

Jubilation!

Jubilation! is the newsletter of Jubilee United Church
40 Underhill Drive * 416-447-6846 * www.jubileeunited.ca

NOTES from NORM and ANSWERS from ANNE



Not sure exactly what to share in the first Jubilation of a new year, Rev.'s Anne and Norm decided to interview each other. This is actually pretty close to what you would hear if you were to eavesdrop almost any day that they are in the church together. (In person, there would be more laughing).

So, Anne, tell me and our faithful readers what you enjoy about being in ministry at Jubilee?

Three things come to mind: questioning, creativity, and connections. Certainly, what first endeared me to Jubilee is the questioning faith that is evident here. At *Living the Questions*, *Theology on Tap*, *Youth group*, etc., there is an eagerness to think carefully about faith and philosophy. I still enjoy accompanying people at Jubilee in the questioning and wondering together. This questioning has also been a good fit as I have introduced *Godly Play* as a format for our Sunday morning children and youth programs.



I also love the creativity that is part of the life and worship of Jubilee. Whether it is through music, drama, knitting, or visual arts, there is a wonderful creative aspect to the way that we do church here. I am thinking of projects like the windows at Christmas, the beautiful materials that have been made for the *Godly Play* room, the music ministry that we have in Daniel and the choir, and beyond with others who share their gifts. All of this gives a beauty to our worship together.

The third piece, and I would say that this is what I love about ministry overall, is the connections that I am part of and that I see here. As ministers, we have this sacred privilege of being part of the lives of those who are part of the congregations we serve, but I think that in church, this is not supposed to be limited to us. It seems to me that the church is at its best when people are finding connection to each other and to God. I see that happening here as people offer friendship and support to each other and to the community beyond our walls.

...oh yeah...and of course working with you...

Well, sure... I'd blush, but I like working with me, too. (*It's just that I never seem to get finished – there is so much work to be done with me.*) Anyway, from time to time another church will poke around or someone will ask if I'm ready to move (that happens when you've been somewhere for over a decade) and I don't even think about it. Where would I possibly go that offers such latitude and grace? I find that people at Jubilee are supportive of my efforts, enthusiastic when it comes together, and forgiving when it doesn't. I listen to colleagues talk and I reflect on places that I have seen or experienced and I don't know another community so willing to try breakfast and Elvis at Sunday Morning Church; raise money for four Refugee families and support and understand that they may not get to see them very often, but are glad to know that they have an opportunity to make a new life in Canada; people so willing to embrace students and interns, so excited come out to a discussion group or just stop to talk and wonder about a new idea. I love that we try to engage challenges from the Right and the Left, the Traditional and the Progressive, the Top and the Bottom and even though we don't always see eye to eye, we seem to be able to work shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart. I don't think that I've ever had two days the same at Jubilee and I love that. I also love working in a team – a team that includes the smiling faces, strong arms, open hearts, and keen minds of Pat and Barb, the boundless gifts of Daniel, the incredible volunteer commitment from everyone from Charlie and Gary to Anne-Mari and Barb. Of course, among the best part of being at Jubilee is working with and being inspired by you. It also helps that you bring Eleanor, speaking of whom: What's it been like coming back to Jubilee after your Maternity Leave and what's it like having Eleanor at work?

I was speaking with another parent about this today, about work and parenting, and she mentioned the word, "stretching." It's a good one and one that I suspect others might use too.

So, as Eleanor speeds towards walking, we've just put up a baby gate to keep her in the main living space, out of the kitchen, and other parts of our apartment. We've had a few weeks of rapid development as she's learned to skooch, then crawl, then stand, and walk along furniture. As she has become more and more precocious, she's starting to understand the word "no" ... and finds it hilarious.

But I digress, being a new parent and being back at Jubilee has very much been like Eleanor's ever-changing development. With each new phase, I find myself thinking, "Oh! I guess we're doing this now."; "I guess we're clapping now"; "I guess we need to put latches on all the cupboards now",

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and so on. In many ways, I feel as though I'm discovering right along with her. Okay, no, "discovering" is too idealistic... "being stretched" is better, as we learn and adapt with each new phase. As parents do, Eleanor's father and I continually return to the question: How can we give her the healthiest beginning possible while balancing that focus with our other responsibilities?

Being able to come back to Jubilee in September was really important, as we started off a new season at church. The flexibility and welcome that I found as I returned, while Eleanor was still only six months old, made this possible. As a minister's child myself, I know that lines between home and work can be somewhat blurred in this vocation. For instance, when my father worked in an office at the university, we never went with him to work to watch. When he was ordained, we were suddenly living eight feet from his office; there was a direct line for church business in our home; we would all go to work with him on Sunday and he taught us confirmation. From this perspective, it feels perfectly natural for me to have Eleanor with me around the church. I have also found myself more mindfully present when she is around or even in the carrier right next to me, keeping my thoughts from being in two places at once.

Having nothing but respect for your inestimable wisdom (Norm may have re-written this), what is it that appeals to you about Team Ministry?

For me, it models the first line of my favourite Creed: **We are not alone. Joy is increased and burdens are lifted when you're not alone.** I relish and probably require someone who can compassionately criticize me, cover for me when I'm not making it, or do the heavy lifting when I feel weak. It's a very special feeling when someone has a vision of ministry and invites you in to be part of the vision or part of the result. Artists rarely invite other painters to fill in, colour, or create part of their masterpiece, but I think that Team Ministry is exactly that – inviting another person in to what you are lovingly creating. In that invitation, in that collaboration, I am reminded that it's not about me: it's about a ministry to which I've been called; in the discussion and collaboration, in the creating together, I am much more able to hear the voice of God and discover or create something beyond my own imagination or agenda. I find Team Ministry both humbling and uplifting at the same time. What about you?

For sure, being in Team Ministry is a model of working that reminds us that we are never lone wolves in the church. It certainly is a model that we find again and again in the Bible, whether it is God sending Aaron along with Moses to bring the people out of Egypt, or Jesus calling his disciples and followers to be part of his work and then sending them out in pairs, or Paul working along side Silas. As ministers, and as lay persons, we are called to be part of a body.

Having worked as the lone minister in a congregation, I can also say that Team Ministry is a gift. Figuring out that we can work well together and that we have many theologies and philosophies in common allowed us to imagine a common vision for ministry here at Jubilee. I remember when we started to talk about it, there was a strong sense between us that we want to hold up a ministry that is integrated across ages and cohorts. Making connections, teaching, and being creative in worship continue to be shared values. They have played out in our work with the youth, with the *Ish* group, in building *Godly Play*, in *Pancake Church* and most recently in plans for *Jubilee Delivery*.

In the day to day work, team ministry has been a gift in just being able to talk about the ongoing life and needs of the church, to wonder about ways forward when challenges come up, and about new ideas and potential, ...and then you know, someone to help cover when one is off on obstetrician appointments.

So, now that we are a team, what happens next?

I'm looking forward to creating new things together. I really hope that as we find a rhythm, we can move freely through ages and programs at Jubilee. I hope that we don't become exclusively Ministers of one silo or another, but that we can work together with children, youth, adults, experienced adults, with newcomers, and folks who have been here forever. We have some different gifts, but I hope that we continue to share a ministry and invite the congregation and community to do the same. I love the way that you shape Pancake Church and I couldn't be happier flipping pancakes and leading music while you tell stories and wonder. I am looking forward to *Home Delivery* and I think it's great that the community have both of us available for pastoral care or just to talk and wonder... What are your hopes for our Team Ministry?

I hope that we continue to work together to provide leadership that honours our callings and builds up the church. To me, this looks like us continuing to work together on many projects in worship and teaching, but also supporting each other in the separate things that we do – making sure that they continue to make sense for the church. It seems to me that we are both drawn to providing as many worship and learning opportunities as we can, and through these, making caring connections with, and promoting caring connections within the congregation.

There is more possibility for all this than even two ministers can sustain... but that's okay, because it is not our role to do it all. So, I think that team ministry at Jubilee will continue to be lived out with the leadership and involvement of so many of our congregation members and attendees, Barb, Pat, Daniel, and our amazing board.

So, I was ordained the same year as your Dad was ordained. Not that I dwell on that – I was very young – but, I suppose that makes us an Inter-Generational Team. Do you think that Jubilee is or could be an Inter-Generational Church?

At its heart, I think that an inter-generational church is one where I arrive on Sunday morning and know right away that I belong in this place, no matter what my life stage is. If I am nearing retirement and come to worship on Sunday morning only to find that all of the songs are nursery rhymes and the bulletins are being handed out by clowns... I might question if I'm in the right place. At the same time, if I am a child and arrive at church to find that everything is for adults and have trouble finding anything that invites me into worship, I would understand that this is not a place for me. To me, inter-generational ministry at Jubilee means a commitment to continually return to the question, 'who is being invited/welcome to worship here?' And then, as we seek to minister across generations, finding ways to make it clear to those who come through our doors that this is for them.

Our activities beyond Sunday morning provide opportunity to offer more focused worship and study experiences. This is part of being inter-generational too. We've been working at this with the youth groups, with *Ish*, with *Theology on Tap* and *Living the Questions*. Not every group is for everyone, but hopefully we are connecting across generations. So yes, I do think that Jubilee is moving in the right direction towards being an inter-generational church and, in many ways we are already one.

So, "Yes" and hopefully more "Yes to come". As we finish up, could you perhaps say more about how great it is to work with me??

No Comment.

The conversation didn't really end there, but if you're interested in more, perhaps you should speak with one or both of the Revs and keep it going...

Just to keep you up to date for Holy Week and Easter



PALM SUNDAY

Words and Music celebrating the beginning of Holy Week, an intergenerational Service with Communion, a little bit of drama, and lots of wonder.

March 25th, 10:30 am

HOLY WEEK STUDY GROUP

Join us in the Garden Room every morning for some reflection and discussion about the meaning of Easter. Sure, we can talk about the history and historical place of Easter, but we will also talk about what Easter means to you and to the world in 2018. Using short engaging video clips, Rev. Seli will lead the discussion. The Coffee will be hot, the welcome warm, and the discussion worth your time and effort.

Monday – Friday, March 26th - 30th, 8 - 8:50 am



MAUNDY THURSDAY

An informal celebration of the Last Supper. Story telling and personal reflection around a meal, led by Rev. Seli.

Thursday, March 29th, 6:00 pm

GOOD FRIDAY

The story of the Passion. A time for personal reflection and an opportunity to engage with the cross and understand the story of Jesus' crucifixion.

Friday, March 30th, 10:30 am



EASTER “SON”RISE SERVICE

Out on the Labyrinth at 8:00 am. – Inside/Outside (depending on the weather) – guitar and voice provide an informal celebration of Jesus' resurrection and the joy of new life!

Afterwards, stay for breakfast!

Sunday, April 1st

EASTER SUNDAY

April 1st, 10:30 am

**The Big One!! Words and Music;
Celebration for the Whole Family.**

**Even if you've never been to church before,
there is something here for you!**

(Come early and join us for breakfast at 9)



Council Comments

While there are many issues that Council members must address in their role as the representative of the congregation, our focus in recent months involved addressing the developments associated with the merger between St. John's United Church and Jubilee United Church. Under the Covenant Agreement drafted by both churches, Jubilee became responsible, on July 01st, 2017, for the sale of the church property and for the maintenance of building services until the property was sold on December 05th, 2017. Special thanks to Alan Bone, supported by a joint sales team who took responsibility for the sale of the property, and to Bill Watson and the Trustees who were responsible for the execution of the selling documents and closing of the sale (including insurance coverage and other associated legal matters that arose in conjunction with the selling of the property). While many people from both churches participated in this undertaking, we must mention the important role that our Treasurer, Gary Norris, played in addressing expenditures as they occurred and accepting the challenge of maintaining dual financial records of all transactions occurring while Jubilee assumed ownership responsibility. Last, but not least, our Property Manager, Barb Secord, who had the added responsibility for maintaining building services at St. John's in addition to her current responsibilities during the period that we assumed ownership of St. John's up to the eventual sale date.

Our goal now, on completion of the merger, is to welcome the people of St. John's U.C. who have chosen to join Jubilee and to ensure that they continue to experience the hospitality and fellowship that they have experienced during their past while members of St. John's.

Currently we are involved in preparing for a new Jubilee Family Photo Directory and to date, we have approximately 120 appointments scheduled for individuals and families who have signed-up to participate in this new Jubilee church family photo album which is generally undertaken every five years or more.

Lastly, we are preparing for our Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held in the church auditorium on Sunday, April 08th, following the Sunday service when we will discuss our opportunities and challenges for the year ahead, and we sincerely hope that you will attend this informative session.

Before concluding these remarks, I wish to indicate that our challenge continues to be our goal financially to achieve a balanced budget. While expenditures have been managed and controlled to the degree possible, we find it necessary to ask our members and adherents, where possible, to consider and possibly adjust their financial support through the envelopes and PAR to maintain this important ministry and services and programs developed to meet the needs of our congregation and the community at large that we serve in light of the deficit we are currently experiencing.

On a personal note, this report will represent the completion of my two-year term as Chair of Council and I want to take this opportunity to indicate that it has been a privilege to work with such a competent group of Council members, our excellent staff, and our dedicated and talented Ministers. I would be remiss if I did not thank each of you, as members of the congregation, for the opportunity to serve you and for the support given to me and my colleagues on Council.

I look forward, in the role of Past Chair, to supporting our new Chair of Council, Elizabeth Clarke, as she assumes this responsibility for a two-year term at this year's Annual General Meeting. Charlie Scott



The Benevolent Fund

Let me start with thanking everyone for their generosity. The need has never been more keenly expressed than it has been in the past few months, but your donations have made it possible for us to respond to record numbers of requests – for groceries, school books, utility bills, tuition, books, short term child care, necessary clothes for a new job... We can't exactly provide food, shelter, or income security, but in the past little while we have helped people find a little breathing room, a decent meal and knowledge that they are not discounted or forgotten. I am quite sure that the need will only increase as we move into 2018, but I have no concerns that we will be able to respond... with your kindness and my discreet management, some people will sleep better at night. Although you may never know to whom these gifts have been given, rest assured that they are greatly appreciated and might even be helping the person sitting next to you on a Sunday Morning. Donations can be given to me directly, but are more likely to be properly receipted and/or included in your donations if dropped off at the office or in the Offering Box on Sunday.

I thank you for your on-going support of the Benevolent Fund.

Norm

Message from the Music Director

It has been a fantastic musical season at Jubilee. The choir's Christmas musical offering took place on the morning of Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017, and was very well received. The choir performed beautifully – a special highlight was their stirring rendition of Pergolesi's *Magnificat*. The Christmas focus on Mary was novel and gave our wonderful soloists a chance to showcase their individual talents. Special thanks to Marie Criscione, Dylan Hillyer and Justin Welsh for excellent solo work and wonderful sectional leadership during this season. Our wonderful guest organist, Scott Weidler, supported the choir with great sensitivity.

This year, the choir is busy preparing for the Lent/Easter season. On Easter Sunday (April 1), we will present the incredible *Te Deum* (Praising God) by Mozart. Additionally, there will be some special music for the Lenten season – including Palm Sunday and Good Friday.

It is important to me that we utilize the musical talents and interests of people from the congregation. Jubilee is particularly rich in this regard! For example, Will and Christine Petrie, a very talented husband-and-wife singing duo, are busy with the choir in planning a wonderful springtime concert. The Saturday evening show will feature choruses, small-group singing and solos from the wonderful tradition of musicals. The concert will take place on Saturday, April 28th at 7:30 p.m. Come one, come all!

We are thrilled that the choir has grown in size to over 25 members! We rehearse most Thursday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. and are always looking for new members – especially men! Please see me after church on Sunday if you are interested in auditioning. A big thank you goes out to our tireless president, Cheron Christmas-LaFleur, who is an indispensable part of the music program. Her skills in organization and communication have helped us reach a new level of excellence.

Thank you to everyone who participates in the Rimbala music and movement program for seniors, which is designed to reduce the incidence of falls and develop cognitive plasticity. We have two classes at Jubilee on Thursdays throughout the year. The beginner's class meets at 10:00 a.m. in the auditorium and an intermediate level class meets at 4 p.m. If you are interested in trying a class, please contact me for details (416.709.8381).

Blessings to everyone,
Daniel Rubinoff, Director of Music



Theology on Tap

Wednesdays, March 21st, April 18th, & May 16th

Rev. Seli will be sitting down for a pint at 7:30pm at Watt's Restaurant at Eglinton Square.

(South side, by the Food Court – easy access from Pharmacy)

We'll talk about the real world and what God and Faith have to do with it all; we'll talk about heresies and orthodoxies, and how many angels can actually dance on the head of pin. We might wonder if Star Wars or Star Trek is the more "Faithful" reality... We might be clever, we might get deep... we might just enjoy some chicken wings. The Jubilee Facebook page and the Church Bulletin will offer upcoming topics as the day approaches.

**Buy your own food and drink; bring your own opinions...
but sit with Norm and he'll keep the conversation going.**



PENNIES FOR MISSION AND SERVICE

How amazing is this!
Jubilee has raised
\$981.26 in pennies.

Can there be any more in the
back of your sock drawer or
under the sofa cushions?

Can we reach \$1,000?
Bravo and thank you all for
your contributions.

Anne-Mari Rimmel



**Don't always have time for Study Groups
or Lectures at Jubilee,
but still want to dig deeper into your faith?**

Wouldn't Home Delivery be great?

What do you think about an afternoon or
evening of **Food, Friends and Faith?**

If you would like to host a dinner, lunch, dessert, wine and cheese, bbq or a pot-luck for 6 to 8 friends, Rev. Anne and/or Rev. Norm would love to join you, present a topic of your choosing and lead a discussion. You can pick any topic you like, but allow us to suggest the following that are already packaged and ready for delivery:

**Bible Basics ● Prayer ● Holy Spirit ● United Church of Canada
Jesus ● Easter ● Christmas ● Baptism/Communion
Living in the World Faithfully ● Evil and Suffering**

This is good for any age or stage of faith; Rev's Anne and Norm will bring knowledge, experience and handouts and/or video material that we explore together. They will come to your home or if you prefer we can arrange a time at the church and pot-luck or order take out. **For parents of young children, we can gather at Jubilee and arrange babysitting at the church.** The idea is to get people together to talk about some of the things that matter and to provide easy access to the knowledge and experience of Jubilee's resident theologians.

So, put some friends together and invite the Revs.

Don't have a group of friends in mind? Tell us what topics interest you and when we get more than 4 interested, we'll find a date and do it at Jubilee.

To make a date or for more information, contact

Rev. Norm - (416)447-6846 x103 nseli@jubileeunited.ca

or Rev. Anne - (416)447-6846 x104 adionisio@jubileeunited.ca

Pancake Church

@Jubilee

A fun and casual
monthly **worship** service
for **children, families,
singles, teens, adults**
and anyone
who likes breakfast
for dinner



**First Tuesday of Each Month, including:
Tuesdays March 6th, April 3rd and May 1st**

Dinner and Worship is from 6-7pm

Come at 5 to help set up and flip pancakes!



**Wednesday,
February 14th
is Ash
Wednesday,
marking the
beginning of
Lent.**

Jubilee will be open from **8am to 6:30pm**
The Labyrinth will be set up inside the
foyer, as well as a place for prayer and a
short service. The imposition of ashes
will take place during 20 minute services
at 8am and 12:30pm. Ashes will also be
imposed during "Open Doors" Prayer
time between 4:30 and 6pm. **Rev.s Seli
and Dionisio will lead the services and
imposition of ashes.** You are invited.



JUBILEE BRIDGE SPRING 2018



Once again we are very pleased to announce the Jubilee Bridge Day for this coming spring, on Friday, April 20th. Instruction will be by Mr. John Rayner. John has an extensive background in the Canadian bridge world – playing, teaching, and coaching. His many experiences and accomplishments include:



- former owner/manager of the Mississauga-Oakville Bridge Centre for 33 years
- winner of the "Kate Buckman Award" to "the person who most contributes to others' enjoyment of the game of bridge"
- winner of the "Audrey Grant Award" for "excellence and professionalism in the teaching of bridge"
- as a bridge player:
 - Canadian Open Pairs Championship winner
 - Canadian National Open Team Championship winner
 - Canadian Senior Team Championship winner
 - Australian Mixed Pairs Championship winner
- twice captain/coach of the Canadian Woman's National Team at World Bridge Championships in Istanbul and Beijing

The day's program includes Coffee at 9:15 am, Instruction from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon, Lunch and Instruction again from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Instruction will be on Take Out Doubles and Advances, and how a good understanding is critical to better competitive bidding.

A Registration Day will be held at Jubilee on Friday, February 2, 2018 From 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

If this is not convenient you may contact Marie at 416-222-9329 (Home), 416-560-0187 (Cell) or mmcroe@rogers.com



Thanks to the ministry of Jennine Profeta, we will never be the same



On January 7th, we said Good-Bye to Jennine Profeta after 3½ years of ministry with us. Jennine's enthusiasm, love for, and dedication to children, youth, and drama will have a long-lasting affect on our community. We have been blessed by her gifts and love and wish her all the best as she continues her work with Second City, as a performer all around Canada and beyond, and with other churches ready to be so blessed.



The Jubilee Living and Learning LECTURE SERIES



Wednesdays, March 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2018
At 1:00 p.m.

Wed., Mar. 7: “Media and the Military”

Charles Dickens was the first to invent the phrase, “War Correspondent” in an essay written during his visit to the US in 1941. Now, over 170 years later, no one can doubt the importance of the media to the military. But the history of how the media got involved is only as old as journalism as the ability to distribute information about what was actually going on. As Hiram Johnson said, the first casualty of war is truth. But who in the final analysis defines truth, particularly when anyone with a cell phone can become a 'war correspondent'? Presenter: Dr. Peter Silverman

Wed., Mar. 14: “Consumer Advocacy – Important to All”

If you have ever had a telemarketer on the line, you know how much pressure there can be to buy, buy, buy. From the Nigerian letters to the phony bank asking for information to the advent of the internet, consumers are subjected to or are victims of a growing list of frauds. How do we defend ourselves from being scammed? Presenter: Dr. Peter Silverman

Wed., Mar. 21 and Wed., Mar. 28: “Mathematics: Its Pleasures and Its Values”

School mathematics has often encouraged people to think of mathematics as a set of fixed procedures rather than as a way of thinking and analysis. The purpose of this set of lectures is to challenge the common perception on two fronts: recreational mathematics that embodies discoveries, puzzles, problems, and games that can go back centuries; and the many ways in which mathematics is applied in modern society.

While both recreations and applications can give you an appreciation of how mathematics is developed and used, a surprising amount of the material does not require significant technical background and is accessible to anyone who has engaged in intellectual activities that share features with mathematics, such as bridge, board games like chess and checkers, cryptic crosswords, Sudoku or kenken, or creative endeavours such as art, music, and drama.

The first session will be on recreations and the second on the uses and misuse of mathematics in such areas as finance, climate science, politics, and risk evaluation. Presenter: Dr. Ed Barbeau

Maundy Thursday



Maundy Thursday, also called Holy Thursday, is the Thursday before Easter. Christians remember it as the day of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist or Communion.

Just so you know, the word "maundy" likely comes from the mangling of the Latin, “Mandatum novum do vobis,” (“A new commandment I give to you.”)

Now that you know everything, perhaps you would like join us at Jubilee for a **Maundy Thursday Service to be held on Thursday, March 29th at 6:00pm.** It will be an intimate service of worship around the table, sharing food and friendship.

In the sharing of a simple meal, we will search for meaning in the symbols and memories that are always with us. We will have foot and/or hand washing; we will share food, laughter, companionship, and we will complete the evening with candles and a shared telling of The Last Supper, the Betrayal, the Trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus.



The service will be casual and intimate and you are invited. All that we ask is that you sign up so that we can prepare the appropriate amount of food for all. The sign up sheet should be easy to find in the front foyer in March... or you can phone the church office, or even email nseli@jubileeunited.ca

On, Tuesday, January 23, Greg Daly was recommended for Ordination by the Toronto Conference of the United Church of Canada. The Sunday before, he preached the following sermon to his congregation of Palgrave United Church on the theme of Jonah and Greg's own personal journey to ministry. With his permission, we share it with you.



This Tuesday, time is up for me. I have been taking a really long exam now for the past four and a half years, and Tuesday: time is up. I have my Conference Interview Committee exam. They will decide if I am ordination worthy.

Obviously, this has not

been a traditional exam, but one that has challenged me to consider the core of who I am, and what I might be into the future.

Looking at the story of Jonah, I recognize a couple of things that inform what I plan to say on Tuesday: First, I am more like Jonah than I might want to admit. Second, life might have been less complicated for me if I had been swallowed by a whale long ago.

In my formative years, I regularly heard from my family that “you can be anything you want to be,” and I believed them. I am grateful for that support. Unfortunately, the contrived persona necessary to survive as a gay teen in 1970's Toronto led to a reticence to live with authenticity and a growing isolation in early adulthood. I believed, at the time, that if I loved God enough, the secret that kept spinning its web around me could be broken. This was the pinnacle of youthful naivety and bravado.

I still believed that I could do anything I wanted to do, (thank you, Mom and Dad), and what I wanted to do was be a leader in the church. A year at a Baptist Leadership Training School back in 1981 would give me the tools to make a difference in this world, but the difference I expected is not what I got. While my personal savior, Jesus, mysteriously kept letting me down by not curing me, I was awakened to a new path.

In my limited understanding of that time, anyone 'other' was a person who did not follow the one “true” Christian God, and thus could look forward to a fiery end. I questioned this from the start, and it finally found a voice in a paper I wrote which posed the question: Why don't Muslims go to heaven? I concluded that we (the

grand 'Christian' we) did not have the corner on the God market. I failed the course. I did not, however, fail to realize that what I had come to understand about God, as I had been told, might not be what I had to believe. Nor was it what all 'good' people believed. Spiritual immaturity does not, thankfully, necessarily stop us from asking important spiritual questions. The snowball effect of this line of thought led me to conclude that perhaps God could see me in a different way too.

Perhaps I was not also doomed to the proverbial fire.

The power to think for myself about God was a defining moment in my life. However powerful this realization is, in retrospect, it began a period of time where I walked my own path, thinking that God was not important or material in my life. It took me years to realize that God had not left me: I had left God. The emptiness of this experience was, in retrospect, more isolating than any rejection experienced in earlier times.

I longed for justice, but saw God as part of the problem, not the solution. Instead, I focused on speaking out for, and on behalf of, the under-represented. I became, in my own eyes, a champion of the underdog. Thankfully, much of my moral formation, though coloured with privilege, supported ideas of acceptance and the intrinsic value of all people. This desire provided a framework within which to speak strongly against societal oppression which has defined my understanding of call.

Recall, however, that I think I am more like Jonah than I might want to admit. Jonah heard everything that God was saying to him – “go to Nineveh, talk to those folks, and give them my message” – and Jonah chose to go in exactly the opposite direction. No, more than chose, Jonah was determined to go in the opposite direction. He ends up creating havoc for himself and for all the other people on the ship he was sailing on.

Over the years, I have sailed a lot of ships in the wrong direction. My life experience has led to addiction and personal chaos which ultimately resulted in job and relationship loss; emotional and financial bankruptcy; jail; disgrace; and illness. I made a lot of decisions that led me in exactly the wrong direction. However, it has also taken me to a new place.

When Jonah was swallowed by the whale, he thought he was going to die. No, he knew he was going to die. He had given up. He had become so concerned about himself, about his own welfare, that he forgot what God had asked him to do.

God had asked him to look beyond himself, to be God's voice to the people of Nineveh, so that they too might come into relationship with God and each other in a new way.

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He needed to be swallowed by that whale, to be in that desperate place, so shaken up and so humbled that he recognized that a new plan was required.

I wonder what I would have done had I been Jonah in the whale? Would I have simply given up? I remember moments when I wanted to. I remember moments when I was that desperate. Somewhere in those moments, God provided me the circumstance to respond, to look beyond myself, to see myself in a bigger picture. In responding to this, I found a way to get barfed out onto the beach. This has led me to release and true joy.

Another quote for you: 'Go far enough on the inner journey, they all tell us – go past ego toward true self – and you end up not lost in narcissism, but returning to the world, bearing more gracefully the responsibilities that come with being human.' In *Let Your Life Speak*, this quote by the renowned Quaker writer, Parker Palmer, speaks more eloquently than I how I see my spiritual journey in the present. Perhaps Jonah could have benefited from reading Parker Palmer as well.

This quote challenges me to ask myself a new question: Is what I have done, in all its totality, my life? I will say it again – “Is what I have done, in all its totality, my life?” Well, yes, and in asking this, I feel I have finally started to ask the right question. In answering it, I must take responsibility for me, all of me, and it challenges me to consider how authentically I am living my life. The question requires continual asking. Jonah asked that question from inside the whale and recognized that a new direction – one toward Nineveh – was his necessary journey, his call.

For me, in the asking and discovering of self, I can say that I rediscovered God. Not the God of childhood, or the God I left in early adulthood, but the God of justice and community. Questioning what historically represented answers leads me to conclude that I am now on a new life journey. My life is my life with all the twists and turns it represents. Listening to my own voice calls me to listen to other voices: each one valid, each one important. Each one necessary.

I have had opportunities to understand life as homeless, incarcerated, and penniless. I have experienced life-threatening illness, and discrimination. I have known the love of family and relationship. I have lived with hope and despair. When I started coming back to the church at Robertson-Wesley United Church in Edmonton, I heard powerful words from Tammi-Jo Mortensen, the Music Director: “Live your circumstance, and your circumstance will become your success.” This has allowed me to accept that what I have done IS my life. My ethic is now informed and guided by this. When I see the life of each person I encounter, I

realize it is true for them too. What they have done is their lived life. It is not for me to judge or critique or to change. I am moved by that part of the United Church creed which reads: “we are called to be the church, to live with respect in creation, to seek justice and resist evil.” Respecting creation means respecting and listening to the unique and diverse voices of the whole of creation. In the context of the United Church of Canada, this also means listening to diverse theological voices.

This Wednesday, I will be asked if I am in 'Essential Agreement' with the Basis of Union and proceeding statements of faith of the United Church of Canada. Part of my examination preparation was the completion of a personal statement of faith (thank you, Emmanuel College). I included the following words in the preamble to that statement: 'Faith provides meaning and purpose for life. Faith statements provide context and a framework for understanding what faith means for groups and individuals. Faith statements remind us that we can never have complete knowledge, and understandings are always partial.'

There is both an individual and collective component to this understanding. For me, being in 'Essential Agreement' provides a way to stand for something. To be understood in a particular way. It is not static, but it is also not casual. It requires me to listen. As I listen to these voices, my own included, I hear the Divine. I hear God and this is my call. I am who I am and this is good.

James Cone, a noted American theologian rocked the theological world in 1968 by saying: “if I cannot worship a black Christ, then I am not worshipping Christ at all.” If I cannot see Christ in all people, then what Christ am I worshipping? By his words, I am constantly reminded, “if I cannot worship a black or gay or female or transgendered or poor or disabled Christ, then I am not worshipping Christ at all.” I am here to support people as they seek to be who they already are, and I realize the potential that this represents for me to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.” These words from Micah 6:8 underpin my call.

Christ's living informs my way of being in this world. Jesus' story offers all of us ways to live with authenticity and integrity. For me, salvation is effected through intentionally living an authentic, honest life built on integrity and the inherent equal value of all. In order to accomplish this I am learning to accept circumstances as a means to change and grow. Every experience in my life brings with it learning, strength, and consequence. By inviting God to journey these experiences with me, I am able to be increasingly open to change.

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In our Gospel reading today, when Jesus called to Simon, Andrew, James, and John on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, he invited them to journey with him, to journey in a call to live life a new way. By understanding Christ, as part of this journey, I accept God incarnate walking with me through the joys and sorrows that life brings. In this way, I build personal and intimate relationship with the Creator and creation.

It can take a lot for some of us to see this possibility. For Jonah, it took a whale. For me, it took pretty much the same. What might it take for you? God calls each of you, in your own way, to journey in life with God incarnate through the joys and sorrows that life brings.

That is my answer to the exam. I am good with that answer. I am grateful for a place to sing my song of faith as I grow in relationship with the Divine. All of it has provided opportunities for me to live with respect in creation as I journey with God and others towards justice and peace.

Time's up.
Amen

Definitely NOT Church
Romance Tips from the Bible

Sunday, February 25, 7:30pm

Still smartin' from Valentine's Day?
 The Howling Heretics present music from 7 decades and advice from 5 millennia
 to get you back on track with that special someone.
 If your way's not working... try Yahweh

Jubilee United Church-www.jubileeunited.ca

JUBILEE UNITED CHURCH MEMORIAL FLOWER FUND

Thank you for supporting the Flower Fund in 2017. This fund is used to buy flowers to decorate our church for Sundays, special occasions and Christmas. At Christmas and Easter, we remember our shut-ins by purchasing plants to be delivered by members of the Pastoral Care Committee. Donations to the Memorial Flower Fund are tax-deductible. Please complete the form below. It can be submitted by mail, handed into the church office, or placed on the collection plate. In order to publish the Memorial List on Easter Sunday, April 1st, the form below must be received on or before Palm Sunday March 25, 2018.

Thank you for your continued support in 2018.

Cathy Leeson, Flower Committee Head

Memorial Flower Fund Donation.

[Jubilee United Church, 40 Underhill Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3A 2J5]

I would like to make a donation of \$ _____ to the Memorial Flower Fund.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Envelope Number: _____ [if known]

Dedication: _____

Just in case you missed this year's **Jubilee Christmas Windows**,
have a look at what they looked like from outside.
Thanks to Donna Rutz for her design, artistry, and hard work.
Thanks to those who came to paint and later to clean.



Life Events

Celebrations of Life:

Nancy Ball
Margaret Mori

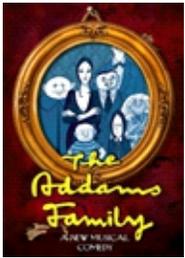
December 20
December 31

A Few Highlights from Christmas at Jubilee, including the Christmas Dinner, Santa Claus, Pyjama Church, Christmas Eve Kid's Service, Family Service, and other delights...



Scarborough Village Theatre will be advertising Jubilee's Garage sale in their April programs, and they are pleased to let you know what's coming up at the theatre -

THEATRE SCARBOROUGH UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS:

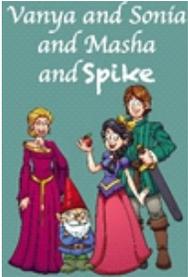


Based on the famous cartoon from The New Yorker Magazine and made popular by the classic television series and films, The Addams Family is the Tony Award-nominated musical that's sure to be ghoulishly delightful for the whole family.

Suitable for all ages.

Adults: \$30 Seniors & Students: \$27 Children (12 and under): \$25

February 15 and 16 at 8:00pm. February 11 and 17 at 2:00pm.



Enjoy a wacky weekend in the family home of bickering siblings Vanya and Sonia as they complain about their lives. Old resentments flare up when their movie-star sister, Masha, shows up with her new younger boyfriend, Spike.

Recommended for age 12 and up. Advisory: Contains strong language and mature content.

Adults: \$24 Seniors & Students: \$20

March 2*, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15* and 16 at 8:00pm. March 4, 11 and 17 at 2:00pm.



This sweet-tempered and moving comedy is about three widows who meet once a month for tea before going to visit their husbands' graves. This group dynamic goes well until a widower comes into the picture, and the women need to decide whether there is more to life than re-visiting the past.

Recommended for ages 18 and up.

Adults: \$24 Seniors & Students: \$20

April 6*, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20 at 8:00pm April 8, 15 and 21 at 2:00pm.

Purchase Tickets online at: theatrescarborough.com

Location: Scarborough Village Theatre, NE corner of Markham Rd and Kingston Rd.

Rimbala

After several visits to Geneva as part of my PhD research, I developed a music-and-movement program tailored to the North American seniors' population. I named the program Rimbala™, which includes the suffix "Rim" (short form for rhythm) and "bala" (short form for balance), in order to symbolize the power of music as a falls prevention intervention. Rimbala™ is based on my expertise in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a century-old Swiss practice that connects body movements to music. Because of its popularity in Switzerland, Dalcroze Eurhythmics was the intervention used for the falls reduction study in Geneva. In my Rimbala™ program, I also incorporate aspects of Taoist Tai Chi, Chi Gung, Alexander Technique, and Dance Therapy – all of which have been scientifically proven to greatly benefit the physical health of the older adult.

Rimbala™ classes contain gentle changes of mood, tempo (speed of the music), orchestration, tonality, rhythm, beat quality, texture, articulation, and musical nuances, in order to invite the senior to enjoy the most artistically rich experience as possible. The improvising instructor gently invites the participants to improvise their own responses, and this response to the music develops brain plasticity and imbues the classes with a sense of fun and discovery.

Daniel Rubinoff

