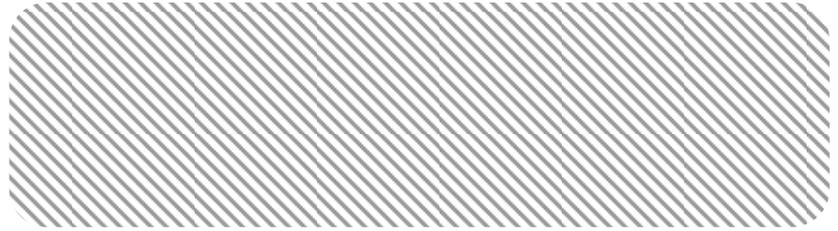


news
@
westhill

May
Jun
2019



Report From Your Board Chair

This is my first report to you. Let me start out by saying that I am honoured to assume the position of Board Chair and look forward to working with our dedicated leaders, Gretta, Scott, Annie and Babette. My heartfelt thanks to past Chair, Randy Bowes, who has led us for 9 years through many challenges and used his problem-solving, organizational and leadership skills to see us through. Randy will continue as Past Chair as a member of the Board and the Executive Committee. The Board welcomed Jan Garvey, who assumed the position of Ministry and Personnel Chair while we thanked Kevin Jackson, John DiPede, and Wei Djao for their terms as members of the Board and the huge contributions they made.

The Board continues to respond to some of our property and environmental needs. It was a relief to resolve our roof issues and address the water damage and mould challenges inside. A top priority is the repair work on the parking lot where there are several depressed areas. An examination of what lies beneath the surface is an important part of the repair so that we can have a lasting solution, rather than a temporary or cosmetic one. Our outdoor sign is in need of attention as it has fallen into disrepair. A second issue for the Board is driven by our financial need to attract more renters of our space, both short and long term. A task force is working on this issue, consisting of Florence, Kevin, Babette, Louise, Ruth, Barb and Deb. Under their leadership, we have done a major tidying up, painting and staging for promotional photos. With consultation help from a TUCC (Toronto United Church Conference) representative we have been progressing in our effort to attract renters. This necessitates us needing to have the foyer of the building looking more like an office space than a church gathering area during business hours. We appreciate all of Annie's efforts in making this happen. An important part of our "sprucing up" operation, is to replace the chairs in the sanctuary, known in secular terms as the great or meeting hall.

As seems to be the trend with church boards, we still face financial and personnel challenges. Our budget is forecasting a deficit, but less than first anticipated. In facing this reality, we continue to thank our members and adherents for their consistent generosity and encourage those not in our PAR (pre-authorized remit) program to consider doing so. On the macro level, we continue to look to the United Church and community partnerships for other sources of revenue. Regarding our human resources challenges, we need to restore our elements committee, our speakers and program coordinator and to continue the leadership recruitment and development program.

It is my hope to keep my written comments to 500 words or less and my verbal ones to less than 3 minutes. I will always welcome your input.

Michael Lawrie, Chair

News From First Nations Study Group

QUERIES/RESPONSE FROM OUR MPP

On March 25th our First Nations Study Group wrote a letter to our local MPP, Vijay Thanigasalam for Scarborough-Rouge Park, inquiring about the Ontario Government's actions on:

- The ongoing problems with water pollution in Grassy Narrows First Nation.
- Preventing the suicides in First Nations communities and what degree of support is offered when they do occur.
- What if any history of Indigenous Peoples is included in the new curriculum for schools.
- Asking for an opportunity to meet with Mr. Thanigasalam once again in the month of April.

Their response (below) was received April 2, 2019. No date was offered to us for a meeting.

Thank you for reaching out to us and I appreciate your patience on this matter.

Our government remains committed to working with Indigenous communities to identify mercury contaminated sites in the English and Wabigoon Rivers and develop and implement a plan to appropriately remediate these sites. An \$85 million English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Trust has been established, and the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel directs how funds from the trust are distributed. The Panel is comprised of members from Grassy Narrows First Nation, Wabaseemoong Independent Nations and Ontario.

Our government is working to provide supports and services to help Indigenous children and youth to succeed, together with the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Children, Community and Social Services, and Education. We have specifically invested in preventative services on-the-ground in First Nations communities focused on life-promotion skills. These include community-led and youth-focused initiatives that promote leadership, build pathways to wellness, and address service needs. The aim is to support youth and families on their healing journey, and to connect youth to their land and culture.

Some Examples of Support:

- *This January, we provided \$54,000 to Nibinamik First Nation to complete their wellness plan and support youth at risk, in partnership with Ryerson University.*
- *We also provided \$40,200 to Mushkegowuk Tribal Council to develop a Community Safety and Wellbeing pilot project in partnership with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and Public Safety Canada.*
- *Our government is committed to building more comprehensive child and youth mental health services that are easier to access, of better quality, more integrated at the community level, and that focus on better outcomes for children, youth and families. To support this commitment we are investing an additional \$3.8 billion over 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy.*
- *Our government is committed to the success of Indigenous students and ensuring that all students learn about First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives. As part of this work we are committed to enhancing connections between curriculum and Indigenous peoples' experiences, perspectives, knowledge and ways of knowing. We look forward to working cooperatively with Indigenous partners on an approach to supporting Indigenous education in Ontario.*

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns.

Anetes Anton, Case Manager | Communications Assistant
Office of MPP Vijay Thanigasalam - Scarborough - Rouge Park - 416-283-8448

WHAT DOES THE ONTARIO BUDGET ‘SAY’ ABOUT OUR GOVERNMENT’S STANCE ON CHILDREN?

Upon reading Tanya Talaga’s column of April 18, 2019 in the Toronto Star, one cannot help but question the sincerity of the Ontario Government on these issues and their claims that they are ‘for the People’.... and ‘Protecting what matters most’ does not seem to include children.

And now Ontario is the only province without a child advocate’s office.

As of May 1, 2019 the office of Ontario’s Child Advocate will no longer exist. A few of its functions will transfer to the Ombudsman’s office. However, the Child Advocate’s office in Thunder Bay, which has been a champion of many vulnerable children (this is where the 7 Indigenous youth were found dead in the rivers surrounding Lake Superior), will be no more. Funding supporting the Feathers of Hope, a youth advocacy group, has gone.

Irman Elman, the outgoing Ontario child advocate has stated “We would get 4,000 to 6,000 calls a year.” His office has also fought over the past eight years for the power to investigate deaths of children in care (and he won!), but that investigation will no longer be under the office of the Ombudsman.

Mr Elman believes “the reasons youth feel so hopeless is they feel voiceless. They feel no one is listening. They don’t feel like they matter. That is a very dangerous situation for young people.”

Our group has again requested another meeting with Mr. Thanigasalam and we are awaiting a response from his office.



Children at Wapekeka First Nation, Northern Ontario

submitted by Ruth Gill for First Nations Study Group



IN THE SPIRIT

Yoga Studio & Wine Lounge



REMINDER — YOGA CLASSES (SENIORS DISCOUNT). We still offer special seniors classes (yoga in chairs and for those with mobility issues) Mondays at 10:15-11:15 a.m. and Thursdays 9:00-10:00 a.m. (\$15/class includes tea/coffee & cookies). (Highland Creek Plaza, 376 Old Kingston Road)

We have many more options for all ages. Please check out our website for our class schedule, rates and more information (647-352-4879): www.inthespirtityoga.com, email letsconnect@inthespirtityoga.com

Women, Let's Dine!

Interested in having some time with other women in the congregation? Time that connects with both your heart and your mind? Feel the need for a deeper conversation than Sunday coffee allows? Have a desire to get to know other women a little bit better?

For many years, West Hill has had two women's groups meeting on a regular basis: the Labyrinth walkers who meet in the back parking lot on Tuesday mornings and the Crafty Ladies who gather Tuesday afternoons to work on their crafts together and ultimately raise a ton of money for the church. If you aren't one of them or quite sure who they are, let me share their secret: they are the women in the congregation who are rich in friendship, connection, wellbeing, and love. They have fallen in love with being together, the magic elixir for strengthening personal wellbeing. You can see it on Sundays. They are the people who practically glow.

Not everyone has Tuesdays free, though, and not everyone's interests turn toward crafts or walking the labyrinth; we know that. And if we could bottle the side effects of their time together, we'd patent it and sell it in the Kiosk! Alas, no tech will brew that sort of potion.

We can do the next best thing, however, by providing another opportunity to bring women together during the week to engage around a topic, listen to one another's stories, or simply come to know one another better. So, we're starting with a supper gathering on the third Thursday evening of the month before choir practices. Right now, we're running with the name, "Women, Let's Dine!" and our first supper gathering will be Thursday, May 16th in the Upper Lounge. We'll begin to gather any time after 5 and begin our meal around 5:45 so we can be tidied up in time for those in the choir to be ready for its 7:30 start time.

Pot lucks are great, but they also require some coordination, always take time for people to prepare, and often end up with leftovers the group needs to address. With that in mind, we are suggesting you bring your own supper with you; if you have some to share, you're welcome to offer it. Don't stay away if you don't have time to make something; we'll manage to fill a plate or two with what we've brought individually. We just want you to come!

I am so looking forward to our first meal together in May!

~ gretta



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Very special thanks go out to Dorothy Hirlehey who for many years regularly provided news@westhill (formerly The Salt Shaker) with stories from The UCC's Ministry & Service who direct our donated funds to help groups of people in urgent need locally, nationally, and all over the world. These stories were very interesting, informative, and much-appreciated additions to our newsletter.



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Spring MARKETPLACE

SATURDAY, MAY 25th 10 AM - 1 PM

BBQ LUNCH, BAKE TABLE,
WHITE ELEPHANT, BOOKS, DVDs
FASHION BOUTIQUE (GENTLY USED)
CRAFTS, PLANTS
(No large furniture at this time please)

Please bring your items to the church on
Sundays and Tuesdays or call the church to
make alternative arrangements for drop-off



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Helping People Is What We Love To Do!**

news@westhill looks forward to featuring Deb Ellis as a regular contributor on the subject of FOOD! This is not just any tasty food ... it's environmentally responsible, economical, wholesome, and nutritious tasty food! For those of you who have an interest in plant-based diets, you'll be eager to prepare and feast on some fabulous recipes, tried and approved inside Deb's own kitchen. Coming up in the July/August issue!



It's time to stop using "meat" as a synonym for "protein."

Plant foods are abundant in protein and they are better for your health and the health of the planet.



Spring Clean-Up

Saturday, June 1st, 9-3 PM

Pot Luck Lunch

Please sign up in the lobby or contact the office if you would like to lend a hand!



**Wayne Crossley Memorial
Golf Tournament**
MONDAY JUNE 10TH

Winchester Golf Club
Winchester Road - East of Thickson, Whitby

Tee off 10:15 - Shotgun start
\$100 per person
Includes green fees, cart & prizes for all.
Dinner to follow (5pm)
at West Hill United Church

(Join us for dinner only - \$20)

A small image of a white golf ball with dimples, resting on a green lawn.

Tuesdays ~ May 21st, & June 4th

West Hill Matters

**Strength and
Compassion
In Leadership**

At West Hill we have a long history of striving to improve how we work together to achieve our shared goals. Continuing that tradition, in March we began by offering a series of six Leadership Development workshops to members of the Board; and the entire congregation is invited to attend since the topics apply to home situations as much as to how, for example, Boards make decisions.

We have, at no cost, secured an experienced non-profit Board Member and Executive Director to deliver six lively, fun and interactive workshops on topics that include The Role of the Board, Proposal Writing, and Decision-Making.

Board members are invited to attend all six so that the Board can be even more effective than before. Congregants are welcome to attend any, all or none of the sessions.

We look forward to seeing you there.



Upcoming/Ongoing Special Events At-A-Glance

Tuesdays, May 21 and June 4.....	Leadership Workshops (page 7)
Thursdays, May 16 and June 20.....	Women, Let's Dine! (page 4)
Saturday, May 25.....	Spring Marketplace (page 6)
Sunday, May 26.....	Sunday Service ~ David Newland (Perspective) The Northwest Passage in Story and Song
Saturday, June 1	Spring Clean-up (page 7)
Monday, June 10	Wayne Crossley Memorial Golf Tournament (page 7)

Regular Services, Meetings and Events

Every Sunday	Sunday Service	10:30 AM
First Sunday of every month	Visitors' and Travellers' Lunch	12:00 PM
Every other Monday (May 13 thru Jun 10; Jun 24 TBC)	Men's Spirituality Group	7:00 PM
Last Monday of every month	First Nations Study Group Meeting	1:00 PM
Every Tuesday	Labyrinth Walk	10:30 AM
.....	Holiday Crafting	1:00 PM
Second Tuesday of every month	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
Every Thursday	Choir Practice	7:30 PM
Every other Friday (concludes May 10)	Book Study - <i>The Power of Kindness</i>	7:30 PM
Last Friday of every month	Dinner with Friends	5:30 PM

West Hill United Board of Directors for 2019

Board Chair: Michael Lawrie
Past Chair: Randy Bowes
Finance Chair: Frank Kilroy
Property Chair: Gary Megson
Ministry & Personnel Chair: Jan Garvey
Ministers at Large: Dennis Hollingshead, Ruth Gill, Deb Ellis
Presbytery Reps: Louise Lawrie, Annemarie Leepel
Minister: Gretta

Acting Secretary: Annie DiPede

There are other Board Positions that are vacant. If you are interested in joining the WHU Board, please call the office.

West Hill United

A warm place to find yourself

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