



**December  
2018**

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**Church Office Hours**  
Monday to Friday—9:30-12:30

**Newsletter Editor**

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# KEEPING IN TOUCH

*"To know God through Jesus Christ, and to reflect God's love as the Church in a changing community and world."*



## Newsletter

Advent began again on Dec. 2! When it takes place in the last month of the calendar year, it is easy to forget that Advent is the beginning of a new year in our lives together as Christians. And I know that as we begin this new church year, many of us are looking back at what the year 2018 has been for us, for our church, for our world. We are perhaps looking back at what we have found and what we have lost, what we have celebrated and what we have struggled with, what has been easy and what has been challenging, what we have accomplished and what we have failed to do. Yet whatever 2018 has been for us, it will indeed be ending, and a new year will begin soon. And so maybe the season of Advent can help us to remember that with every ending there is also a beginning. Maybe celebrating hope, peace, joy and love will help us to move forward to embrace what will be our future even as we accept all that has ended or will soon end.

For even though many of us experienced personal loss in our lives, we are building a wider circle of care for one another through our lay training for health and healing so that **hope** can be shared in the midst of despair. As our ability to travel safely to Nicaragua ended our plans to be with our friends in the Moravian church there, we will continue to call on our government to support a just resolution for the people there and to continue to offer our resources so that they will know **peace** again. As Rev. Patricia Gale-MacDonald retires from ministry at the end of 2018, we will fill our church with **joyful** gratitude for the rich blessing of her leadership as we celebrate her ministry at a special worship in the new year. While engaging in difficult conversations and discernment about what it means to be inclusive may have put us on different sides of the Affirm question, we will continue to act and speak with **love** in all that we do and are together.

Yes, as we move through Advent and into Christmas and into the new year, may all of our endings and beginnings be filled with hope, peace, joy and love. May we sing with our whole lives the words of this chorus:

**Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our Light! Shine in your church, gathered today.**

*Words & Words copyright © 1993, Bernadette Farrell*

*Advent & Christmas blessings,  
Andrea Wheaton, DLM  
Minister of Word, Sacrament & Pastoral Care*



*“And Joseph left his home In Nazareth and travelled to the city of David that is called Bethlehem. He took with him Mary, his betrothed, who was with child...” Luke 2: 4*

**Dear friends,**

There are so many things that I love about Advent! I love the beautiful decorations that grace our Sanctuary. I love singing the beloved old carols and watching as the candles of hope and peace and joy and love spread their light into our worship. I love the Snowflake Tree, and how it enables us to give support in a meaningful way to children in our own community. And I love the Christmas story: every part of it, from the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus’ birth to the final escape to Egypt. This oldest of Christian stories never grows old for me. Each time I read it something: some detail, some image, stands out in a new way. This year I have been especially aware of the place of “journey” in the unfolding of the story. Mary and Joseph travelled many days before arriving in Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. The shepherds abandoned their flocks of sheep and travelled through the dark and the cold to find Jesus. The magi left the comfort of the known and familiar and spent 12 days crossing unknown, hostile lands to follow the star that led them to the Christ. And when word came that King Herod’s men had orders to seek out Jesus and kill him, Mary and Joseph bundled up their infant son and fled through the night to Egypt.

In the 1958 photography book called “The Family of Man” there is a quote that says simply “Flow, flow, flow...the movement of life flows ever onward.” We know in our own lives the truth of these words. No matter how much we might reminisce about the “good old days”, no matter how much we might wish we could rest in the comfort of the known and familiar, there is no going back. There is no standing still. As with Mary and Joseph, as with the shepherds and the Magi, we too are called to open our hearts to the leading of God’s Spirit and then to follow where God leads us. The movement of life flows ever onward.

These past few weeks I have been reassured by the wisdom found in the journey stories. In just three weeks I will be retiring from active ministry after 35 years of service in the United Church. It was not an easy decision to make. I have been blessed to minister in 4 amazing Pastoral Charges: in southwest Saskatchewan, eastern Ontario, Etobicoke and, for the past 18 years, here at Burton Ave United Church. I have loved each ministry experience. I have loved my time here with you both as your minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care and, for the last 4 years, as your Minister of Justice and Outreach. It has been a privilege to work so closely with Andrea, my colleague and dear friend. It has been a privilege to work with the rest of the ministry team, and with so many others who have shared their gifts in the building up of the Burton Ave community. Retiring means that I will no longer be journeying with you in the same way. I will continue to worship at Burton Ave, and I will still be involved in the ongoing ministry of the congregation, but my pastoral relationship with you will change. And change can be frightening, until I remember the journey stories, which remind us that the end of one way of life is also the beginning of another, and that wherever God leads us God also goes with us, our friend and companion for the journey.

I will say more about this on another occasion. For now, I just want to say thank you. Thanks to each of you who have been part of our shared ministry over the last 18 years. Thank you for your support, for your prayers, for your forgiveness, and for your love.

I wish you all the blessings of this Holy Season.

*Blessings,*

*Rev. Pat , Minister of Justice & Outreach*

## Update on Nicaragua

Dear friends,

In the September newsletter, I wrote about the political situation in Nicaragua and about how the uncertainty there meant that two missions planned for the summer of 2018 had to be postponed. We were hoping that things would settle down and that we would be able to reschedule the missions for next summer. Unfortunately that has not happened. If anything, things are even more unsettled. Peaceful protest marches and outdoor gatherings of any kind have been banned by the government. Hundreds have been killed, thousands have been wounded and countless thousands have either fled the country, been thrown into prison or have simply “disappeared”. We are grateful that our friends on the east coast live in an area of Nicaragua that has not been directly involved in the conflict, although their lives have been adversely affected by supplies not getting through. In July we decided to bring our friend David Sujo Taylor out of Nicaragua as there were some concerns for his personal safety. David spent 4 months with us in Canada and then decided to return home to be with his family. He left on November 12 and arrived home safely. However we are watching the situation closely and if things change we will bring him out again.

At a meeting of the Nicaragua Steering Committee in September, we made the difficult decision to not plan any missions to Nicaragua for the foreseeable future. We will continue to raise money for the projects we are supporting there, but we will not return until it is safe for us to do so.

We have been fortunate to find another opportunity in Central America for the youth who were planning to go to Nicaragua last July. In September I met with Doris Kizinna who is the Director of a United Church- supported organization called *World Pilgrim Global Education Inc.* Doris is going to lead us on an experience in Guatemala next summer. All but 2 of the participants in the 2018 mission have chosen to be part of this new experience.

As we move forward into 2019, members of the Steering Committee and of the BAUC Nicaragua Group will be looking closely at the future of Open Hands United. Is the cross-cultural experience something we want to continue to make available to adults and youth as part of the ministry of Burton Ave United Church? If so, what would that look like? There are several options to consider, including tying in with the work that Doris is doing through World Pilgrim Global Education Inc., and/or exploring the possibility of a partnership with a First Nations Community somewhere in Canada. Although I am retiring at the end of December, I will continue to work with the committees as we seek to discern the leading of God’s Spirit.

Following this report are pictures of some of the projects that we at Burton Ave United Church have supported over the years, a letter from David, and a representation of comments made by youth who have gone to Nicaragua through Open Hands United. Whatever its future, it’s important that you know the difference that your support for Open Hands United has made in the lives of so many.

*Blessings,*

*Rev Pat, Minister of Justice and Outreach and Director of Open Hands United*

### Projects Supported by Open Hands United 2007- 2018



Building washrooms and showers at the YMCA in an impoverished area of downtown Managua.



Going upriver from the village of Waspam to take much-needed medicines to the remote community of San Jeronimo.



**Projects Supported by Open Hands United 2007- 2018 (cont.)**



Building the first library in the town of Waspam and helping to stock its shelves.



The church in Sangni Laya was destroyed by Hurricane Felix in 2007. With support from Open Hands, it has been rebuilt by the local people and is used not only for worship but also for community gatherings.



Projects Supported by Open Hands United 2007- 2018 (cont.)



The beginning of a dream for an elementary school in Waspam.

The dream is now fulfilled, and over 300 children are now able to go to school.



Taking clothes, sheets and supplies for babies to people downriver who have no access to any of these things.



The women of the Moravian church provide ongoing care for those who are in hospital, prison, and also for shut-ins. Open Hands United has given financial support for the building of a small kiosk where the women can sell food as a way of raising money for the care they provide.

Open Hands was gifted with a 3-acre parcel of land on the Rio Coco. The vision for the land is to create a retreat/training centre which would be used for youth gatherings, workshops, educational opportunities and medical care. To date we have received \$50,000 seed money to begin work on this ongoing project.



## **Treasurer's Report November 2018 YTD**

As the deadline for submission of this report was prior to closing out the month of November, our total receipts for the first ten months were \$284,292 compared to \$333,133 in 2017, which represents a decrease of \$48,841. As mentioned previously, all of this decrease can be attributed to extraordinary items such as the ending of the restorative health care and refugee sponsorship programs. On a positive note, our local givings continue to increase, and were up \$6,704 compared to last year.

Our expenses for the first ten months were \$300,411 versus \$346,729 last year, representing a decrease of \$46,318. This leaves us with an operating deficit of \$16,119 compared to \$13,596 over this same period last year, an increase of \$2,523.

Preliminary results for November show a significantly improved result as local givings continued to increase and the **Be a Part of the Whole Picture** fundraising campaign brought in \$13,836 to the end of the month. This has reduced the operating deficit to less than \$10,000, which is on track with last year's performance to the end of November. Our thanks to the congregation for its ongoing support of the ministries here at Burton Avenue United Church.

*Alan J. McGee, DBA*

*Treasurer*

### **Life Long Learning Committee**

On Friday, October 19th we hosted a Hallowe'en themed games night. Approximately 35 kids & adults gathered to enjoy their favourite game, Hallowe'en treats and Hallowe'en themed games. The night ended with David Sujo Taylor being wrapped up like a mommy in toilet paper!

Saturday, November 24th was a fun filled trip to First Light at St Marie Among the Hurons. Approximately 7 car loads headed up to Midland to enjoy the candle lit night. There was music for all ages, different crafts for the kids to participate in and lessons in history.

The LLC wishes everyone a wonderful Christmas season and look forward to planning new events in the new year.

*Merry Christmas,*

*Nicole Masuda, Marni O'Brien, Sally Telford, Ken Down, Shelley Cliche & Briana O'Brien*

### Worship and Music Committee

It has been a busy faith-filled fall. Our worship was led by our Local and World Outreach Committee on Sun., Oct. 14. On Sun., Nov. 11, Remembrance Day, we were pleased to welcome guest musicians Cara Chimienti, trumpeter, and Ric Butler, piper and Rev. Ruth McDonald. On Sun., Nov. 18 we celebrated the 145th anniversary of our Burton Avenue congregation with Captain, the Reverend Audrey Brown, president of Toronto Conference, giving the meditation. Communion was celebrated on Sun., Nov. 25, Reign of Christ Sunday which is the last Sunday of the church year.

We now have entered the month of December, the darkest month. The month with the fewest hours of daylight. And yet in the midst of that darkness we are awaiting with hope and anticipation the coming of a great Light as we journey through the advent season to Christmas.

Our sanctuary will be beautifully decorated with garlands, the tree and the memorial poinsettias placed in memory of loved ones. The choir will have prepared lovely anthems and members of our Rainbow Club will give a special musical performance during the morning service on Sun., Dec. 16.

The quiet of **The Longest Night Service, held at 6:30 p.m. on Thurs. Dec. 20**, provides respite from the busyness of the season and an opportunity for those who seek comfort in the midst of the season's celebrations. It is a quiet, short service. Beautiful in its simplicity.

The wonder of Christmas Eve is celebrated with a **Family Service at 5 p.m.** and a **Candlelight Communion Service at 10 p.m.**

The Sunday following Christmas, Dec. 30, will be a service of story and song. Children & youth will remain in worship. On Sun., Jan. 6 we will celebrate Epiphany.

Worship with us and share in the anticipation, wonder and joy of the Advent and Christmas season. Wishing you all the blessings of the season

*Brenda Young for Brenda McGee, Miriam Oben, Bob Gill, Katie Pergau, Jane Rees and Rick William.*





**Advent & Christmas Worship****Sunday, December 9**

9:50 a.m. - Advent Hymn Sing

10:00 a.m. - Advent 2 - Peace

**Sunday, December 16**

9:50 a.m. - Advent Hymns & Christmas Carols

10:00 a.m. - Advent 3 - Joy

"We Three Spies" - A musical presented by our Children & Youth

**Thursday, December 20**

6:30 p.m. - Longest Night Service

A service acknowledging sadness, loss, struggle, despair...

....amidst a season of celebration.

**Sunday, December 23**

9:50 a.m. - Christmas Carols

10:00 a.m. - Advent 4 - Love

**Monday, December 24**

5:00 p.m. - Pageant of the Nativity

Presented by our children & youth

10:00 p.m. - Candlelight Communion

We are so pleased to once again welcome Classical Guitarist Tim Beattie.

Tim will be playing immediately prior to the service, as well as providing special music during the service.

Come out and enjoy some quiet Christmas Eve thoughts as we continue this wonderful tradition.

**Sunday, December 30**

10:00 a.m. - 6th Day of Christmas

A service of story and song.

No Rainbow Club for children and youth today.

**Sunday, January 6**

10:00 a.m. Epiphany Sunday

No Rainbow Club for children and youth today but come and learn about the Magi.

### Congregational Life

Part of the mandate of this committee is to promote fellowship and caring for each other. Burton Ave has an active Pastoral Care team who are in regular contact with those in our church community who are unwell, homebound, experiencing a loss or have other spiritual care needs. But the responsibility of caring for each other also falls on the rest of us. There are many ways we do this, such as through prayer, phone calls, sending a card or visiting. The names of 17 people from our congregation who would benefit from a visit over the Christmas season were provided to us through Pastoral Care, and as usual you rose to the challenge. A big thank you to those who were able to take a name and will spend a little time visiting with someone during all the busyness that happens in December. May you be richly blessed by this experience!

In November we hosted an adult card/game party and it was so nice to see some of the “newer to Burton” people come out, as well as many of the “regulars”. There were lots of laughs, in between the playing and nibbling on a variety of snacks and sweets – as well as a few surprises. Like, how could Mary Jane get the prize for the most loan hands (4!) and end up with the second lowest score in Euchre! And who knew that David had become such a Whiz at Wizard, winning both games! Perhaps he will be teaching this game to his family and friends in Nicaragua.

The 145<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Burton Avenue United was celebrated on November 18<sup>th</sup>, with a lunch after the worship service. Thanks to your generous and varied contributions of finger foods, about 90 people left feeling very well fed that day.

Our committee members will enjoy a bit of a break over the next few weeks, but plan to organize a lunch on February 3<sup>rd</sup> before the Annual Meeting. Until then we will continue to provide refreshments on Sunday mornings. This is another area where we appreciate all of the ongoing help we get from those who sign up to serve, and others who drop off cookies, drop a loonie or toonie in the jar, or help afterwards with dishes or stacking chairs. Many hands make light work!

Wishing you all the joys of the Christmas season, and health and happiness for the New Year.

*Your congregational Life Committee (Lois, Linda, Lynn, Nancy, Janet, Valerie and Alita)*

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"Please join us on Sunday, December 16 at 10:00 am to enjoy "We Three Spies" our Kids Christmas Musical. Our children have been working so hard since September to put together this presentation for you. Hope to see you there!"





## Rainbow Club

Well, another fall has flown by in Rainbow Club and we are getting excited about Advent and Christmas! On Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, under the direction of Katie Pergau, the children will be presenting the drama “We Three Spies”, and on Christmas Eve we will have our traditional pageant (at the early family service). We still need actors for Christmas Eve. There are lots of non-speaking parts which we hope makes for a stress-free event for our young families. The cast and crew of We Three Spies have been practising a lot of over the last few weeks and show time is almost here. We hope that our actors for the Christmas Eve pageant can be here on as many of the next few Sundays as possible. Let Catherine or Marni know if your child **or youth** wants to participate.

We will be having our “Happy Birthday, Jesus” party on Sunday, December 23rd during Rainbow Club. It should be a fun time of friends, food and fun.

Please note that our teachers are taking well-deserved breaks on December 30 and January 6, so there will be no Rainbow Club on those dates.

Merry Christmas to Burton Avenue from the Rainbow Club and we’ll see you again in the New Year!

*Catherine, Marni, Carol, Sheena, Peter, Cathy and Angela*

## Youth Inc

Our group started in October with 23 youth registering with information, questions, energy, ideas and a desire to grow in relationship with each other and with God. We also are very excited and appreciative to have two new leaders, Sheena Fletcher-Hoving and Lisa Edgar who bring their talents and energy to our youth. Our first meeting was an Introductory one and was followed by a costume Halloween party – check out the pictures on the Youth Inc bulletin board! See if you can find Waldo!

We were contacted by the Royal Canadian Legion to participate in their Bells of Peace function and answered the call to ring the bell at BAUC 100 times beginning at sunset on November 11<sup>th</sup> to honor the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW1. We followed the bell ringing with a small worship service which was attended by the youth and some members of our congregation.

During the past few weeks we have been collecting groceries items to support the Hunger to Hope Campaign at the Barrie Native Friendship Centre. Two representatives from the Centre will help us put the meal items together during our January meeting. These easy to prepare meals can be distributed to those in need over the winter months. If you would like to learn more about this initiative please speak to one of the leaders or a youth. If you would like to contribute to our meal items we are in need of canned tuna, cream of mushroom soup, pasta, canned vegetables...collecting up to January 14<sup>th</sup>!

For our closing of Youth Inc for 2018 we will be holding a Christmas party to celebrate the amazing God we experience in our lives each and every day.

From all of us to all of you and your families we wish you a Merry Christmas!

*Kim Stoll*



## Outreach Committee

Our committee would like to thank you all for making SOCKTOBER a roaring success with donations of 258 pairs of socks that were delivered to the David Busby Centre for distribution. These socks will make a large difference for many people as we are now in the cold and wet winter season!

Also a large thank you for participating in our Outreach Sunday service! The veggies brought in for the “Stone Soup” story went to Youth Haven and they were greatly appreciated!

12 more blessing bags were made this fall and sent to the Busby Centre for their street outreach, again making a small difference to those that are vulnerable and living on the street.

Our Snowflake tree went up on November 18<sup>th</sup> with the names of 70 children. All the snowflakes were taken within 2 Sundays and gifts have already started to pour in! Actually, even more names have been taken as some had missed getting a name. Thank you all for participating in this annual event that will give a child a smile on Christmas!

We will be again sending gift cards to Youth Haven to give these older children a bit of a Christmas as well. Youth Haven runs a “Boxes of Hope” campaign throughout the Christmas season to assist with funding the youth that enter the shelter, giving them winter care packages and a gift under the tree at Christmas. If you are interested, you can contact Youth Haven, or donate on line at [youthhaven.ca](http://youthhaven.ca).

This year, on Sunday, Dec. 16 we will be collecting small stocking stuffers and hygiene items for clients of CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association). Many of these clients do not have families or family support so the only gifts they will receive this year will be what CMHA gives to them. The most needed items are toiletries, mitts, hats, gloves etc. Small luxury items would be a nice surprise as well.

Please also support our Random Acts of Kindness Advent and Christmas Challenge. There is a list of suggestions in the bulletin that you could consider doing this advent season. Bring a smile to someone’s face, lighten someone’s day – “No act of kindness is ever wasted”.

Thank you again for all your support and donations throughout the year. We will make a difference in the world!

*Devon, Joan, Joan, Lyla & Christine*

## Men's Lunch Group.

At our last gathering 18 men joined in for lunch, fellowship and conversation. We are now meeting at Wickie's Pub where we have our own room. This makes it easier for conversation. We usually meet the 1st Tuesday of the month. We will meet next on Tues., Jan. 8 at noon at Wickie's at 274 Burton Ave.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Committee**

The TRC Committee is back up and running!

Our small but mighty group met twice this fall to envision plans for the coming year.

Highlights of our conversations to date:

We applaud the Appreciative Inquiry workshop group for identifying a goal of developing a relationship between BAUC and the Barrie Native Friendship Centre. Indeed, at our October meeting the TRC committee had agreed that this is our next step and we welcomed a representative from the BNFC to that meeting. As follow-up our November meeting was held at the BNFC offices.

Healing Lodges and Restorative Justice are topics of interest for an educational event to be developed early in the new year, hopefully with participation from the BNFC.

The Territorial Acknowledgement, currently printed in the order of service and on the overhead before service, may be expanded. Watch for coming developments.

We have approved a Vision and Mission Statement to guide the work of the committee.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. at the Barrie Native Friendship Centre, 175 Bayfield Street, Barrie.

Are you eager to join us in our commitment to making right the relationship between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples? New members to our group are always welcome. Speak to any of the current members about coming on board:

*Julie McGonegal, Rev. Pat MacDonald, Islay Scott, Rev. Jane Sullivan and Jane Rees.*

### **Heritage Barrie Award**

On Mon., Nov. 26 Cathy Manzato attended Barrie City Council to receive an award given to BAUC in the institutional category. To be nominated, a building must be at least 100 years old, well maintained and sensitive to various architectural heritage features, especially if they have been restored.

At the presentation our building was called “enduring and in so many ways a beautifully unchanged community fixture for well over a century.” We received a beautiful picture which is on display in the foyer.

## Stewardship

As usual, once we return from the summer, we are right back in the busyness that good stewardship brings. We celebrate our stewardship successes not only in monetary terms but also by appreciating the giving of our time and talent.

By practising good stewardship we were able to;

- a) cater a wonderful Roast Beef Dinner which made \$2500
- b) run our annual fall financial campaign - Be a Piece of the Whole Picture - which raised \$14,706.50 to celebrate our 145th anniversary as a congregation
- c) put on a dazzling Victorian Tea which made in excess of \$4500

We have done well indeed but I remind you, that whatever the gift of money, time or talent you are able to give, it is gratefully received. Each of us has been given unique abilities and financial means. Through using them as we are each able, we can live out our mission at Burton Avenue United, in the Barrie- Allandale community and in the world.

The Advent Season has us looking forward with all the hope and expectation that the time of year brings. So it is with that feeling that we look forward to the following events in the New Year.

## 2019

Fri., Jan. 25 - Ham and Scalloped Potato Dinner

Fri., Mar. 1 - Spring Fling

Fri., May 3 - Roast Beef Dinner

Tue., June 18 - NICA Strawberry Supper

Fri., Oct. 25 - Roast Beef Dinner

Sat., Nov.30 - Victorian Tea

Sun., Dec. 1 - Chili and Chowder

Events as yet unscheduled are NICA Curling (usually in Feb.) and NICA Golf (usually in May)

In this season in which we receive the greatest Gift of all, there will be special Christmas offering envelopes in the pews on Sun., Dec. 23 and at both services on Sat. Dec. 24.

Please use them as you are able.

Stewardship at BAUC wishes you all the joy and blessings of the Advent and Christmas season.

*Brenda Young, Alan McGee, Sandy Davidson, Jim Macfarlane*



### Reflections of Canadian Youth on Their Experiences in Nicaragua

“My Nicaragua experience absolutely changed me. I cannot even begin to put into words how it changed my outlook, my personality and my faith.... Looking back, one particular incident changed my personality. It was Day 5, and there was a miscommunication among the leaders. We split up into groups and went to different people’s houses for dinner, and were told to meet at the church. We had no idea how to get there, what time we had to be there by or where everyone else was. If my memory serves me right, my group was the second group there. I distinctly remember sitting on the curb in front of the church in the heat, the humidity, and it was overwhelming, a new experience. I broke down. It was the first memory of myself breaking down in front of anyone, especially 10 people. I remember everyone coming around to comfort me. It was then when I realized that they weren’t judging me or noting how imperfect I am, they simply cared. This changed my personality and I have been able to live my life free, free of fear and full of confidence since that night.” - C.E.

“I was disillusioned with the idea of going to church. I stopped going to church unless my mom made me go. Then I was accepted on the Open Hands United Youth Mission to Nicaragua. So now I had to go to church, if only for the year, so that I could fundraise. That trip changed everything. I have a new passion for church and its local and international ministries. I have a new passion for God. I am considering starting the process of becoming an ordained minister in the United Church. Since returning from the trip I have not missed a single Sunday of church and my worship carries on throughout every day of my life.” -S.J.W.

“The youth mission that K. participated in changed her life in many ways. Her eyes were opened to another way of life and faith, and she actually changed her career path as a result of her experiences. She will now be attending Western Uni-

versity in their social work program in September. In addition, the outpouring of support that she and I both experienced from [our] congregation was frankly overwhelming. In church, people we didn’t know would go out of their way to talk to K., and by extension, me. I have never felt more a part of a church community than I did during the year that we participated in craft shows, pasta dinners and other fundraising activities to support the youth going to Nicaragua. “This also provided an opportunity for me, as a parent, to watch my daughter grow and expand her horizons and experiences in a way I hadn’t really seen before. I can’t say enough about...the leadership and caring [the leaders] showed throughout this experience. I hope that the presbytery will continue to support these projects. Although as a student, K. works many Sundays and she will be going away in the fall,...her faith and her ties and connection to the United Church have been strengthened by this experience, and I hope that she will one day bring her own children to church.” -S.H. (parent)

“Those two weeks in Nicaragua were life-changing for me. I learned so much about myself and lessons that I continue to think about and apply to my everyday life. Everyone I met had something to teach me. Meeting the people of the Moravian Church taught me about my faith, and that my faith is also my family. “Mendelson, who was one of the coordinators while we stayed in Managua, made a lasting impression on me. On the last day we were in Nicaragua, Mendelson came up to me before we went through customs at the airport. He spoke to about how he would pray for my family, and he hoped that I would do the same for him because we are united as brothers and sisters in our faith. This man taught me so many things, but the biggest lesson I learned from him was to love and appreciate my family. But not only just love my family, but also to love everyone who has touched my life.” - K.H.

“In terms of important life skills, Nicaragua taught me about the importance of communication. This can mean many different things. Sometimes it can mean a two-hour bus ride filled with conversation that is one part broken English, one part broken Spanish and two parts charades. Sometimes it means sitting back and listening. I never really realized before that ‘helping people’ is only really helpful if the solution fits the problem. It sounds fairly obvious now, but it took participating in a mission trip for me to fully understand it. As an example, since I’ve been back, when I talk about going to Nicaragua, people usually ask me if I built something while I was there. I didn’t build anything. I didn’t build anything because no one in Nicaragua needs a school or a café or anything, for that matter, built by a teenage girl with no construction experience. In this case, communication means saying, ‘I want to help; here are the resources I have,’ and listening to what the people of Nicaragua need. As it happens, it’s a lot more effective to fundraise to have a café built by people who do have experience with construction and need the money.”  
-L.L.

“I was lucky enough to spend two weeks in Nicaragua on a short-term mission trip. I spent those two weeks forming relationships, diving head-first into a new culture, and learning some of the most important things I will ever know. If I was asked to pick out one moment, one event in my life that defines me and shapes me as a person, my time in Nica would be it. That experience means the world to me, and I would not trade it for anything... While I was in Nicaragua, I told myself that I was going to do everything I got the chance to do, because I may never get the chance to do those things again. I jumped off a cliff into a river despite the fact that heights are my worst fear, along with many other things that pushed me out of my comfort zone. Nica taught me the most important thing I will ever know, which is to be brave, even when you’re scared. All of the things that I learned over those two weeks have shaped me into what I am today: someone brave and compassionate who strives to make the most of

every second and to always be optimistic. I learned all these things in Nica, and I will be forever grateful for that.”  
-H.C.

“In Nicaragua I did not build things, I built relationships. I did not try to change their lives; I tried to brighten their day. I did not bring Jesus to the people of Nicaragua, Jesus is already there and they showed His light to me. No matter what their lives were like, they were happy with what they had and they praised God for their blessings. “Mission is a wonderful thing. I went to Nicaragua thinking I could maybe change some lives, but really the life that was altered the most was mine. I am so thankful for this experience and how it has impacted my everyday life. I am more aware of my blessings and I realize that I do not ‘need’ all I think I do. I see God in the little things now. He really is everywhere. And He’s working in the lives of everyone. “This quotation by Howard Thurman has really spoken to me since I have returned: ‘Do not ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.’ “So ask yourself what makes you come alive, whether it’s mission, or music, or teaching, or volunteering, or cooking, or writing and go do that. Whatever it is, do it to glorify God and show His love to the world. God is everywhere; we just need to open our eyes and hearts to Him.”  
- M.H.

“I went to Nicaragua full of fears and self-doubt. I thought I was useless. I had no real purpose to my life. During the two weeks I spent there, I had many experiences that helped me realize that I have a lot to offer. The Nicaraguan people taught me that my value as a person isn’t tied to the amount of stuff that I have. I came home and started an LGBTQ group at my school and am planning to run for President of the Student Council. My life has changed because of the time I spent in Nicaragua.”  
- P.L.

“When I came home from Nicaragua I didn’t think too much about the experience. Now, 5 years later, I realize that going to Nicaragua has been the most important experience of my life. It helped me see the world in new ways and has made me want to live in a way that brings the best out in me, and in others.” -P.R.

“Nicaragua was my first experience in a developing country. I expected to find people worn down by poverty, but instead I met many people whose laughter and love of life inspired me to live in the same way. Next summer, I am going to work in a First Nations Community in northern Ontario.” - N.L.

“In Nicaragua I experienced a feeling I cannot describe but will never forget. I felt inspired to create change, I felt grateful for all the things I have and had back home, I felt humbled by the people there, and took the time to learn from them in order to better myself. My time spent in Nicaragua has also helped me to spread awareness about poverty, being grateful, and the small acts we do every day that can make a difference. One of the most heartwarming things I experienced in Nicaragua happened on a Sunday morning when half of us were invited to a Miskito service where we sat and listened to a service. Although not being able to understand any of it, we were moved by the spirit that was felt in the air by all the people there. Once Meagan and I heard their story, we knew we had to help by donating \$200 to finish the payment of their property. Giving from the true goodness of my heart was one of the most rewarding things I had ever done, even though \$200 was not a lot for us, the fact that it meant so much to them inspires me every day to think about how I can have a positive impact on the lives of others.” - E.G.

In response to the question “Would you recommend Open Hands United to others”, one participant responded in this way:

“Absolutely. Why? Because it gives you the opportunity to have your heart broken open so that there is room for you to receive the blessings of a

community that is filled with hope and deep, deep faith. It also allows your heart to be expanded so that you can give what you have to others. The blessings flow both ways.” A.W.

Following each summer mission to Nicaragua, there is a week-end retreat where the leaders and youth come together to reflect on their experiences. During that time, the youth are asked to respond to a number of questions. Three of those questions are included in this application. The bulleted responses are from youth who went on one of the missions from 2010 to 2017.

### 1. “What were your greatest learnings?”

- Whole other world on this earth.
- Can be happy without lots of stuff.
- “Slow Down!”
- Honour differences.
- To let go of time and schedules; jumping into the unknown.
- Connecting with people without saying a word.
- Be optimistic and grateful.
- Do everything you get the chance to do.
- People live with so much less than we have, but seem happier than we do.
- Learning to take things as they come.
- How to build relationships without words.
- To be happy with what I have.

### 2. “How has this experience impacted your life?”

- The people we met changed our lives.
- Pushed out of comfort zone.
- Friendships with each other and some of the people there will last a lifetime.
- Get more involved with groups at school that are responding to local and Third World issues.
- Studying World Issues/International Development.
- I believe that I can make a difference.
- I want to return!
- Learned to push myself out of my comfort zone.



- Learned/realized what I am capable of.
- I really became more honest and open after this trip.
- That I need to let go and go with the flow.
- Want to do work that builds community.
- Practice medicine in a developing country.
- To work hard for something that I really want to do.
- I can make a difference in people's lives.

### 3. "What is the meaning of mission?"

- Mission is about relationship: relationship with God and, through God, with one another.
- It is about going into a developing country with open hands and an open heart so that we can both give and receive.
- It is about doing **with**, not **for**.
- It is about sharing what we can of our time, talents and money in a way that generates independence and self-sufficiency.
- It is about discovering the light of God working in and through the lives of the people we meet.
- Mission is about learning that one person can make a difference.

#### Letter from David Anthony Sujo Taylor.

27/10/2018

Since 2012 it was the first time I had the pleasure of meeting and at the same time being part of the group of open hands United. My main function is to serve as a translator, guide and organizer of trip to Puerto Cabezas and Waspam.

With this the relationship grew and a strong relationship was formed between the Moravian Church and the United Church of Canada. Thanks to this, the leaders of the Moravian church began sending project requests in which the most relevant ones were accepted. Among those listed are the construction of a library in Waspam Rio Coco, some improvements for the secondary school, support in

the purchase of the school bus, as a final project the construction of the primary school which is located in the Morava church land.

Thanks to the support and cooperation of our Canadian brothers, these projects have been carried out satisfactorily. We can also mention some projects outside Waspam, such as the construction of the church in the community of Sagni laya, as well as the support of the Moravian primary school Doris Gabay in Puerto Cabezas. These social works have been very helpful in strengthening the faith of the members of the different Moravian congregations to which they have been given support without your help, this could not have been a reality

Personally, I want to thank from the bottom of my heart for the great support you have always given me. I do not have how to pay you or give back everything that you have done for me. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to travel to Canada and have the opportunity to know your culture, landscape, food, and give me the confidence to be part of your congregation. It has been an unforgettable experience. I will always say that Canada is my second home. I feel like am one more of the group of opens Hands United. This different experiences with different groups I have learned that in this life it is better to give than to receive. I want to end by saying that without the great effort that each of you make to contribute to making all those dreams come true.

**"Each one must give according to what he has decided in his heart, not unwillingly or out of obligation, because God loves the one who gives with joy. "**

**2 Corinthians 9: 7**

## Affirming Ministry

In Dec of 2017 the BAUC Church Board decided to begin the process to discern if we want to be recognized as an Affirming Ministry. So we formed an Affirm Team to guide us through the process. They offered intentional conversations, offered reading material, welcomed guest speakers, invited individual conversations and questions, attended the Pride Parade, spoke with other churches and did much learning themselves. Then on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> the Church Board approved three documents that we developed as part of our process and are required in order to be declared an Affirming Ministry by Affirm United. The Church Board also passed a motion to hold a congregational vote, by members and adherents\*, to approve the three Affirming Ministry documents and the Board's recommendation that Burton Ave United Church be declared an Affirming Ministry by Affirm United. (\*An adherent is a person who contributes regularly to the life and work of the congregation but is not a member or full member)

At the end of October 90% of those who cast a ballot voted YES that Burton Avenue United Church should become an Affirming Ministry through membership in the network of Affirm United and in doing so: Adopt the BAUC Marriage Policy, Adopt the BAUC Affirming Vision Statement and Seek to live out the BAUC Affirming Ministry Action Plan. There were 132 ballots cast, with 119 voting yes, 11 voting no and 2 casting their ballot as an abstention. We are grateful to all who took the time to engage in the process and to vote.

**Marriage Policy:** This puts into policy the already inclusive practices that have been the tradition at BAUC. (Available on the website or through the office).

**Vision Statement:** This does not replace our Vision Statement: *To know God through Jesus Christ, and to reflect God's love as the church in a changing community and world.* Rather, in living out that mission, our Affirm Vision Statement explicitly declares that, as a welcoming and inclusive church, we are not only affirming of diversity, but we offer full participation in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry. (the statement is on next page)

**Affirm Action Plan:** These are some intended plans to help us live out what it means to be an Affirming Ministry. It encourages ongoing reflection on what it means to live as a welcoming and affirming congregation to help review any areas where we can eliminate barriers such as accessibility or socio-economic, etc. It is a working document, a guideline, for the next year that can be changed as needed. This is work that has already happened over the years and will need to continue as we live with diversity (even within the Affirm vote) within our church community.

With gratitude to those who answered the invitation to be on our Affirm Team: Angela Kerr, Cathy Manzato, Julie McGonegal, Alita Morgan, Christine Nayler, Islay Scott, Chelsea Skanes & Kevin Wauchope. Going forward some of these people and perhaps others will be the Affirm Team which will help us to live out our commitment going forward. Let us know if you would like to be part of the team.

**At our worship on Sunday, Jan. 27 at 10:00 a.m. we will hold a celebration as we are officially recognized as an Affirming Ministry. There will be a guest from Affirm United with us and we will have a luncheon after worship. We hope that you will join us on that day.**

Affirm United is a justice-oriented network within the United Church of Canada that works for the full inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the United Church and in society. It also encourages ministries to be public, intentional and explicit in their commitment to diversity and their inclusion of all those who are marginalized in many other ways. As an Affirming Ministry, Affirm United offers support to us in our commitment to live a radical welcome.

### **Burton Ave United Church Affirm Vision Statement**

To know God through Jesus Christ, and to reflect God's love as the church in a changing community and world. We walk confidently with Jesus, who knows no boundaries, as we celebrate the richness and diversity of God's creation.

We are called and seek to be a faith community that welcomes and affirms diversity in ethnic, racial and cultural origin; gender identity and sexual orientation; age and stage of life; physical and mental ability; social and economic status; honouring and embracing all in their uniqueness. Full participation of everyone is included in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry.

Together we support and encourage one another to become all we can be in God, individually and as a faith community.

### **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

The Barrie United Churches are planning a shared worship service on Sun., January 20th at 4:00 pm at Grace United Church.

There will be a shared Youth worship service on Wed., Jan. 23 from 6:00-8:00 pm also at Grace United. The theme is Let Justice Flow. Pizza dinner will be served at 6:00 pm. Adults are also welcome to attend.

### **Youth Confirmation Class**

If you are in grades 7-10 and want to be a part of the 2019 Confirmation Class please be in touch with Andrea Wheaton as soon as possible. (awheatonbauc@outlook.com) This is an opportunity for some fun learning about the church and a time to decide if you want to be confirmed in your faith by becoming a full member of the United Church. We will schedule our classes depending on the schedule of those who participate. We will also participate in 2 retreats along with those from other United Churches. The first is Feb. 22-23 here at Burton Ave United with the theme When Hands Reach Out.



**Congregational Happenings**

**145<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**



On our 145<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service, the sermon was delivered by Captain, The Reverend Audrey Brown. She has been an ordained minister for 24 plus years and served congregations in Alberta and Ontario. She became a Canadian Armed Forces Reserve Chaplain in 2014 and served with 32<sup>nd</sup> Signal Regiment in Borden/Toronto. In 2018 she became a Regular Force Chaplain and is currently serving at CFB Trenton with 820 members under her care. She also continues to serve The United Church of Canada as President of Toronto Conference.



After the service a potluck finger food luncheon was served by members of the Congregational Life Committee and everyone enjoyed a piece of the anniversary cake.





# THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Thursday, December 20, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

As days grow shorter, our spirits may sink.  
As we feel the darkness growing deeper around us,  
we may feel the difficulty that this holiday season can hold for us or others.

The anguish of broken relationship, the death of a loved one, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, financial struggles – all these can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone.

Come out and join with others in this gentle service of  
prayers, scripture, music and candle-lighting.  
It is a time to acknowledge the presence of sadness, loss, struggle and despair  
in the midst of a season of celebration.  
It is a service of light in the midst of darkness.

**Burton Avenue United Church**  
**37 Burton Avenue, Barrie**  
**705-726-0401**

**[www.burtonavenueunited.com](http://www.burtonavenueunited.com)**

Everyone is welcome.

The short service will be followed by a brief time for light refreshments and fellowship.