

East Central Ontario Region

Retirees Network Newsletter, April 2022.



New Life,

Surely this is what we, as a caring United and Uniting Church need to be all about, and in many cases ARE all about. It has been a pleasure listening to those members of the Covenant Support Team speak about their congregation and church experiences which have created a new buzz around Church communities. The creation of Warming Centres in winter when the temperature for homeless people drops to -10 degrees and below.

The fact that a Belleville United Church Congregation has delivered over 100,000 meals to the homeless and deprived population of that city. All outreach which would have been unthinkable for these congregations several years ago. Yet progressive ministry and members reached out to the underprivileged communities, stepping up to the plate to fulfill gaps in the services offered in that area. Consultative groups have been formed to enable moving forward with confidence bred from experience of other entities.

In today's complex environment we must think outside the box of traditional behaviour and consider new areas of service A Jesus move.

Sounds rather far-fetched. Believe me, it is not. In a recent Retirees Network meeting where we reached out to another region for support, we posed the question:

We invited those present to hear from two retirees from the Retirees Forum Clergy answer this question in their own way:

They were Rev. Elizabeth Macdonald and Rev. Dr Wayne Hilliker.

The question discussed was:

We invite you to join us in a conversation about how our experience in pastoral ministry might be helpful in addressing the issues facing those in ministry today. For example: changing perspectives in theology, communicating the gospel in a mostly secular/unchurched environment, lack of financial and other resources. Two members of the leadership team will offer their answers and then we will break into small groups where we can all respond.

In addition, we spread the invitation further to include Horseshoe Regional Council retired clergy and this brought additional interest from several individuals.

The talk commenced with the dialogue of 10 minutes from Elizabeth followed by Wayne. We broke up into small groups to discuss what had been the answer of the 2 members of the Retirees Forum. The discussion was so successful that we ran out of time after about 30 minutes of break out discussion. About 20 members were in attendance with several from HRC and several sending regrets.

I would believe that our next Network meeting will be equally as successful, and again we will reach out to other interested regions.

[Ian Robb (Chair)/ Caroline Giesbrecht (Sec.)]

FIVE QUOTES PLUS ONE WORTH PONDERING

– submitted by UC retiree C. Wayne Hilliker

1) “I am not optimistic, but I am hopeful.... For hope arouses, as nothing else can arouse, a passion for the possible.”

(---Peace Activist Robert McAfee Brown)

2) “Faith is the direction our feet start moving when we discover that we are loved”.

(---Writer Frederick Buechner)

3) “I have arrived at an understanding of faith that has far more to do with trust than with certainty.”

(---Writer and teacher Barbara Brown Taylor)

4) “If the only prayer you ever say is thank you, that will suffice.” “Console thyself. Thou wouldst not seek me if thou hadst not found me.”

(---Medieval mystic Meister Eckhart)

- 5) “One of the most seductive temptations for the preacher is to explain too much too soon. The parables remain vivid because they refuse to cater to our craving for tidy completion.”

(---American theologian Harvey Cox)

Finally:

Debate between a philosopher and a theologian:

It seems a philosopher and a theologian were once engaged in intense debate. The theologian charged:

‘The trouble with you philosophers is that you are like a blind man looking in a dark room for a black kitten that is not there.’

To which the philosopher replied:

‘And the trouble with you theologians is that you always find it.’

Finally, yes, Finally!

This comes to you as a personal comment and I cannot claim that it in any way represents the thoughts/will of the Retirees Forum/Network, however, I think it must be said and reflected upon. *Ukraine, and the Ukraine people.* It is so easy to turn a blind eye/ear to what is going on in Eastern Europe when, given ample opportunity, it could be happening to us here in Canada. Suffering of the magnitude we are seeing courtesy of the news broadcasts defies the imagination. We can sit back and follow along with the news OR, we can thank our Canadian Government in Ottawa (all Parties for there is no room here for politics) for taking appropriate action in making available visas for those families and individuals affected who wish to seek the solace of safer environments.



My life is an incredible gift from another which I honor completely. I am delighted to say that Canadian Citizens are stepping up to the plate and also offering their gifts in any way they can (resources permitting.) In Brighton, where I live, we have formed a Not-for-Profit Company (it will eventually have Charitable status) and are set to provide all the necessary elements to family life for those Ukrainians whom we sponsor in this area of Northumberland. Now who is the “WE” I am talking about? The Not-for-Profit Company is named: H.U.G.S. Brighton (which is an acronym for ‘Help Ukrainians Get Settled-Brighton.’ Rev. Wanda Stride is the chairperson of this organization and assisted by an executive of a further six people. If you should wish to help in any way or receive more information, please contact Wanda or myself cc Wanda and we will be pleased to receive your support.

Blessings, Ian and the Retirees Forum, April 2022

