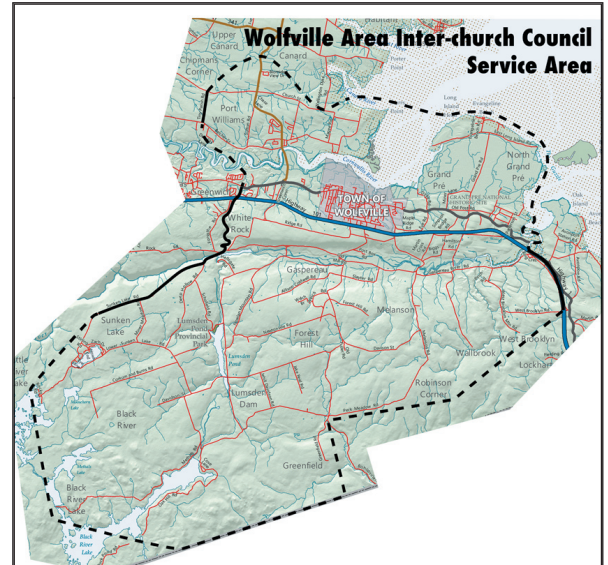
A story of Ruth - I volunteer with the Wolfville Area Food Bank and I want to tell you a story about a woman I know – I'll call her Ruth. To keep her costs down, she turned her heat way down. She wore double socks and sweaters around the house. And, right after supper she spent the evening in bed because her apartment was cold and she could stay warm under blankets. She couldn't afford enough food, so finally she broke down and came to our Food Bank. When Ruth got home with her food she spread it out on the table and made a list of everything she'd been given. She thought that, like other "banks", she had to pay it back some day and then she sat down and cried because she could not imagine how she would ever be able to do that. When Ruth came to see us again, we explained that the food was a gift from kind and generous people in our community. Again, she cried; this time from relief. And gave me the most genuine hug and thank you that you can imagine.

Did you know that the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council (WAICC) provides outreach ministry to assist people like

Ruth on behalf of local churches, including Orchard Valley United Church? Here are a few interesting facts to help you get to know WAICC a little better. **Who is WAICC?** Founded in 1970, WAICC has offered ecumenical worship, education, and humanitarian action for over 50 years! The Council was established by area churches to respond to needs in the community that could be best served through common action. Today, it works on behalf of eight local Christian churches and organizations: Orchard Valley United Church; Wolfville United Baptist Church; St. John's Anglican Church; St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church; Port Williams Baptist Church; Manning Memorial Chapel – Acadia University; Religious Society of Friends - Quakers; and L'Arche Homefires. **What does WAICC do?** WAICC's initiatives (that reflect faith in action) are made possible by people in our community who provide essential resources: volunteers give their time and

talents; donors give money and food. Initiatives focus on two broad areas:

- Attending to Spiritual Needs by hosting worship services for residents of the Wolfville Nursing Home and Wolfville



Elms, and by organizing ecumenical worship services and community events such as speakers, workshops, and vigils.

- Addressing Social and Humanitarian Needs through a school supply program, support for student food programs and for individuals' emergency and special needs, the Wolfville Area Food Bank, and the Christmas Hamper program.

Where does WAICC operate?

WAICC's outreach initiatives assist people in the service area (see map) regardless of religious affiliation. WAICC's ministry was aptly described by Rev Doug Hergett in his book, Visible Faith, when he observed that WAICC's good work in the community is possible because "church members have been joined and supported in their endeavors by many others whose motivation is a social or humanitarian concern."

Orchard Valley can be proud of the work being done in the community on your behalf by WAICC volunteers to help our neighbours with very real needs. If you would like to learn more, please contact Andy Pitter.

Men's Group Plans Fall Take Out Turkey Dinner

by Bill Woodman, Chairperson, Turkey Dinner Subcommittee

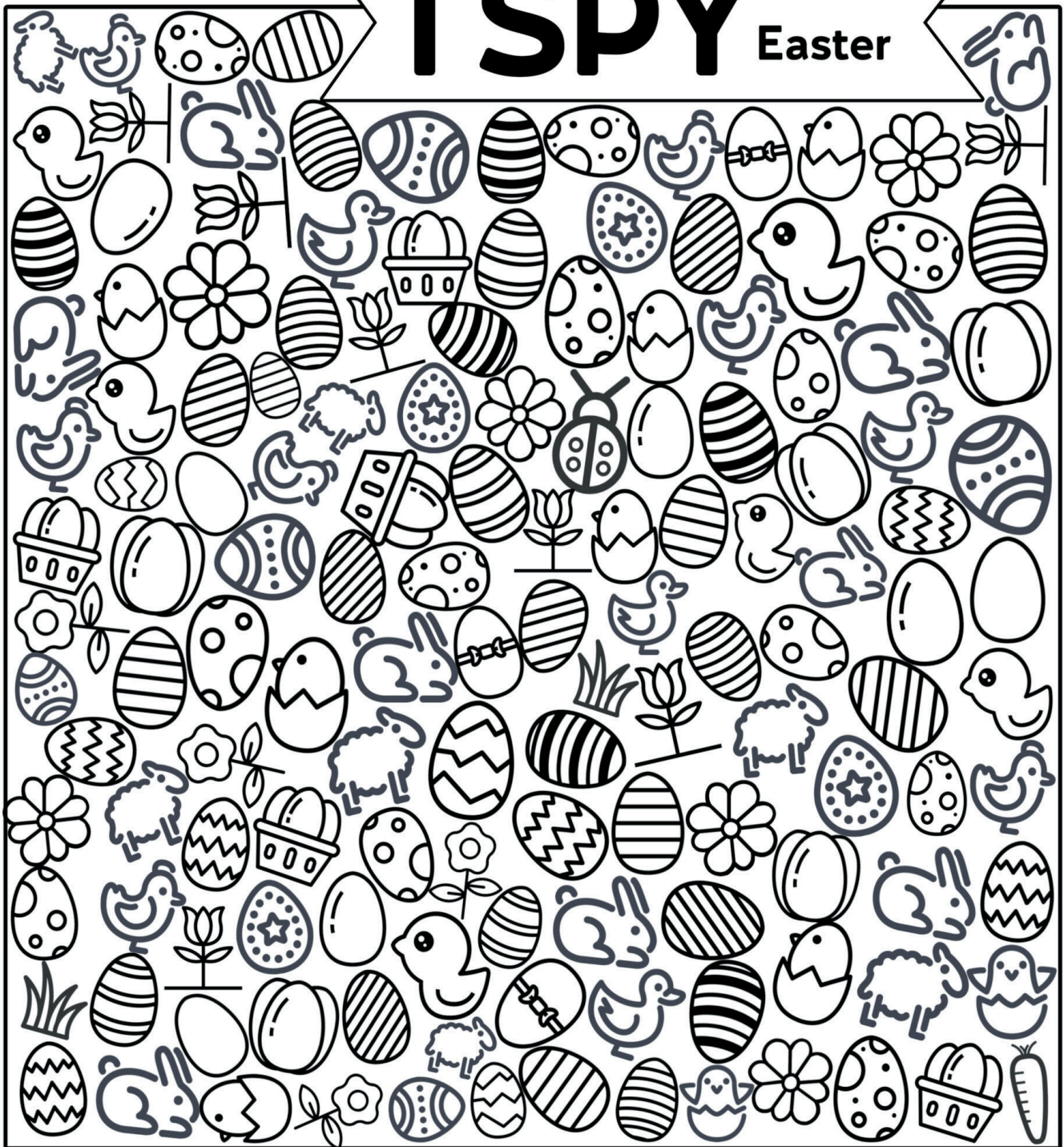
The Men's Fellowship group of Orchard Valley United Church in the fall of 2019 decided to have a fundraiser to help with the building expenses of the renovation of the church.

A number of projects were discussed and a decision was made to have a turkey dinner. That dinner raised approximately



\$2000 which was presented to the Building Committee. Due to COVID-19 during the year of 2020, the dinner was cancelled, but this year we decided to do a take out turkey dinner from the Louis Millett Centre in New Minas. We would like to thank at this time all of the members of the Men's Fellowship group for the work they put into the supper and also to donors and the congregation of the church for their assistance.

I SPY Easter



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He is Risen!



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RISEN

SALVATION

STONE

SUNDAY

TOMB

ANGEL

CALVARY

CHRIST

CROSS

CROWN

DISCIPLES

EMPTY

MARY