

First-St Andrew's
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Tidings

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Tidings

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David Wardlaw

Think back one year. Life was 'normal' individually and collectively for most of us. There were no known large scale public health threats, the economy was fine, and the life and work of FSA was humming.

I cannot recall a year in my life when the proverbial apple cart was upset more than the 2019-2020 church year. The mantra 'expect the unexpected' can be applied to almost everything. The headliner is the Covid-19 pandemic. The extent to which the pandemic has affected FSA is revealed in numerous ways; I imagine you can list a handful off the top. One way is through the lens of *Tidings*. The June 2020 was a special pandemic issue – every article considered the impact of COVID-19 on FSA and churches in general. In the current issue 16 of 22 articles/reports make reference to the pandemic.

At the same time FSA has experienced an enormous upheaval in its staffing situation. Our Music Director, Terry Head, died tragically in November of last year. Terry, your spirit is with us. Our Youth Coordinator, Jane Dockrill, has been valiantly dealing with cancer and its treatment for much of 2019-20. Jane, our thoughts and prayers are with you. Our Minister of Worship, Michelle Down, accepted a call to a pastoral charge in Kingston beginning September 2020. Michelle, we thank you for your ministry at FSA and we wish you and Joyce all the best.

It is easy to despair, to be frustrated, perhaps even become depressed, at all the activities and events that have been suspended, cancelled, or changed in fundamental ways, and at the loss of communing in person with friends, relatives, colleagues, and fellow attendees of FSA. But as we enter the 2020-21 church year, many of the harshest restrictions imposed by the pandemic have been lifted, in-person worship is set to resume, and we are embarking on staff renewal.

One unexpected, progressive outcome of the pandemic restrictions is the distinct possibility of regular online availability of the FSA worship service (see the Communications and Marketing report). Another example is a virtual golf tournament that raised as much money as the real one (see White Squirrel report). There will be other unanticipated outcomes as we find new ways to do old things and do some brand new things. On the staffing front we have our next Director of Music, Erich Knapp. Erich, welcome to FSA! We are also getting ready to search for our next Minister of Worship and our next Minister of Pastoral Care (David McKane will then attempt to retire again – see Minister's Message).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



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Rev. Dr. David McKane



David as Rev. Proudfoot (circa 2006)



When I was a small child I loved to watch television cowboy shows. Gene Autry used to sing while riding his wonder horse Champion, "I'm back in the saddle again ..." As of September Antler River Watershed Region has appointed me Pastoral Charge Supervisor for FSA working $\frac{3}{4}$ time for six months in the hope that FSA will call a new minister of Worship and Administration and a new minister of Pastoral Care allowing me to retire yet again. We live in hope.

This month will see Michelle installed into her new congregation in Collin's Bay (part of Kingston). We wish her and Joyce every blessing in their new home and congregation and thank them for their many gifts to FSA. We also welcome Erich Knapp to London and to Canada and look forward to his sharing of his many gifts among us. As T.S. Eliot once said, "every ending is a new beginning" and we look forward to a new chapter in the life of FSA.

This has been a hard year for the congregation with the death of Terry, the loss of Michelle and Joyce, and Jane's ongoing struggle with cancer. But Kathryn, Heather and Tim continue to faithfully serve as do Council and committee members who keep our ministry alive and well during these COVID days. While I did not expect to find myself in this position I am happy to help in any way I can.

To close with another cowboy song from my childhood, this one by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, "Who cares about the weather when we're together? Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather. Happy trails to you, keep smiling until then." Or in the words of another old song, "Come along and let us foot it out together." Stay well and keep safe. †



Ardath Finnbogason-Hill

Rev. Michelle Down



For five years Reverend Michelle Down gifted FSA with her unique style of leadership. As our Spiritual leader, her loving heart touched the lives of members and guests alike, and much of her ministry was quietly provided and received by individuals who sought her counsel; her gentle presence providing a safe place to be—with life realities. These precious moments were often spent with the marginalized amongst us. Kindness was bestowed, often in the form of a home-cooked meal she had made or a ride to the graveside for a soul feeling very sad and alone. Behind the scenes delivery of meals from her kitchen to those grieving or healing or celebrating were a frequent happening. These stories were often known only to those receiving or those others they told. Her office was a sanctuary for those needing time, gentle counsel, questions pondered, or quiet meditation. She gave us a ministry which focussed on loving kindness, and her grass roots messages were filled with contemporary stories related to Biblical passages.

Michelle is a collaborator and we were often introduced to members from the London community who brought us educational pieces or reminders about the lives lived beyond our church walls. We were reminded of social justice issues, emanating from her strong belief in the relevance and the equality of each voice at the table. She encouraged our members to take leadership roles, inviting and encouraging them to participate actively in worship services or worship planning; many had never been asked before.

She was a visionary who encour-

aged us to think about FSA's future in a changing world. She also led us gently through the valleys of deep corporate grief while she herself was in deep mourning. We were comforted and were able to feel safe as we mourned the loss of Terry Head together.

As we all enter a new chapter of church life at FSA, Michelle too, will be entering a new environment, bringing her gifts to the membership at Edith

embraced by you. It will represent your wishes for her, coupled with the symbolism of her ministry which were lessons in the affirmation and loving kindness of each other, the recognition of equality and inclusion of all God's people, and an awareness of social justice for all.,

In addition to the personal notes received prior to her departure and the beautiful on-line KUDOS board, which was offered for tribute messages, it seemed appropriate to incorporate some of the congregation's words, thoughts and wishes for Michelle, as submitted with the fabric pieces for the special stole, as a passage in this tribute article:

"I'll always love you," began the flow of your Beannacht (blessing) messages

which accompanied the fabric contributions from FSA members. The stole will represent Michelle's FSA family coming together

as one to embrace her as she journeys forward bringing her Ministry of Love to Edith Rankin Memorial United Church and the Kingston community. Her "open hearted presence" and her "Spirit-filled walk in the world" will continue "to teach compassion and respect" as she continues to "walk her sacred path."

"FSA was truly blessed by her warmth and caring ministry."

"May Love Hope Peace and Joy" and "much happiness" accompany Michelle and Joyce into their next phase of Christian leadership and may "Christ be with you dear friends" as you move "onward in love."

"We'll meet again."

†

"Hugs ... FSA was truly blessed."

(quote from a FSA congregant)

Rankin Memorial United Church in Kingston, Ontario. She takes with her a wealth of life experience as a pastoral charge minister who also has a history of numerous roles within the regional and national bodies of the United Church. She is also a skilled writer, workshop facilitator, gardener, cook, beautiful potter, and creator of quilted fabric art, and holds a degree in business.

One of our gifts of thanks for Michelle is the creation of a rainbow-themed clerical stole, now in the process of being created by Donna Vamos, a gifted quilter who is a member of Michelle's former congregation in Strathroy. Your personal words/notes which accompanied your fabric pieces will be incorporated into this creation and when she is draped in this love-filled garment she will be

Erich Knapp



Merran Neville



On Thursday, July 23rd, the Music Committee had our first meet and greet with Erich. He “crashed” our Zoom meeting and it was great fun to enjoy the surprise for everyone and to quickly understand why the Search Committee had chosen him as our next director of music. The photo with this article was taken by Erich during the Zoom session and shows many boxes packed and ready for the movers.

Erich hails from Menahga, Minnesota, in the Pine and Lake country, about 300 km northwest of Minneapolis and 430 km southeast of Winnipeg. During high school and college, Erich played the organ at his local church and grew up treasuring his Norwegian heritage, which we will learn more about, for it continues to play an important part in his life. Erich’s love of gardening took him to North Dakota State University (NDSU), Fargo, where he completed a bachelor’s degree in Horticulture. As well, he studied Greek, Latin and Classical Studies at Cardinal Muench Seminary. After graduation, Erich was hired as the manager of a large plant nursery in Washington, D.C. He even wrote a weekly gardening advice column for the *Washington Post*!

When Erich’s father was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1992, Erich

returned home to care for his mother whose health was failing. He took several jobs, which included the position as executive chef at restaurants and once more became an organist, until he returned to university at Bemidji State U. to complete a degree in Vocal Music Education. Armed with his second degree, he then taught at a Public School—kindergarten through grade 12—for several years.

All the while, church music and playing the organ beckoned. He chose to go back to graduate school and accepted a scholarship and a teaching stipend at NDSU, Fargo, and embarked on a Master’s and Doctorate programme so that he could become a minister of music. His studies also took him to the University of Oslo, Norway, in 2008 to do research for his Doctor of Musical Arts. He completed his Master of Music in Choral Conducting /Organ as primary instrument in 2010.

For the past eight years, Erich has been Artist-in-Residence, Organist and Director of Music Ministries at St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brenham, Texas. St. Paul’s has a large 1500 member congregation and a day school of 350 students from two-year-olds to 6th grade (providing childcare for the pre-kindergarten ages) which is connected to St. Paul’s. Erich’s CV is stunning,

particularly in respect to all the activities he has been involved in, from planning music for worship services, conducting the adult choir, handbell choir, choral scholars ensemble, youth choir, praise and worship team for contemporary worship, special services, major choral works in concert, and a tour with the handbell choir to Singapore in 2014.

Erich’s interests include gourmet cooking and entertaining, gardening, horticultural lecturing, water aerobics, antiquing, travelling, museums and Norwegian culture. He also enjoys hosting themed social gatherings, something we look forward to, and he offers cooking classes! Does he ever have time to sleep?

Erich’s enthusiasm for coming to FSA is compelling, and with his deep love of church ministry through music and so much experience, we have much to look forward to. We eagerly await the time when he can put his full energies and vision into action, and we can return to a “normal” form of worship and concert making. However, I am confident that Erich will be able to make the most of the time prior to that in bringing us beautiful music in services in whatever way is possible.

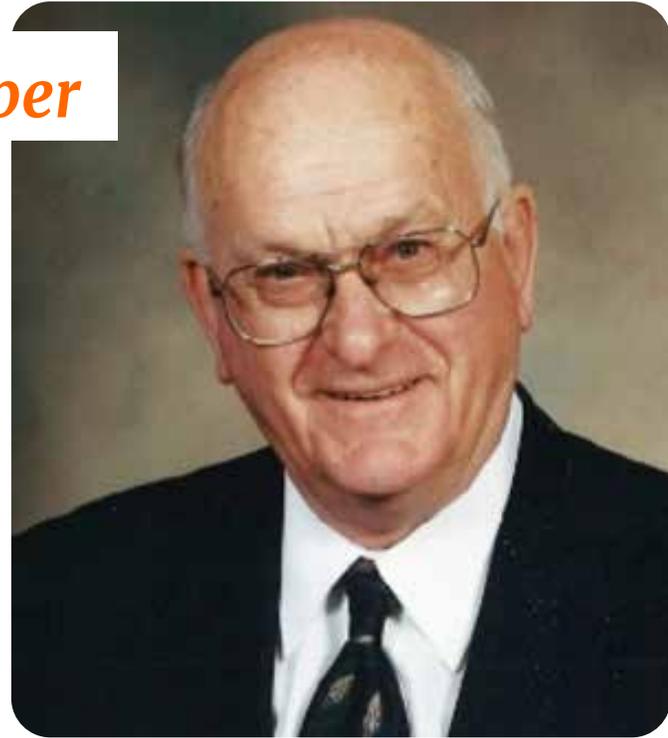
Welcome Erich!

†



David Flynn

Bob Vosper



Bob Vosper was a big man—big in experience, varied in his ideas, large in his compassion for others. He was born in 1927, and grew up on a farm near Mitchell, until joining General Motors Diesel soon after its London opening in 1951. He was in finance, and on his retirement in 1992 he was the Export Financing Manager, where he finalized the sales of locomotives (and mining trucks) all over the world. Besides North America, he travelled through Latin America, Asia, South Africa and Russia. He also met frequently with the Federal Export Development Corporation and major banks in Ottawa. There he occasionally breakfasted with Jean Chrétien, future prime minister.

In 1954 he married Jessie (from the Maritimes) his beloved companion for the next 55 years. Their daughter, Heather, provided much of the information for this article. Bob and Jessie joined FSA at the time of their marriage.

During his quarter century at FSA, he was narthex coordinator, and then, for many years, the Elder responsible for organizing Communion. He also co-chaired Property, where, among other projects, he managed a major renovation of Proudfoot Hall.

He was proudest of his work, along with others at FSA and in the community, planning and developing Proudfoot House, a halfway home for women who had been in trouble with the law. Over 1,500 women passed through the residence during its fifteen years of operation. As far as Bob knew, none re-

offended, and occasionally former residents would thank him for his help. Unfortunately, the provincial government withdrew funds from all half-way houses in 1995. Bob continued to manage funds from the sale of the home, with annual revenue split between two other women's shelters in London. He saw Proudfoot House as a good example of FSA's "Faith in Action."

He joined our Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) in 2009, and continued to exercise his faith there, including organizing the annual pancake supper, and collecting admission from our Mining the Mystery series. At the BBL, he sat in an armchair on one side of the fireplace. From there, he was a source of ideas based on his varied and long experience in the world and at FSA. Even during the last few weeks of his life, he was sometimes able to attend, albeit in a wheelchair.

Other BBL members may use his chair now, but when we look over there, we can still sense the faithful spirit of this wonderful man. He has left a huge vacancy, not only in the BBL but also at FSA. †

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Cara Bulmer



Cherry Bulmer



Cara was born in Fredericton, N.B. She was just an infant when the family moved to Wabush, Labrador, where Dad had a teaching position. While living in Labrador Cara was diagnosed as deafblind and to meet her needs the family moved to London in 1974. Cara is profoundly deaf and legally blind. No services were available in London and so Cara attended the Deafblind Program at the W.R. Macdonald School in Brantford for 15 years. This is a residential school and Cara came home to family and London on the weekends.

After graduation, Cara moved back to live here full-time. With Intervention support from the Canadian Deafblind Association Ontario (now called Sensity) she has been able to live independently. Cara has two roommates who are also deafblind. She has Intervenors who act as her ears and eyes, and especially to assist her in communicating with her world. With her Intervenors, Cara has several part-time volunteer positions which she enjoys. She also takes part in sports and other recreational activities across the city.

Generally, Cara is a busy lady carrying out her many "jobs" and activities. It was a surprise to all who know her how well she coped during this Covid-19 pandemic. Isolation has been hard but she has kept busy, exercising, cooking, gardening, computer games, church school, crafts/stories, and her favourite—fashion catalogues.

First-St. Andrew's has been very special to Cara. She loves church and church school, and definitely feels the joy in this place. On June 8th, Cara had a low-key 50th birthday and hopes for a bigger celebration whenever that is possible. A big thank-you to all her FSA friends who sent cards and gifts. She was very happy to receive mail at this time of isolation. Cara will be thrilled when we can get back to meeting in person. †



Cara and one of her Intervenors.

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FSA FINANCES IN A PANDEMIC:

How we have done so far

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial position of First-St. Andrew's has remained relatively good. There are three main reasons for this, although only two are worth celebrating.

The first, good, news is that with one or two exceptions, our members who donate through PAR have maintained their pledged level of givings. One advantage of having a large number of members of retirement age is that, at least in the short term, their income likely has not been affected.

Overall, 2020 givings to June 30th are less than the first six months of 2019. However, a continuing downward trend in total contributions—occurring in many mainline churches—was anticipated in setting the 2020 budget. The reason for this, of course, is declining membership; the generosity of our members is undiminished. Undoubtedly, the church being closed for several months has made it inconvenient to contribute by envelopes. And potential givings from visitors haven't been realized.

We have also experienced a decrease in total rental income. Council executive decided that we would close the church building to all non-essential use. That meant that Deva Tree, one of our highest revenue-producing long-term tenants, has been unable to use our facilities. However, the second piece of good news is that Meals on Wheels is an essential service; they have been allowed continued use of Farquhar House and the kitchen in the Fireside Room. Their rental payments are a significant source of revenue for FSA.

On the expense side, staffing costs have been significantly less than in 2019; this is the third major factor contributing to our current financial picture. The

sad reason, of course, is that we have been without a music director throughout 2020 and Jane Dockrill has been on long-term disability.

FSA Council made a decision back in March, to continue to pay all our staff their full salaries. This was an easy decision, because it was the right thing to do and we have the financial resources to make it possible. In turn, the staff have responded by adjusting to the new realities, even learning new skills, along with members, to support on-line worship services and children's programming, as well as Zoom meetings.

GOVERNMENT PANDEMIC SUBSIDY PROGRAMMES

Early in the pandemic, the Canadian Government announced several measures to help individuals affected by the loss of jobs and to assist organizations that have lost revenue as a result of the lock down on non-essential businesses. The United Church of Canada offered weekly webinars to inform congregation treasurers of the details of these and internal United Church programmes. There are three government programmes available to First-St. Andrew's. The first is a ten-percent wage subsidy for which most organizations were eligible. We successfully applied for this subsidy, with the help of the United Church of Canada, and have received the related payments.

A second federal programme is a short-term \$40,000 loan, of which \$10,000 is forgivable. After a lot of negotiations with the government, churches were deemed eligible for the loan. However, FSA Council decided against participating: we don't need a loan and it felt unethical to borrow the money just to receive the forgivable portion.



*Kerry Hill
Treasurer*



The third federal programme, which is still under consideration by FSA, is a 75-percent wage subsidy, which is available to organizations whose revenue dropped significantly during the pandemic. Although the decrease in FSA operating income is fairly easy to calculate, the revenue eligibility requirements must also include certain investment income. That is a little harder to determine. We still have time to apply for this programme and will be looking at it prior to September. This programme has been extended by the government to late Fall.

UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA PROGRAMMES

The United Church and the United Church Foundation both stepped up in an unprecedented way to offer loans to congregations. FSA didn't need this source of assistance.

GOING FORWARD

All FSA budget units have been asked to provide a financial update for the balance of the year. We will be welcoming our new music director in September. At this writing, it appears that we will be able to gather for in-person worship services beginning on September 13th, as we welcome ministers, David McKane and Ann Corbet. At this point (mid-August), we don't know when the church will be open for tenants.

I am confident that our members' generosity will continue in the second half of 2020. That, combined with our strong investment position, means that First-St. Andrew's should be in good shape financially, despite the strange new world we now live in. †



This wonderful, ripe eggplant grew for two months in my garden.

I watched it
and
I watered it . . . every day,
thereby learning
patience.

Its leaves are poisonous, as it is a nightshade plant . . .
So don't confuse the leaves with Swiss Chard.

No big lesson there—just know what works for you and what brings you down— maybe sick.
But celebrate the nightshade qualities of those powerful, thick, dark green leaves
Protecting, sustaining and enveloping the baby eggplant —till it ripens.



I built protections for it, as it lived royally in its raised cedar box,
with chicken wire to keep it safe from marauding herbivores.

Finally the harvest day arrived.



And now the alchemy of cooking—the oven of community.
The addition of rich sesame butter, tart lemon juice and pungent garlic,
The sweet, grinding blades of the food processor,
Turning the rich, butter cream marrow into communicable sustenance . . . Baba Ghanouj



Nancy Quinn

The Journey of an Eggplant and what it taught me about Life

Bob Peel
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Volunteerism in Canada and First-St. Andrew's



Heather Locking-Cusolito



Kerry Hill

In a recent *Tidings* article the authors profiled the scope of volunteerism in Canada. This article focuses on volunteerism at First-St. Andrew's (FSA). As the Nigerian Igbo proverb notes, "It takes a village to raise a child." At FSA it takes an army of volunteers to support the life and work and witness of our community of faith and fellowship. We are thankful for each of you.

Some of the effort of volunteers is evident in the work of the ten standing committees of Council. We estimate that members of these committees spend as much as 6000 hours annually ensuring that our worship, Christian education, and music programmes unfold as they should, that our financial well being is assured, that our property is maintained, that the pastoral care needs of the congregation are met, and that our commitment to mission, outreach and the environment are being fulfilled.

Committee work is only part of the picture, however. Each Sunday, members of the choir, lay liturgists, church school volunteers, and servers at Coffee and Conversation contribute to the blessings we experience as we attend weekly service. Events such as the Rummage Sale, the Boutique Bazaar, the Wearable Art Show and musical concerts during Advent, Lent and throughout the year, demand enormous amounts of time and talent on the part of volunteers.

Individuals also take on significant roles. Jim Silcox edits the weekly e-Blast. JoAnn Silcox devotes countless hours to pastoral care. Willis Buckingham has accomplished the massive task of digitizing mountains of documents for the Archives. A team consisting of Jen Sadler, Merran Neville, Kathryn Skelly and Jim Silcox has provided technical expertise permitting us to worship virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. David Beach tirelessly cares for the church lawn, and a team, coordinated by Barrie Evans, maintains the Eco Garden. And quietly behind the scenes many people reach out in service, friendship and support to those in our midst experiencing illness, bereavement or loss.

Thus, it is not surprising that we estimate that our congregation spends over 10,000 hours each year volunteering at FSA. Neither is it surprising that on Volunteer Appreciation Sunday when people are asked to stand as they are able, if they have volunteered at the church in the last year, over 75% of the congregation stands up. Believe us when we say we are grateful to each of you for your contributions to making FSA a vibrant, welcoming and caring community. †

This is the second of two articles on volunteerism. The first appeared in the Lent/Easter issue



Nancy Quinn

FSA's Partner Charities Give Help during the Pandemic

The pandemic offers many challenges for social agencies striving to offer a helping hand to our London neighbours in need. This article focuses on five of FSA's partner charities.

St. Paul's Social Services (SPSS) has seen a fifty percent drop in the number of clients coming in. Their Soup Kitchen remains closed. Co-ordinator Shiella De Leon says that reasons for the drop in clients include the following: Canada Emergency Response Benefits payments (some people have more money for food), fear of contracting the virus, and people thinking that the food bank is closed. Grocery and financial donations are also down by fifty percent. The London Food Bank sends a hamper to SPSS every week to help. Volunteers are available, but management has temporarily cut down their participation, due to social distancing requirements. Separate teams of six minimize the risk of infection and consequent shut-down. Taking the stairs many times a day to get groceries for clients, valiant volunteers serve clients outside. Donations of goods for SPSS are welcome at 472 Richmond Street: open Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 11:30am (Queen's Street parking lot door). Needs include: cereals, canned meat, baked beans (no pork), plain pasta, pasta sauce, canned vegetables and fresh produce. Bulk packaging containers are also needed: egg cartons, grocery bags, Ziplocs, and plastic containers. The 1000 Mask Challenge invites people to donate fabric and to make masks for clients. See <https://www.facebook.com/St.PaulsSocialServices/> or contact 519-434-8179.

Our FSA UCW supports Anova, the recently-merged Women's Community House and Sexual Assault Centre

London. Anna Lise Trudell, Anova manager, communicates that the two shelters, Wellington and Dundas, have operated throughout the pandemic. However, they are at reduced on-site capacity and use some off-site housing. Crisis Line calls are increasing and situations are more extreme. Counselling is mainly online with Zoom or by phone, which has increased technology costs. Money is tight, as financial donations are down and there are no fundraisers. Women's clothing and household linens may be donated at 101 Wellington: Saturdays (1:00 to 4:00pm) and Thursdays (3:00 to 6:00pm). Special needs include: children's lunchbox supplies, school supplies, and basic hygiene products. Anova's Mine 101, 3-900 Oxford East, Bellwood Plaza, is a boutique-themed, quality women's thrift store, open Monday to Saturday (10:00am to 6:00pm). Call 519-453-5550 to arrange to drop-off donations of women's clothing.

Nancy Howard, the ELUCO Community Outreach Worker, reports that pandemic-related stress and anxiety, alongside domestic violence, weapons, and addictions is at a very high level. Serious food insecurity and malnutrition impacts at least fifteen of the forty-five core Marconi Community families. ELUCO has its food cupboard at Gethsemane United Church; however, Marconi residents are excluded by their postal code when they try to register. Therefore, Nancy personally delivers groceries to families in need. In September, Nancy plans to give out snacks for the children, as a temporary replacement for ELUCO's normal programmes of five day breakfasts and the weekly lunch. Please see Ann MacPhail's *Tidings* ELUCO report in this issue.

Lynn Blumas is the Micro Enterprise Coordinator at My Sister's Place

at 566 Dundas Street. She tells us of their exciting but cautious move into Phase Two, which started, August 17th. As clients are often immune compromised, Public Health requires that no more than a total of six people be in the building. This number includes two on the second floor, and no more than four on the ground level for a total of thirty minutes. Intensive cleaning for forty-five minutes then occurs before the next group. Throughout the pandemic, the agency has served vulnerable Londoners by providing harm reduction, basic needs, take-out lunches, and case management. Donations such as hygiene items, masks, and wipes are appreciated. Please call ahead: 519-679-9570, ext. 3.

Meals on Wheels London (MOWL), a renter at FSA, helps seniors and disabled people stay independent by providing meals and ride assistance. Chad Callander, Executive Director states that, pending re-evaluation on September 8th, they have enacted the following measures: limited staff and visitors in the facilities; stopped the ride assistance programme; limited contactless delivery of (now chilled) meals to three days a week; continued service of the weekly frozen meal programme; and instituted Public Health social distancing/sanitizing protocols. MOWL is looking for Fall volunteers to potentially resume the Wheels for Wellness programme: <https://www.mealsonwheelslondon.ca/volunteer>.

The above agencies are in the eye of the pandemic storm, helping those in need. Their resolute tenacity is creating solutions, thereby helping our most vulnerable find their way in these challenging times. †

REPORT ON THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA—LATIN AMERICA CARIBBEAN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Patti Talbot*

July 31, 2020

Dear David and friends at First-St Andrew's:

Warm greetings to you from the United Church General Council Offices. We hope this finds you well.

These are strange and even surreal times as we in Canada and the global community continue to cope with and learn from the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. As UC Canada General Council staff, we are based in our homes—as we have been since mid-March—but our work and engagement with global partners continues, albeit sometimes in new and evolving ways.

As you may know, Jim Hodgson is now retired. Christie Neufeldt, a long-time General Council staff person who most recently coordinated advocacy with the Federal Government, will take over responsibilities for the UC Canada's Latin America Caribbean Partnership programme September 1st, 2020. We've also had a change in Programme Assistants supporting the LAC Program: Josie Forcadilla, has taken over administrative support responsibilities from Maria Elena Oliva. For the time being, please copy all of us into (any) reply (to this letter).

You may not know that los Quinchos has been experiencing acute challenges regarding banking restrictions to receive funds from outside Nicaragua. They were not able to receive any United Church funds in 2019, neither our Mission & Service grant, nor the special gifts shared by FSA and others. Jim Hodgson had been working with los Quinchos director, Luis Fariñas, and sub-director, Yamileth Elías Sandino, trying for months to work out alternate banking arrangements.

That's meant we have had to **hold** FSA special gift funds for los Quinchos, waiting to send them the moment banking arrangements got worked out. Just last week we received word that has revived our hope about transfer of funds soon.

This is all to say we can indeed work on an update for you about United Church M&S partners in Central America, including los Quinchos, but we'll need additional time to do this.

Peace, Patti

**Patti Talbot is Team Leader, Global Partnership Program, and Northeast Asia Partnerships for the United Church of Canada/L'Eglise Unie du Canada. Her letter to FSA is in response to the editor's request to Jim Hodgson, referenced above, to provide an update on United Church of Canada projects and programmes in Central America for Tidings.*

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COUNCIL

Steve Elson

The leadership of FSA and many others have been busy addressing the many issues associated with COVID-19—initially closing down the church and supporting staff to work from home; then arranging on-line services—which have been very positively received—and keeping connected with people, especially those who are vulnerable and isolated. Many people have worked diligently to reach out and do what has been needed, including having on-line Zoom church school sessions for our young people. We are now turning our attention to how to safely open the church so we can be together once again, albeit in a different way.

At the same time, we have all been dealing with the departure of Michelle, Joyce (and Quincy), and many people stepped up to ensure their leaving was well marked and memorable. We are thankful that Rev. Dr. David McKane agreed to be our Pastoral Charge Supervisor during the summer and will be our Supply Minister for a six-month appointment beginning September 1st, 2020.

In the meantime, steps have been taken to develop a series of Profile documents that describe FSA in terms of our demographics, our community of faith, our physical property and our financial status. These documents will need to be reviewed and approved by Council and the FSA community at large. This process is intended to be an opportunity to be reflective about who we are and what we need in terms of ministerial support moving forward. Once the documents have been submitted to, and approved by, the Antler River Watershed Regional Council of the United Church, we will be in a position to begin the search process.

The search process will involve two positions—one for a Pastoral Care Minister (part-time) and one for a Minister of Worship and Congregational Life (full-time). Preliminary conversations have taken place with Metropolitan United Church regarding the Pastoral Care position, as they are looking for someone to fill a similar role (also part-time). We are hopeful we can enter into a partnership with Metropolitan in this regard.

Steps have also been taken to address Jane Dockrill's position as Youth and Young Family Coordinator, given her need to go on an extended medical leave.

Last but certainly not least in terms of staffing, we have been preparing for the arrival of our new Director of Music, Erich Knapp—a welcome and exciting addition.

To say that we are being tested as a community of faith is an understatement. We are being challenged to be strong in the face of having to be physically distant from one another. We are being challenged to address significant staffing changes and health issues. We are being challenged to

re-invent our Sunday services.

At the same time, we are strong. We have dedicated and committed members, volunteers and staff. We have the ability to work together and have demonstrated our ability to come together in the face of adversity and keep focussed on what is important—our care for one another, growing our faith, our commitment to making a difference in the lives of others; and, our commitment to music and the arts. Time and time again we have demonstrated our ability to both offer and receive our gifts as part of this special and long-standing community. This is no exception. †

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FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Jo Ann Silcox

“Faith Development” has been both historically and then again recently in fact the work of two parallel but independent committees—Worship and Christian Development.

In the last year, in response to staff losses and changes, we have worked to ensure that each area of congregational nurturing is honoured so that all ages and circumstances of a multi-variate congregation receive the attention they deserve.

Christian Development, so ably served by Jane Dockrill until her cancer diagnosis a year ago, is now faithfully conducted by Allyson Watson and a committed team of Sunday

School leaders (Kathryn Skelly, Ann McPhail, Kes Sebborn) and Youth leaders (Chris Lindsay and friends) to ensure that young people of all ages not only know the Christian story but experience their importance in that unfolding drama.

Adult Bible Studies have been conducted by the Minister of Worship (Thursday mornings) and Jo Ann Silcox (Sunday mornings) to encourage lively debate around the relevance of scripture in the 21st century.

Worship, under the leadership of the Minister of Worship, seeks to involve as many members of the congregation as feel comfortable in reading scripture, leading in liturgy, serving communion, ushering and healing prayer.

As we come to know scripture and one another, more deeply, we are finding a depth of community and of understanding which makes us doers and not just hearers of the Word! †



MUSIC

Merran Neville

By the time you are reading this newsletter, our new Director of Music, Erich Knapp, has safely crossed the border from the U.S., has completed his quarantine and is ready to join us in person at FSA! (See the "Introducing" article on [page 5](#).) It was with great delight that we received the news from the Search Committee that they had found a music director who truly fitted the bill. We give sincere thanks to the committee for their diligence; the second search in four years that they have undertaken. Members of the committee were: Stephen Adams, Stuart Eberhard, Sonja Gustafson, Doug Jones, Lynda Kennedy, Barbara Plante and Chris Wood. Bravo!

Erich is participating in our virtual service on September 6th giving the prayer and reading the scripture. He will be playing the piano for the outdoor service on September 13th and our formal welcome to him will be in the service on September 20th. No one is more thrilled to welcome Erich than Kathryn

Skelly and I as we thankfully hand back to him the responsibility of selecting music for services and copyright sleuthing.

As we return to worship in the sanctuary, it will feel quite different. We all treasure the beautiful music which regularly forms part of the service, and it will not be the same without congregational hymn singing and anthems from the choir. However, Erich, with our choir soloists (Sonja Gustafson, Francesca Ranalli, Chris Wood, and Alastair Smyth) and instrumentalists, will bring us music to nourish our souls. This time of COVID-19 has brought enormous challenges and caused all of us to make adjustments to our way of living and to re-evaluate what that means most to us. Sadly, adjusting our music making currently falls into that category. The virtual services have proved very popular and the response to the survey indicated that congregation members would like to see them continue. Jim Silcox and his team, are planning to make videos of the live services and post them on YouTube. This will happen a few days after each service when video editing has been completed.

Welcome back FSA! †



COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Jim Silcox

Since the COVID-19 lockdown, the elves at C&M have turned their attention to where we would like to be when the church re-opens. Based on the number of “hits” on our YouTube Channel’s worship services each week since March, this seems to be the time to consider whether a regular video production of the Sanctuary service might be advisable as a new form of ministry for FSA.

We are currently looking into what it would take to produce either a “taped” service that would go up on YouTube after post-production editing each week, or even if “live-streaming” might be in our future. In the former instance, you would have to wait a few days after the Sunday service before it would be available to view online, whereas in the latter it would be available as it was happening on a Sunday morning.

Council has approved the purchase of video cameras that would make either option possible. We hope to start regular videography in September. Stay tuned! †

MISSION AND OUTREACH



ELUCO

Ann MacPhail

"He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted." Isaiah 61:1 (NIV)

ELUCO would like to provide an enormous thank-you to First-St. Andrew's United Church (FSA) congregation for their continued, ongoing and very generous support through personal donations, and by hosting their annual virtual White Squirrel Golf Tournament this June 2020. This tournament raises funds for several very deserving charitable organizations, of which ELUCO is a key recipient.

During COVID-19, to comply with the Middlesex-London Health Unit guidelines, ELUCO has had to make several changes to its activities, while still providing ongoing support and advocacy to those most in need. The Community Outreach Worker, Nancy Howard, has provided uninterrupted support to the families living in the Marconi Blvd affordable housing area through phone calls, email, grocery deliveries, in-person social distancing consultations and counselling, virtual 'Growing Chefs' classes and distribution of art supplies/activities for children. Community response confirms that ELUCO is making a significant difference. Welcome Wednesday at Rowntree United Church has provided a once/wk. noon time takeout bagged lunch instead of the usual sit-down dinner for March-June, and will begin again in Sept. The ELUCO Food Cupboard in North East London has continued to provide food items twice weekly to assist with food security.

If you would like to donate to the Annual ELUCO Walk & Roll Fundraiser, September 27th, please go to the ELUCO website, <https://www.eluco.ca>, and click on DONATE.



Grow-a-Row 2020: It's a Virtual Feast!

Cynthia Simpson

Things have been challenging for many FSA ventures during this pandemic and the Grow-a-Row campaign was no exception. We are sure you missed seeing the Mission & Outreach Committee members, decked out like farmers, handing out the campaign envelopes before service, and we know you were all looking forward to the cheesy skit featuring Linda and Cynthia.

Our campaign this year was entirely virtual. Michelle kindly

made announcements in her recorded services and there were notices in every This Week at FSA email directing you to contribute via the FSA website. However, we were unsure how well the campaign would progress this year.

We are thrilled to announce that our generous and supportive FSA family has risen to the challenge and, as of August 5th, has donated almost \$3800 to the campaign. Our partner in this project, St. Marys United Church, has raised almost \$3700. The Canadian government matches this money 4:1 to provide food to developing countries. Well done, everyone!

We tend to see a final flood of donations at our Fall Corn Roast but, for safety reasons, we are unable to hold the event this year. So, we are inviting our FSA family to join us for a virtual corn roast! And the best part: you get to choose your own meal (well, we hope you'll have some corn, at least). Roast beef and corn? Vegetarian lasagna and corn? Chocolate cake and corn? (We won't judge.)

By the time this issue is released we will have welcomed Henry Reinders from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to deliver the message at our outdoor service on September 13th. To make a contribution to Grow-a-Row, use the [donation form](#) on the FSA website. Please make all cheques payable to St. Marys United Church (not FSA, please) and mail directly to them at the address on the form.



White Squirrel Golf Tournament

Barb Dalrymple

The White Squirrel Golf Tournament committee is absolutely thrilled with the results of our COVID virtual tournament. FSA members, golfers from outside our church and twenty hole sponsors helped us reach beyond our goal and expectations with many long drives and excellent putts. The total donated was \$8,300 with an average donation of \$150. The winners are the families who depend on East London United Church Outreach, families who seek temporary shelter at Rotholme (a branch of Mission Services London), marginalized people in the downtown who access St. Paul's Social Services, and child street vendors in Managua who attend school at Los Quinchos. Special thanks to Allyson Watson, David Manness, Ivana Klouda and members of the Mission & Outreach Committee for their continued commitment to social justice.†

The Mission and Outreach committee thanks the following 2020 White Squirrel Golf Tournament Hole Sponsors:

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CIBC Wood Gundy – The McGorman Investment Team
CIBC Wood Gundy – Mike MacDonald
Desjardin Insurance – Jane Hill
Gen-Car Installations – Peter Ross

Gejolin Property Services – George Jolink
Kelland Portfolio Management Group/Scotia Wealth Management – Rob Kelland
RBC Dominion Securities – Jeffrey Hayward
RBC Dominion Securities – Janitis Wealth Management
RBC Wealth Management – Ken Somerville
Remark Fresh Markets – Gerry Remark
Richmond Woods by Sifton
Zavitz Insurance – Terry Zavitz



TRUSTEES

Doug Jones & Jackie Williams

In this September 2020 report from the Board of Trustees of First-St. Andrew's United Church, we are pleased to have this opportunity for an update on Board activities. Our historic church property, for which the Trustees own the Deed, and the funds to maintain the property which assist with FSA's congregational activities, continue to be the stewardship and fiduciary responsibilities of all Trustees.

During our May meeting, we were delighted to have filled some of the executive positions on the Board. Allan Salmoni has undertaken the role of Chair of the Insurance Committee, Mary Vernon, Chair of the Memorials Committee, and, most recently, Jackie Williams has taken on the role of the Co-Chair of Trustees. Welcome all!

As you are no doubt aware, COVID-19 took a considerable toll on investments world-wide and our Trust Funds were not immune to that volatility. Nevertheless, our overall

decreases were not as substantial as many others due to the conservative nature of our overall balanced portfolio, much to the credit of the leadership of David Manness, Chair of the Investments Committee, and the other members of that committee, together with corporate advice from BMO Nesbitt-Burns. To date, with the partial stock market recovery, the Trust Funds are certainly not at the position as of year-end 2019, but they are approximately back to where they were a little over a year ago. We are hopeful that despite the volatile markets, the Trust Funds still will generate sufficient revenue to support the Fund's contributions to the operation of FSA by the end of 2020 without eroding the principal.

Within the Trustees, the Long-Term Giving and Memorials Committees are putting the final touches on the "Proudfoot Society" benefactor programme, which will provide an opportunity for living donors to support the Trust Funds of FSA.

It is vital that we all recognize that Trust Fund stewardship is important not only for the current congregation, but also to those who have generously left legacy contributions, as well as to future congregants.

Stay safe and healthy!

†



PROPERTY

George Jolink

Greetings from the Property Committee of FSA. In these unusual times when we have not been able to access our building, property matters have been largely put on hold.

Having said that, our Facilities Manager, Tim Miedema, has been active on a daily basis both monitoring the building and managing any situations that arose. With limited use of the building there has been a significant decrease in the need for regular maintenance. The only access granted to FSA was for Meals on Wheels which was deemed an essential service early on in the pandemic. As a result regular cleaning was ongoing.

As we move towards reopening our facility, special attention will be given to cleaning and sanitization to create

safe conditions for those who enter. More details will follow regarding our safety protocols which will be in effect beginning in September.

As you may anticipate, rental of our facility has been suspended with the exception of one of our regular tenants (Meals on Wheels). As we move through the Fall we will be looking at public health guidelines to determine how we can safely return to a rental income stream and maintain the safety standards for all who use our facility.

Although use of the building has been limited over these last few months, the same cannot be said for our Eco-Meditation Garden. With the support of a team of volunteers the garden has become a haven for the community. As the garden matures our neighbours are finding respite at the corner of Queens and Waterloo.

We look forward to a time when we can all once again enjoy the beauty of FSA and its surroundings.

†



CLIMATE ACTION LONDON

Mary Ann Hodge

COVID has emphasized the role of nature in our lives as expressed by the surge in people gardening, walking, or simply enjoying a sunset. We saw a reduction in air pollution and GHG emissions due to people driving and flying less, but what is not so obvious is the damage done by governments in Canada and around the world when they removed environmental protections in the name of economic recovery. An inclusive recovery means acting on initiatives that promote climate, social AND

economic justice. Why would we focus on only one aspect?

The Power of Community

We live in unprecedented times. How do we know what to do? Where do we look for answers? On July 29th, Climate Action London, along with several other groups, hosted a London Green and Just Recovery Town Hall where we explored how these issues intersect (you can find it on Youtube). This will be followed in October by a World Café style virtual event where we will discuss climate, social and economic issues and provide tangible action items for participants.

The Power of Your Voice

In Mike Bancroft's opinion piece "If we can flatten COVID-19 curve, we can do the same with CO₂ emissions" published by the London Free Press on July 3rd (an abridged version appeared in the June 2020 issue of *Tidings*), he encourages those who canceled vacation plans this year to use that money instead to upgrade their next vehicle to a hybrid.

Finding Joy

Making decisions that are climate-friendly can create more joy in your life. Someone asked me about the financial

payback on my solar panels, but the real reason they are on the roof is that it brings me joy every time I see them. Imagine getting in your hybrid or plug-in electric vehicle and feeling joy instead of guilt? We need to shift our focus away from "problems" and towards the possibilities because we CAN be the change we want to see.

Join us the third Monday of every month on zoom (when not in the Fireside Room), email climateactionLondon@gmail.com to join our weekly Environment Message, or follow us on Facebook or Twitter. †



ARCHIVES

Willis Buckingham

Given the COVID-19 situation, and Natasha Roberts with a new baby in January, all has been quiet with the Archives Committee. Unfortunately for FSA, the Roberts family is moving to Bayfield soon.

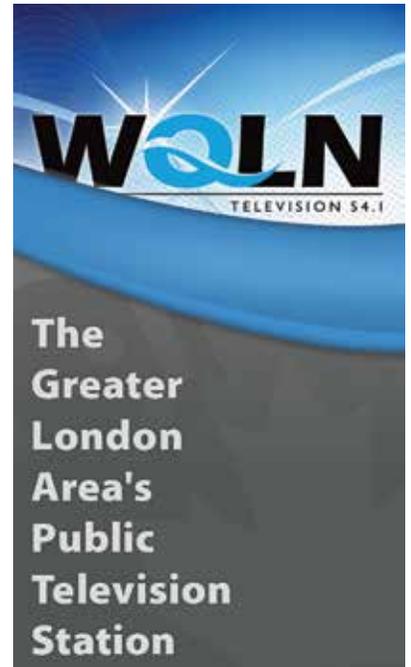
We do need a replacement who is computer literate to continue the digitizing process management to ensure on-going accessibility in future as programmes continue to evolve. Since I can no longer physically access the Archives room, I really need to retire from Archives.

As of July 2019 I had completed the digitization of the FSA files to permit computer access with searches by category, date, name and event (and in the case of marriages by date or either party's name). Most digital files range from 2006, but most are post 2012. I

am in the process of providing a new update covering July 2019 to 2020.

The primary concern with digital formats is maintaining conformity with ever-evolving programming, so the current JPG and PDF files will continue to be accessible. Decisions will be needed to deal with the mass of paper files in FSA storage. Paper files for the period 1832 to 1977 are on file at UWO and for the period 1978 to 2018 at FSA. On-site digitized versions of the Baptism ledgers for 1890 to June 2019 and of the Marriages and Burials ledgers for most of 1936–2019 are electronically filed at FSA.

There are amazing items of interest for anyone who cares about FSA history, and the congregation needs to be made aware of some of the items available by computer. If interested, please contact me at wjb13@rogers.com or Heather Locking-Cusolito at johncusolito009@sympatico.ca. †



UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Nancy Quinn

After much careful consideration and discussion, it has been decided that there will not be a Boutique Bazaar this year, because of COVID-19 issues.

The UCW explored conducting a Deli Sale to occur on three Sundays, during the Fall, at the Church. First-St. Andrew's Council, at their meeting of Wednesday, August 12th, enthusiastically supported this condiment fundraising venture, along with anything else the UCW wished to offer for sale. The Deli Committee have conscientiously re-considered this idea and have decided, at this time, not to proceed because of COVID-19 safety concerns, logistics, and the uncertainty of the times.

This may be a time to just stop and deepen our appreciation of life. Condiments and crafts can be set aside for in-person sales in safer times. Some people may choose to generously share their bounty with those close to them. People are always welcome to sell their condi-



UCW Raspberry Jam making at Kenneycot Cottage (Photo by Nancy Quinn)

ments and crafts to friends and family and, if they wish, write a cheque to UCW. (We would accept such donations with gratitude; however, please note that the UCW does not issue receipts for money resulting from the sale of items, which would normally have been sold at a UCW sale.)

We want to acknowledge and thank all the hard workers out there, who have been cooking and crafting for the UCW charities. News has it that the stove at Kenneycot has been getting a good work-out, along with Jean Comfort's trusty Juicer. Deanne Pederson is hard at work on a cache of beautiful masks that will benefit UCW charities, such as St. Paul's Social Services and ELUCO.

There may be opportunities in the future to raise money for the UCW and their charitable causes. Charities the UCW support, such as My Sister's Place, Anova and others are in need. Please stay tuned for further details, through communications such as the email blast.

In other news, your UCW Executive met on the FSA lawn on Tuesday, August 11th and enjoyed a productive time of business and fellowship. Please, watch the email blasts, as we will give notification of any future general UCW meetings—when we can meet safely. Please, stay safe and healthy until we meet again. †

**MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)**

The possibility of sharing the Pastoral Care position with Metropolitan United is actively being explored (see Council report). A year ago would any of us have thought that a joint position would be on the table?

As I edited this issue the following two sentences in Steve Elson's Council report seemed appropriate as a closing:

“To say that we are being tested as a community of faith is an understatement. At the same time, we are strong.” †



The UCW Executive meets on FSA's Lawn, Tuesday, August 11th
(Photo by Kathryn Skelly)

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DEATHS

Will Burridge, July 24th, 2020

Jim Hutchison, August 7th, 2020

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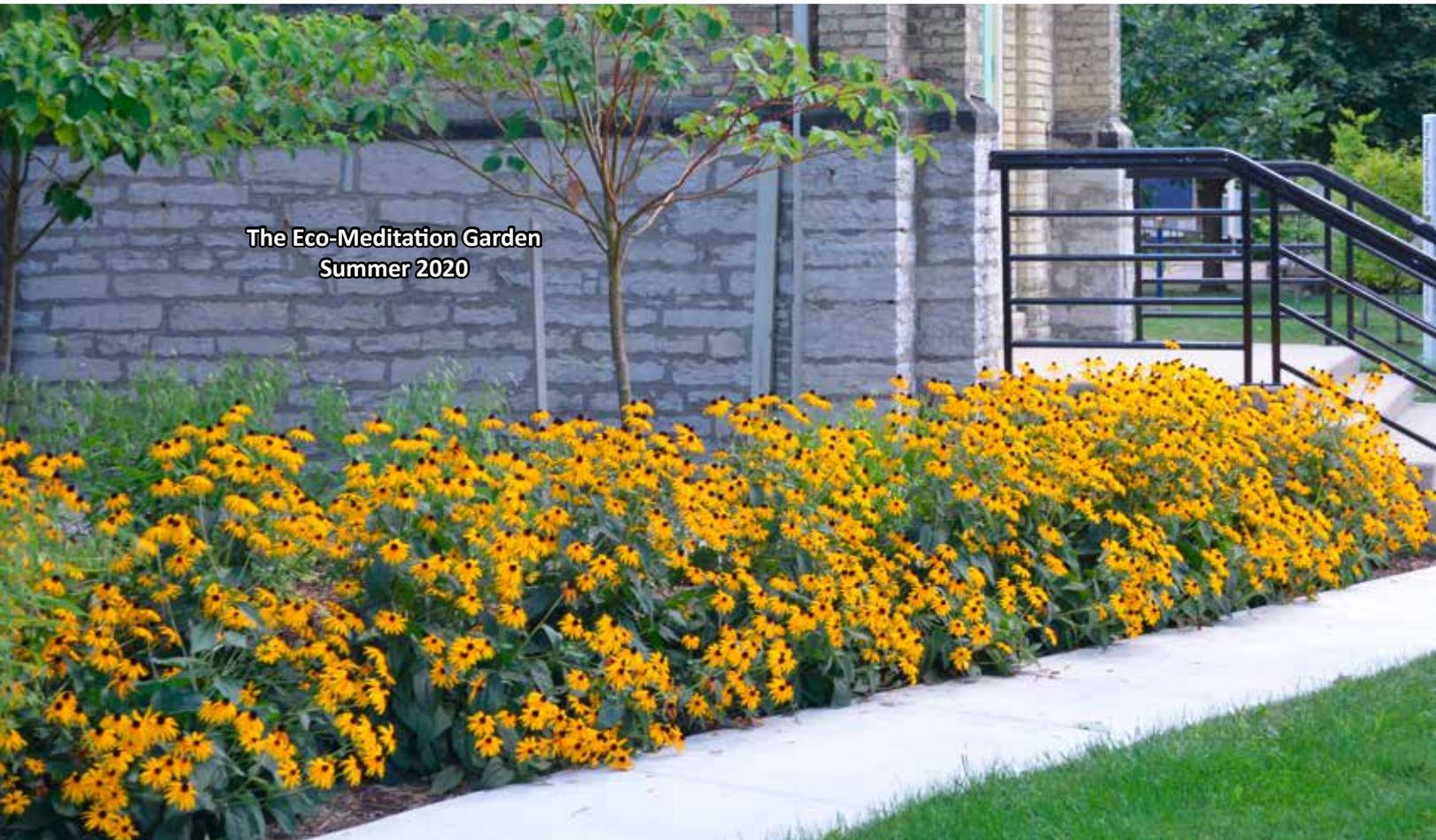
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The Eco-Meditation Garden
Summer 2020