

Jubilation!



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

Editor: Elda Scott

June 2023

Notes from Norm

On Sunday, June 4, 2023, we had over 100 people in church for Sunday worship, 105 by my count - in June! That's the kind of numbers that we might have expected in June before the pandemic and the lockdowns, and pretty remarkable. But the fact that many churches similar to Jubilee are getting Sunday attendance numbers in the 50-60 range, while we seem to be in the 90-100 range, makes it even more remarkable.

So, people are coming back. I've seen folks in the past month make their first visit back to Jubilee since March 2020 and when they come back, they feel at home. Now, they don't simply feel at home because of all the familiar faces; many will comment on how at least half the faces seem to be new at Jubilee. I don't have the numbers, but it does feel like there are a great number of new folk at Jubilee; and yet it still feels like home for an older Jubilee member who comes back for the first time after an absence. It feels like that because we intentionally make it feel like home, we are intentionally kind and welcoming people and we really DO like being together – it's reflected in our conversation, our programmes and our worship; it is part of what has called us to be. So far, pretty remarkable, don't you think?

On Sunday, June 4, not only did we have 105 people in church, but we also had about 150 people join us on-line by the end of the day. Over 250 people engaged in the worship of God with Jubilee United Church that day. That's not the way that things were in the past, but it is the way that things are now. There were times in the past three years when I suspect most of us wondered if we could survive a pandemic and extended lock-downs; we saw other churches closing and thought, "pretty soon that'll be us". But we have not only survived the past three years, but we have begun to thrive, making more connections than ever before, welcoming new faces into community and discovering that God has plans for us.

Did you come to the garage sale? Did you come for afternoon tea in June? There is joyous life at Jubilee. We took some risks over the past three years, spent some money that we might have put away for a rainy day, invested in creativity without an agenda or even deliverable goals, and risked doing things differently than other churches. We have struggled when it might have been easier to go with the flow and on June 4, I think that I saw the pay-off for the daring and challenging path that we have taken.

But this isn't about patting ourselves on the back; it's not even about encouraging us to risk and trust in God as we go forward. This is about our future as Rev. Bri-anne takes a call to another church. Things are just coming together; how can we lose her?? We haven't lost Bri-anne - she has simply been called by God to go where she is needed and she will be a great ally and friend as we work together on projects old and new (including refugees). And to be clear, Bri-anne is not the reason for our success. And I am not the cause of our success. Neither is Jeannie or Dianne; not even Barb is what makes Jubilee a place that people want to be. It's you. It's your willingness to take faith and the church seriously, even as you decide not to take yourself too seriously. It's you wanting to know how people are doing and inviting them to participate in what you are doing. It's you singing in the choir even before you know if you're going to be good at it; it's you being vulnerable and asking questions, showing up to help a neighbour and celebrating the presence of God in community even without naming God all the time.

**The Jubilee Team is part of the success,
but the feeling of "home" that is bringing people into community is you. .**

So, as we plan our next steps, I am getting excited about what God has in store for us next. As noted, we are not the church that we were four years ago, and thanks to Bri-anne, we've learned some things about ourselves and made some new connections. Those will always be with us and we're going to spend some time in the next year assessing ourselves and looking at the opportunities that God provides for us. If we can thrive coming through COVID, imagine what we are going to do next.

For the short term, council has asked me to be on the look-out for a couple of contract workers - one who will manage and continue to grow our social media engagement and another who will help us find our place of value in community, i.e, what can we do that makes a difference in the world. We hope to have a couple of people working one day or two a week by the time Thanksgiving rolls around and they will hopefully be with us until next summer, maybe beyond. It all depends on how we figure out who and what we need to best answer God's call into the future.

I am going to miss my friend very much. She'll still be my friend, but Bri-anne won't be in the office next door every day and I won't hear her voice of challenge and support, her gifts that inspire not only the community but me personally, the back-up and trailblazer that has made my ministry with you more fruitful and more fun. But I am very excited about what God is calling us into next, and I am excited about how we will step boldly into the future and answer God's call to love our neighbours and to be a community where we get to know each other and God more every day.

So, Bri-anne, here's to you! And here's to where God is calling us now.

Norm

Notes from Bri-anne

Jubilee has a rich history of engaging in outreach initiatives, both within and beyond our community, ranging from collecting diapers for the Massey Centre (now known as the Abiona Centre) to assembling care packages for homebound congregants during the Christmas season, as well as providing support to refugee families seeking safety in Canada. Jubilee has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to assisting those in need, and this remains unwavering.

Currently, Pam Lock serves as the chair of Outreach, primarily operating as a committee of one! While Jubilee participates in various outreach initiatives, they have largely been project-based in nature. Understandably, there is little enthusiasm for adding additional committee meetings to the already busy schedules of our members. There are advantages to maintaining time-limited and project-focused initiatives within our outreach efforts; however, the extensive range of activities has made it increasingly challenging to keep track of everything Jubilee undertakes and effectively coordinate our outreach

endeavours. Three years of pandemic have exacerbated this issue, and it is evident that we are currently in a transition phase as we evaluate our past accomplishments, identify present needs, and devise strategies to coordinate our resources and contributions moving forward.

Furthermore, we are striving to determine where there may be overlapping efforts with other Jubilee groups. For instance, care packages for seniors can be viewed as both outreach initiatives and falling under the purview of Jubilee Cares (our pastoral care initiative). The garage sale, while primarily focused on outreach by offering goods to local residents at significantly reduced prices, also serves as a fundraiser for the congregation.

With all of these considerations in mind, Pam and I extended invitations to approximately a dozen Jubilee members who have been involved in outreach initiatives over the years to join us for lunch and a discussion. During this gathering, we reminisced about Jubilee's past efforts and contemplated which initiatives we might consider reintroducing. The narthex where we gathered smelled strongly of wonton soup and black markers as we utilized sticky notes to visually map out the various Jubilee initiatives that came to mind.

A few weeks ago, Pam and I devoted time to sit down with those notes and endeavoured to categorize them, aiming to identify any notable patterns or trends. Here are some general groupings that emerged from our analysis:



Outreach that benefits both Jubilee and the wider community

- 5K Walk/Run
- Jubilee Market
- Garage Sale

Outreach that connects us to the wider United Church of Canada

- Broadview Magazine Subscriptions
- Representatives to Shining Waters Regional Council
- Mission and Service Support
- United Church Women (funding)

Outreach that overlaps with Jubilee Cares

- Prayer Shawl/Knitting
- St. John's Scholarship
- Christmas Cards
- Prayer Group

Outreach that supports local agencies

- Food Bank Collection
- Backpacks
- Clothing to Scott Mission
- Diapers to Massey Centre
- New Circles

Outreach that offers funding to outside organizations

- Brookbanks Grannies
- Out of the Cold
- Other groups that are not included under any separate heading are the Green Team and the Refugee Committee.

Moving forward, the outreach model we are working with is one where there is a central outreach coordinator (currently Pam Lock) with different rotating “spokes” with community members leading their specific projects or interests.

Our next steps are to discern how to coordinate outreach initiatives within the congregation and whether there is energy and passion to dig deeper into one or more outreach needs. Is there an “issue” that Jubilee wants to really sink its teeth into? Perhaps we could start focusing deeply on food insecurity? Or maybe the housing crisis?

Would you like to be a part of the ongoing conversation? Please talk to Pam or email me at bswan@jubileeunited.ca. We’d love to find others who are passionate about doing the work of being church in the world.

Bri-anne

Greetings from the Music Ministry!

Here we are at summer already!! Lovely to see so many in attendance on Sunday as we recognized Indigenous Peoples Day and welcomed Nicole-Joy Fraser from the Beaver Cree and Metis nation.

The amazing Marie Criscione, soprano section lead for 27 years, has stepped down and, as a community, we were able to thank her on Sunday, June 18. I would personally like to thank Marie for her talent, leadership and generosity of spirit and I look forward to seeing her smiling face in the congregation where she can sit back and enjoy the music.

We welcome Allie Jeffery as our new soprano section lead. Allie joined us just after Easter and has fit in beautifully. Those of you who were able to be at the Spring Concert “Possibly Magic” heard Allie’s stunning rendition of The Light in the Piazza. You also heard Henry Paterson play flute on the 2nd movement of the Poulenc Flute Sonata and Lily May Vers and Katie White swing their hearts out on the Louis Prima/Keely Smith arrangement of That Ole Black Magic!! Mark Cassius was our special guest, joined by Jamie Drake on drums, and it was a magical evening.

Thank you to all choir members for their dedication and commitment to the music ministry at Jubilee. And thank you to the M&P Committee for their continued support.

I wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy summer and hope that we will see your faces in the congregation. The choir returns in September and new members will always be welcome.

Jeannie Wyse

Congratulations to Rev. Jim Harbell



On Sunday, May 28, at North Bramalea United Church, our former student and great friend, Jim Harbell was ordained to the ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care in the United Church of Canada. Jim’s time with us in 2022 was brief and yet his impact was great, having been integral in the “Call Everyone” campaign and the formation of the “Jubilee Cares” team. Jim has been called to Metropolitan United Church where he is on a team with one of our former interns, Rev. Jason Meyers, and will be working with us as Jubilee and Metropolitan have a shared Refugee Project.

Congratulations, Jim!

MISSION AND SERVICE (M&S)

by Pamela Lock

Brief Report of Shining Waters Regional Council Annual Meeting

On the weekend of May 26–28, the Shining Waters Regional Council held its annual meeting in a bold hybrid fashion: in-person at North Bramalea United Church and online by Zoom. The numbers of participants were approximately equal for both formats. Those of us on Zoom missed the camaraderie and meals, but we participated in discussions in breakout rooms and voted on motions. Anyone interested in regional matters like budgets, committees, and issues like community ministries can find more information on the Shining Waters website. Jubilee was represented by our ministers (Rev. Norm Seli and Rev. Bri-anne Swan) and by Pam Lock, our elected lay representative.

MISSION AND SERVICE

As many activities wind down for the summer, it can be tempting to set church responsibilities on the back burner. However, even if *we* are on vacation time, we remember that *God's work* never stops. Our congregation continues to support the national M&S Fund through weekly offering envelopes, monthly PAR deductions, and occasional special gifts. We will be sending a cheque to the national office for \$8,674.15 – the amount collected from January 1 to May 31.

Another way to support M&S is through use of the **GIFTS WITH VISION** catalogue, to mark occasions such as birthdays, weddings, graduations, births, new jobs, promotions, and any reason for joyful celebration. Printed brochures are available at the church, or through me, as our designated M&S enthusiast (the woman in a rainbow-striped hat, who gives a monthly Minute for Mission). Also, you can check the United Church of Canada's website, and view the new YouTube video clip "*What Is Gifts with Vision?*". You might be surprised at the variety of ways our contributions can be used to make the world a better place.

PROPERTY REPORT

by Brian Kalanda

Faithful Footprint Grant Application: \$20,000 awarded!

Work started in late 2022 to prepare the multi-page submission package addressing church profile, detailing our many greening efforts to date and, most importantly, our two key greening activities: replace existing lighting with LED bulbs/fixtures and six new exterior doors. We were pleased to be awarded the maximum amount of \$20,000. The grant covers 66% of the cost of these projects. These two projects will consume the full \$20,000.

LED Lighting Program:

It was decided several years ago to switch over all lights to LED to upgrade technology and energy savings efficiency. There are about 800 lights in the church!! Barb Secord led the process to obtain quotes, award the work and oversee the program. The work is almost done with all lights in the sanctuary, foyer, garden room, kitchen, offices and washrooms, as well as all exterior lights having been replaced. Also included is all emergency lighting. The auditorium has a major visual change with the 27 old-style fluorescent cage-covered fixtures replaced by just **eight** LED fixtures. The difference is dazzling! Great job Barb!

Exterior Doors:

In 2021 we ordered six new doors to replace the four garden room doors and the two north entrance doors. The existing doors have extensive damage, mostly with peeling veneer. The new doors are metal clad, will provide better insulation and last years longer. However, this has been a supply chain and

quality management challenge, taking over 18 months to date. We are now expecting delivery and installation in July/August. It will be great to get this project done!

Sanctuary Access Ramp:

Our beautiful sanctuary needs to be fully accessible to all. This means building a ramp for barrier-free access to the chancel area. Over the past two years, we analyzed over 20 possible designs with the support of an architect, considering how the ramp designs would impact all users and uses of the sanctuary, especially the ease of use for a ramp user. In early 2023, council approved the creation of a ramp-up team to work through the options. Many thanks to the team!!

We have narrowed our search to two options, gotten quotes from contractors, and are very close to announcing the final design and timeline for the project. Council has approved the building of the ramp in 2023 and we are working on grant funding to help us with the cost. Stay tuned!

Maintenance:

As our building ages, work is needed to maintain the standard we want for our church. Most of us never notice or think about this because Barb Secord is here to ensure everything continues to work as expected. Plumbing, electrical, custodial, and safety issues are quickly and efficiently handled by Barb and others so the rest of us don't have to worry about our church building.

In the second half of 2023, we plan to address the soffit damage done by carpenter bees as well as refresh the painted lines in the parking lot. We will also have some property work times in the coming months.

As a final note, Charlie Scott and the trustees are helping 'maintain' our building by ensuring we have the appropriate insurance valuations should we have a need. We were very happy to help Charlie with this critical endeavour.

BUILDING INTO OUR FUTURE - WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Introducing the New Capital Fundraising Committee

This Committee was created under council direction in early 2023. There are three members: Elizabeth Clarke (Co-Chair of Trustees), Brian Kalanda (Property Chair) and Kathy Coats (Co-Chair of Finance). This committee will lead a campaign to raise capital funds to continue to meet our mission *"To conserve and enhance the built fabric and supporting services of Jubilee United Church for service to the congregation and community."* We will actively pursue grant money but that will not be enough. We will organize fundraiser events, but we need your financial help! The Capital Fund Committee will be making announcements very soon.

Our Challenge

Over the next five years we can anticipate key major projects that we will have to undertake. However, the cost of those exceeds what we can manage in our annual budget. Our first priority will be the accessibility ramp. This is a missing element in our inclusivity mission and Council has approved that we are building it in 2023! In addition to the ramp, we are looking at auditorium roof repairs, replacing the 25-year-old HVAC units on the auditorium roof, soffit repair, new water heaters, new appliances, new exterior doors and many others. We are keen to hear your feedback and creative ideas, and to answer questions.

Elizabeth, Kathy and Brian

On June 23, 2013, Jubilee United Church became an Affirming Ministry.

On that day we official declared that we are intentionally aware and inclusive of all people expressing themselves and the love of God is diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. At that time, we were the **ONLY** church in North York to make such a statement. Since then, many have followed, including four different churches that came to us for advice and support. On that day we took a picture of our folk on the labyrinth dressed in Rainbow Colours.



On our tenth anniversary, June 24, 2023, we took another picture, this time in the Chancel. Within our walls and outside of our walls, we see, celebrate and love one another for who we are: gloriously and lovingly created by God.

Brookbanks for African Grannies ***Jeanne Kennedy, Co-Chair***

This beautiful Grandmother Tree quilt was handmade by Grandmothers in Canada and Africa to celebrate 20 years of partnerships with community-led organizations in sub-Saharan Africa. The idea came from Niambia, a staff member of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The sewing and piecing were done by grandmothers across Canada with contributions of fabric leaves and other pieces from grannies from both Canada and Africa. The quilt will travel throughout the countries.



It will be open to our supporters and friends, especially the Jubilee family, without which we couldn't function. Please stay tuned to find out when we will have our chance to see it. We will have refreshments, music, a marketplace and at least one guest speaker.

Brookbanks Grannies have been working with three other Toronto area groups to put on a show of African art, which has been postponed until 2024.

On Thursday June 15, we had an afternoon tea and invited our friends.

The WestEnders entertained us with 90 minutes of amazing music. Friends old and new gathered around tables and enjoy sweets and tea supplied and replenished by a wonderful crew of volunteers from the Jubilee Cares team. For many, it was the first time back and a reminder of how great it is to be in a community. We had such a good time that we've already booked the WestEnders for another afternoon tea on Wednesday, October 4. If you missed out on the last one, be sure to join us for the next one. As we get closer to the date, we will publicize and also provide transportation options.



FUN AT JUBILEE

by Pat Lansche

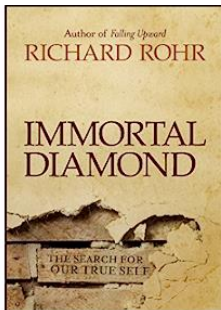


Do you have an activity, event, or group you would like to put together for the fall? A 'faith-full' get-together, a social event, or a fundraising activity? The FESC is here to help you to prepare all of those.

The **Fundraising and Event Support Committee** will go over with you all aspects of planning for your event and assist you in thinking of additional tasks that you might not have thought of yourself. We can put you in touch with volunteers and help you figure out a reasonable timeline in which to get everything in place.

Autumn is typically a busy time of year at Jubilee, so it's not too early to get started! Reach out to us and we will do everything we can to support you and your great ideas!

Pat Lansche, Chair
(pjlansche@gmail.com)



Our Men's Contemplation Group meets Wednesday Evenings at 7pm by Zoom.

We've been meeting for over a year, but we are always ready to welcome new members. We gather for one hour and we're pretty good at sticking to that schedule. We check in when we gather, we spend at least minutes in non-speaking meditation and then we talk about the book that we are reading. We have just started to read *Immortal Diamond: The Search for our True Self* by Richard Rohr.

If you would like to join us, we would be very happy to include you; you don't have to have been with us from the beginning of the book (we only read between 14 and 40 pages a week - easy to catch up) and you don't have to come every week, most of us don't. But we come often, because we feel a connection in our time together and we value the different perspectives that each of us bring to the reading.

If you are interested in joining us, please be in touch with Rev. Norm - nseli@jubileeunited.ca

Monday Duplicate Bridge Club is postponing in-person Bridge until the fall since there was not enough interest to warrant keeping going through the summer.

Stay tuned for news in September.
Marie McRorie



The Benevolent Fund



Nobody has to tell you that we are navigating difficult times with rising grocery prices, housing hard to find, and work hard to secure. The cost of food and gas have put a number of people at a serious disadvantage and having to choose between food and rent.

As worrying as it is for some of us, it has been quite bleak for others and the Benevolent Fund continues to be accessed by our neighbours in need. The need is sometimes a utility bill or groceries; we have helped with funds for transportation and even child care. We are able to offer a variety of supports from Education to Summer Camp thanks to your generosity.

The Benevolent Fund is a discretionary fund that your ministers administer confidentially to those in need. Our support is not meant to be on-going, but occasional (when it comes to food security) or one-time only when it comes to larger needs like paying a heating bill or getting books for school. We hope to help those whose needs are not recognized by the system and existing supports.

You might be amazed at who needs help and the kind of help that is needed; you might be surprised to recognize the people discreetly seeking support and may also be surprised to know that several of the folks that we have helped in the past have come to be supporters of the Benevolent Fund in the present.

Donations can be made in the usual ways: e-transfers to admin@jubileeunited.ca, cheques mailed or dropped off. Even Canada Helps can be used (canadahelps.org – search “Jubilee United Church”). Just indicate on your cheque, in your email or on-line donation that you would like the money to go to the Benevolent Fund.

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

Norm

Our condolences go out to Vera Hohns' family on her passing on March 27, 2023.

A lot of things have been happening at Jubilee lately, including the Moderator of the United Church of Canada meeting at Jubilee with over 80 United Church ministers to engage in the present and plan for the future, a garage sale, volunteers and friends doing what they do best, a Church BBQ and more.

Have a look for yourself:

