



Dear Friends,

We are quickly approaching Advent, the period before Christmas. This is a time of waiting and a time of preparation. It is an exciting time. As we journey through this time, may we have the spirit of Christmas which is peace, the gladness of Christmas which is hope and the heart of Christmas which is love.

We wish Rev. Debbie best wishes and many blessings as she begins her new journey with Unity United Church in Vasey. She is about to embark on new experiences and new opportunities.

Rev. Pat continues to be on Restorative Care leave. The length of Pat's absence is undetermined at this time. We hold Pat in our prayers as her health is restored and she gains the strength and energy to return to her ministry with us.

We are grateful to have Rev. Dick Moffat's presence here to lead us in Sunday worship and help with pastoral care during the next several weeks. We look forward to his guidance and support during these weeks.

The life and work of our church is organized and lead by many people at Burton Avenue. As the end of another church year approaches, several positions on the Church Board are becoming available. Please consider joining a committee to share in this ministry.

May God bless you richly throughout this seasonal time.

Islay



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KEEPING IN TOUCH

Dear Burton Avenue,

In what I thought was my final letter to you, I wrote about impending changes in my life and work. I began the process of saying goodbye to you. By the time you read this, I will be gone. My work with Unity United Church in Vasey/Midland will have begun.

So all I am going to write are a series of thank you---thank you that I was too choked up to offer on Sunday. November 15th during my final service with you.

Thank you, Catherine Fletcher. Your creativity, your leadership and your gifts are a blessing. Her work and ministry have inspired me. Watching her work with the Rainbow Club was a privilege. You taught me a lot, Catherine. May God bless you in your ministry.

Thank you Nicole and Kenji Masuda; your work with Youth Inc. is extraordinary. Not many people are gifted or willing to work with youth. But you are and you do it so well. You deserved the nomination for that award at Central for Volunteerism. I don't know who won it, but as far as I am concerned, you did. Thanks to Rory, Kristy and Andrew for sharing your leadership gifts with the youth and with me. May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

Thank you, Lynn Garraway. You endured lengthy bulletins I drafted, you persevered with emails I sent and you managed my challenges with punctuality with grace and professionalism. I will miss your smile and your sense of humour. I enjoyed our morning chats and will miss those too. May God bless you in your ministry.

Thank you, Doug Garraway. Your music has been a blessing to me. But I am sure you hear that a lot. What I will miss most about you are your travel stories. Each one contains wisdom. Each one reminds me that we don't get very far in life if we aren't willing to step outside of our comfort zones and experience life completely. Each story reminds me that we can't fully encounter one another if we don't move past ourselves. Thank you for teaching me that. May God bless you in your ministry.

Thank you, Islay Scott, Alan Mcgee, Harv Garraway, Brenda Mcgee and Al Scarth. Your care and passion for the work and ministry of this church was revealed to me very early on in my time here. What you do is not easy. But you do it well and you do it with the Spirit working in you. You have all taught me a lot about what it means to be a professional in a church setting. May God continue to bless you in your ministries.

Thank you Rainbow Club and Youth Inc. You are a precious resource in this church. Never forget how special you are. Knowing you and serving you has been a blessing. Your presence is a gift to Burton. May God bless you in your ministry.

Thank you members and friends of Burton Avenue United Church whom I have not named. You opened yourselves to having a minister for children, youth and young families in your midst. You welcomed me into your sanctuary during the times I was called to step out of that specialized role. You tried to get to know me during our limited contact with one another. Your many kindnesses have blessed me. May you continue to be a blessing to one another and to the community that surrounds your church. May God bless you in your ministry.

*Peace and Blessings,
The Rev. Debbie McMillan*



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Treasurer's Report

October 2009

Our financial position for the first ten months of this year has gradually improved which is a good thing as we head into the final two months of 2009. A review of the operating statement for October YTD shows total receipts of \$194,388 compared to \$184,855 over the same period in 2008, which is an increase of \$9,534. This increase in receipts has been due to an increase in miscellaneous revenues which were primarily fundraising, the Time & Talent campaign, and a bequeath of \$10,000. Our thanks to the congregation for its ongoing support of these important campaigns.

Our operating expenses for the first ten months of this year were \$208,815 versus \$217,316 last year, which represents a decrease of \$8,501, leaving us with an operating deficit for the year of \$14,427. This is \$18,035 less than last year's deficit of \$32,462 at this time so we are in reasonably good shape by comparison! We still have a number of fundraising initiatives planned for the remainder of the year which we believe will help to reduce this deficit. Blessings through the Advent season.

Sincerely,
Alan J. McGee
Treasurer



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2009 CHRISTMAS SNOWFLAKE PROGRAM

We are in our fourth year of the Christmas Snowflake program supporting our local community in partnership with Samaritan House Community Ministries. We are delighted to know that this program has been embraced by so many. This year we have a list of 66 children name's, age and a modest wish list. Each Snowflake has been prepared and placed on the Charlie Brown Christmas tree.

The Local Outreach Committee wish to express gratitude and appreciation for your continued support to the Snowflake program. The Christmas Snowflake program does make a difference for many families.

May God Bless each and everyone.

LIFE LONG LEARNING COMMITTEE (LLC)

Now that the "Time and Talents" initiative has run its course, LLC will be creating a bulletin board, which will celebrate milestones within our church community and present an opportunity for BAUC members to promote themselves or their businesses. Church community members can post business cards, youth can advertise for babysitting, parents can advertise the need for babysitters etc. You can also post photos or newspaper articles featuring our members or their families. Announce new arrivals, (children, grandchildren) or celebrate the life of someone recently departed. You will be

surprised what you will learn about fellow BAUC members.

On Dec. 13, after service, while the adults are having their social time, the youth of the church are invited to decorate their own gingerbread people for the holidays. Be creative!

In the New Year, LLC will be sending a survey to the young families of BAUC. We are looking for ideas to get families

more involved in activities and fellowship. Stay tuned!

Our thanks go to Rev. Deb McMillan for her help and guidance on this committee. We wish her all the best in her new Ministry in Vasey!

God Bless
Rick Williams
Lori Hornick

A NEW FRIEND IN CHINA

Doug Garraway

There is always something very exciting about visiting a foreign country for the first time. My initial trip to China in 1992 was an eye opener for me as I attempted to cope with a language which I could neither speak nor understand and experience a cuisine which was wonderful, but which bore no similarity whatsoever to the 'Chinese food' that I frequently experienced in Canada. And I found myself in an urban environment that was significantly more crowded than any I had visited.

I soon became accustomed to the fact that streets were constantly filled with thousands of bicycles, but very few automobiles. I recall, on my first morning in Beijing, standing on the curb in front of my hotel, waiting for an opportunity to cross Cha-Nan Road so that I might visit 'The Great Hall of the People'. An unending 'sea' of bicycles, the occasional transit bus and the appearance of the odd private automobile, made it apparent that it would be sheer folly to attempt a crossing of this very wide roadway. I could see no evidence of traffic lights in the vicinity and so began to seriously wonder whether I would ever be able to get to the other side! I was contemplating my options when I felt a tug on the sleeve of my jacket. I turned to find a smiling, middle-aged lady, who, with hand gestures, invited me to follow her through the crowds of pedestrians filling the very wide sidewalk. I dutifully trailed along as we wormed our way through the throngs of people as she led me down the street to the entrance of a pedestrian subway. This would allow me to cross under Cha-Nan Road and visit 'The Great Hall of the People'. This, in and of itself, was helpful but more important was the indication that without doubt, the majority of the ten million inhabitants of Beijing would be willing to provide assistance, guidance and advice to their guests.

I have a number of special memories, from my initial visit to Asia. One of these was my first excursion outside of Beijing to see, up close, one of the remaining sections of The Great Wall of China. The staff at my hotel recommended a company which transported tourists, in air-conditioned

mainly from outside China, coaches, to the 'Great



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Wall'. They would provide helpful commentary on the 'Great Wall' and environs and make sure that we got a 'good meal' at our destination. I opted, however, to go with a group, many of them 'seniors' from other parts of China. The trip to 'the Wall' was in a very old, well used bus with wooden seats, no air conditioning or on-board music. I clearly was the only 'westerner' on the bus. Upon arrival at the 'Great Wall', the group gathered around our tour guide and then headed for a large tent, I suspect to have a cup of tea. Not being particularly fond of tea but anxious to see the 'Wall', I chose to walk directly to the section of the 'Wall' upon which visitors were permitted to walk.

The 'Wall', at that point, is approximately ten feet wide, constructed of what appeared to be local stone. The first thing that caught my eye as I started my trek up the 'Wall' was that not only were there a great number of steps constructed or carved into the existing stone, but that the depth or rise of the many steps, differed significantly. I later learned that this design feature was intended to make it exceedingly difficult for enemy warriors to gather momentum because they were dealing with a great variance in the steps, the rises ranging from three or four to sixteen or eighteen inches. I can bare witness to the fact that this particular feature must have worked very well at that time in history. I was witness to another interesting consequence of this design, hundreds of years after the fortified wall was built.

As I climbed up the interior of this section of the 'wall' the effectiveness of the design of the 'uneven' steps was obvious. It was essential that one move slowly and carefully on the journey up the wall. I was extremely excited to be where I was and so the built in design features were not a significant concern for me. I eventually reached the end of this existing section of the 'wall' and walked across a very green, rock strewn valley. I found a perch from which I could see quite some distance in all directions. But I found my gaze returning to the section of the 'wall' that I had just traversed. After an hour or so of such contemplation, I decided to start my trek back down the wall.

It didn't take long for me to realize that the 'going down' was going to be significantly more difficult than the 'coming up'. This became even more evident when I came upon a 'fellow explorer' who was faced with a challenging situation. She was, I'm guessing, ten years of age. She had long black hair and was shoeless, wearing a worn, grey dress which one might imagine, had been passed down through any number of generations. She clearly was stalled at this point in her descent down the wall. In fact she had encountered a very long, deep step that she needed to deal with in order to continue her trek to the bottom of this section of the wall. As I approached from above and behind her, it was clear that her sudden awareness of a strange looking foreigner only added to the distress that she was already experiencing. I did my best to smile and appear non threatening in hopes that I might be able to assist her in some way. My offer of assistance on the contrary seemed only to increase her sense of discomfort and vulnerability. I had hoped that she might be willing to take my hand or arm and allow me to assist her down this very difficult section of the 'Wall'. Although she was obviously feeling helpless and distressed, she was not yet willing to have anything to do with this 'stranger'. Sensing her discomfort with the situation, I clambered around and past her, waved goodbye, and continued down the interior of 'the wall' and then made my way across the field to where there was some simple food and some fresh tea available in a large tent.



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There was also the opportunity to watch some young dancers in wonderfully colorful costumes. I watched for a short while but continued to wonder about the little girl I had encountered and whether she had been able to make her way down.

Eventually my concern got the better of me and so I walked back to the bottom of the section of 'The Wall' where I had last seen the young girl. As I made my way up the uneven steps and rock strewn floor, I began to fully appreciate how difficult it must be for someone of diminutive stature to make their way down the wall, particularly in bare feet! Within several minutes I spotted the little girl standing exactly where I had left her. As I climbed toward her I sensed a look of resignation on her little face. She seemed to know and perhaps appreciate why I had come back. So when I approached her, she tentatively extended her tiny hand. I took it carefully and assisted her down to the next level. From there it would be, relatively speaking, clear sailing and she scampered quite quickly to the bottom and disappeared. I made my way down more slowly and walked back to where I had been watching the young dancers. It wasn't long before I felt a little tug on the back of my t-shirt. I turned to find my little friend offering me a small bouquet of wild flowers, obviously picked on the nearby hillside. I accepted the flowers with a smile and a thank you in English. She stood for just a moment and allowed me to clearly discern the thank you so clearly expressed in her tiny, precious face. As quickly as she appeared, she turned and ran toward the crowd and disappeared. I would never see her again but I do think of her from time to time, grateful that each of us acted on the opportunity to offer a kindness to a stranger. And I am certain that she knows how much I appreciated the flowers.

LOCAL OUTREACH

Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the food drive at thanksgiving. A letter of thanks was received from the Food Bank for our donation of 300 lbs of food. A paragraph from this letter reads - *"Thanksgiving at the Barrie Food Bank is a paradox. On one hand people are pouring through our doors desperately needing our assistance, and on the other had there are generous folks like you who give generously to make this assistance possible. As a non-government funded charity we are, in effect, a centre for giving and receiving, and we appreciate your confidence in our*

stewardship of this process. On behalf of those folks who often tell us that they don't know how they would survive without the help of the food bank, we thank you once again for your generosity. It's only because of your faithful support that we are able to continue to be there for them."

On Monday, October 26, Youth Haven moved to their new location at 20-22 Wellington Street E. The building has been completely renovated to accommodate staff and up to fifteen males and females. Our committee provided sandwiches, fruit and veggies, juices and dessert at suppertime.



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WHITE GIFT SUNDAY – This will be held on Sunday, December 13th. As in previous years, your donations of food, toys and money will be gratefully received. The toys will be taken to Christmas Cheer; cash donations would be gratefully received for the Food Bank or Christmas Cheer.

HISTORY OF WHITE GIFT SUNDAY – White Gift Sunday dates back to 1904 in Ohio. The wife of a Methodist minister and her two daughters came up with the idea of giving gifts wrapped in white paper at Christmas time to people in need.

Gifts are wrapped in white so that they will be anonymous and so that people who can only give a little will not be embarrassed. There is a Chinese tradition where all the people gave their King a gift wrapped in plain white paper so that every gift would look the same. Each person gave the King what they were able and the King welcomed them all.

The White Gift shares in the spirit of Christ and the God of Love at Christmas. We give gifts of love to people in need. These gifts are often non-perishable food items which are distributed to people in the community.

White Gift Sunday celebrates the stewardship of God's love and giving at the time of year when we remember the coming of the King of Kings.

SICK AND SHUT-IN Names will be available on Sunday, December 13th at coffee time downstairs. If you know of any member needing a visit and gift, please call *Joan Carruthers*, 446-3402 or *Lyla Hubbert* 728-2092 or leave the name at the Church office.

Get well cards have been signed for *Rev. Pat, Audrey Hunter and Howard Kelly*. The supply of cards have been replenished and are in the church office.

Please continue to bring in the tapes and used eye glasses.

Joan Carruthers - Chairperson



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Christmas Memories of Gold

by Brian Baker

Filled with warmth were Christmases of old,
Bring back those times with memories of gold.
Those days were filled with wonder and toys.
Christmas was just made for girls and boys.

In the school concert we all had a part,
For Christmas this was the exciting start.
Cut from the bush we decorated the tree,
Proudly parents our plays came to see.

Church bells ringing and choirs singing,
Garlands and cards we would be stringing.
It's Christmas Eve and not long to wait,
Old Santa's coming and he won't be late.

From our pillow good dreams were spilled.
Wake to find a stocking with goodies filled,
Christmas morning dawned sparkling white,
Behold downstairs the tree a wondrous sight.

Find a sweater, a doll, a game or a book,
Gifts for play and fun or just to look.
Old Dad has built us a sleigh for the hill,
Edible delights Mom has made with skill.

Welcome family and friends are all here,
Come to share this day of Christmas cheer.
For all at the laden table there is a space,
Now bow your heads for this time of grace.

There's turkey and pudding and sweet tarts,
And talk of old stories that warm our hearts.
As purrs the cat at the table begs the dog,
In the hearth crackles the glowing Yule log.

For those good times forgive us if we cry,
Fond Christmas memories we will not let die.
Bring back the folks and a Christmas of old,
Filled with love and joy and memories of gold!



Advent Wreath

An Advent Wreath provides a visual way to move through the 4 Sundays of the Season. The wreath's circle has no beginning or ending, symbolizing God's love which never ends. Evergreen symbolizes everlasting life, and holly reminds us of the crown of thorns with drops of blood. Traditionally, the Advent wreath contains 4 blue candles, or 3 blue or purple, and 1 pink candle that are progressively lit on each Sunday in Advent. If the pink candle is used, it is lit on Advent 3. In the centre of the wreath is a large white candle (sometimes called The Christ candle) which is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The colour of the candles reflects the colour of the church season. Blue symbolizes hope and anticipation. Purple symbolizes penitence and is the colour for royalty. Pink symbolizes the joy of reconciliation and is also associated with the Virgin Mary in some traditions. Certain themes are sometimes associated with each of the candles-such as hope, peace, joy and love.



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WORSHIP and MUSIC COMMITTEE November, 2009

*(Members: Rev. Pat, Brian Baker,
Miriam Oben, Marion Moffat, Doug
Garraway, and Brenda McGee)*

Autumn has been a busy, faith-filled time here at Burton. It has also been a time of great change. Our beloved Reverend Pat has taken a Restorative Care Leave to nurture her health; our prayers for healing go out to her and we look forward to her return. Reverend Debbie has carried Sunday services for the past four weeks and stepped into that role with grace and ease. Reverend Dick has made the generous offer to lead Burton in worship starting November 22nd and extending through to early February. We look forward to his faithful leadership as we celebrate the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. We are so blessed to have three such talented and caring ministers. The Lord truly provides.

We have celebrated some wonderful events over the Fall. Rev. Darren Liepold spoke to the importance of world outreach programs on Mission and Service Sunday.

The Time and Talents Celebration gave folks a chance to share stories of how they used their God-given gifts to serve others and made their investments grow.

Rev. Diane Knowles returned home to Burton Avenue as guest speaker for our 136th Anniversary Service; ever engaging, she quizzed us all on the origins of the United Church and gave a stirring message of encouragement and

strength as we look to the future of our faith and our church.

Two wee souls were baptized this Fall: on Sept. 27th, Jillian Grace Theissler, daughter of David and Carrie, and on Nov. 8th, Hudson Rafaele Vavala, son of Frank and Stacy, and grandson of Bruce and Linda Hudson.

Reverend Debbie's time here at Burton has come to a close. In a lovely service, a Covenanting of Closure, the Rainbow Club, Youth Inc., and the entire congregation celebrated Rev. Deb's ministry to our children, youth, and young families here over the past year and a-half and to wish her happiness and many blessings as she moves into full-time ministry at Unity United Church at Vasey.

The Advent Season is before us. The Rainbow Club will help mark White Gift Sunday with a drama. The quiet of The Longest Night Service invites all who seek comfort to gather at 6:30 on Dec. 17th. Our choir is busy preparing a joyous Christmas Cantata that will be sung in portions throughout the weeks of Advent. Christmas Eve will celebrate Christ's birth with a Family Service at 7pm and a Candle-light Service at 10pm (note the earlier start). Come share in the joy and anticipation of Christ's birth.

Blessings, Brenda McGee (Chair)



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Sunday Worship- Looking Ahead

Nov.22 nd	Reign of the King, Communion
Nov.29 th	Advent Season starts
Dec.13 th	White Gift Sunday
Dec.17 th	The Longest Night Service at 6:30pm
Dec.24 th	Christmas Eve Family Service at 7pm and Candle- light Service with Communion at 10pm.



RAINBOW CLUB

Another busy fall is well under way in the Rainbow Club. Most Sundays we have a full house in 'the Ark' and we always welcome new children and youth ages 3 and up. We enjoy stories, songs, discussions and arts and crafts. The children of the Rainbow Club are also active participants in regular worship services by acting as lay readers or candle lighters.

This fall has been a time of change for us. We have welcomed several new teachers to our team and thanked others as they moved on. In particular, we



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thank Linda Hudson for all the many years she has been a teacher and wish her well as she keeps busy with her many other volunteer roles and her new grandson. Our new team consists of Sheena, Marni, Joanne, Sandy, Heather, Angela, Vickie, Liz and myself.

November 15 was a bittersweet day for us too, as we looked back at Rev. Debbie's time with us and celebrated with her, her new job at another church. The children and teachers have really loved working with Rev. Debbie and we all wish her nothing but the best in her new position. The children presented Deb with a desk blotter with their handprints on it and shared an acrostic poem about Deb with the congregation.

Congratulations to Kyra and Ayla Keough and Kristie Nowocin who received their bibles on November 15.

We are already gearing up for the Advent and Christmas seasons ahead and are looking forward to our annual White Gift Sunday and Christmas Eve dramas. Actors, young and old, we want you!

*Catherine Fletcher
Rainbow Club Coordinator*

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Our committee planned the luncheon for the 136th Anniversary celebration on November 1st. Thanks to everyone who donated food and to those who helped with the setting and cleaning up afterwards.

We will be taking orders for Christmas poinsettias on November 22nd, 29th and

December 6th. Please see one of the committee members at coffee time to place your order. The memorial poinsettias will adorn the church on December 20th and may be taken home after the service.

Coffee hosts are always needed and training will be provided. Please speak to *Lois Delaforce* if you are interested in taking a turn. A special thank you to those "Kitchen Angels" (you know who you are) who are always there every Sunday loading and unloading the dishwasher, taking down tables, stacking chairs, sweeping the floor, etc. Your help is greatly appreciated and makes the clean up more fun.



We have included in this newsletter a recipe from Cora's Restaurant that you might enjoy making for the Christmas holidays.

CORA'S HOLIDAY COOKIES

2 cups butter
2 cups white sugar
2 eggs
4 tsps vanilla extract
5 1/3 cups sifted flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 cup candied fruit

(Optional 1 cup chocolate chips or nuts.)

- In a large bowl cream butter with electric mixer.
- Add sugar, little by little, until blended.
- Add eggs and vanilla. Mix well.
- In another bowl mix flour, baking powder, salt and candied fruit.
- Add this mixture to the sugar mixture and stir until blended.
- Divide batter into 3 equal parts, shape into logs and wrap in wax paper.
- Refrigerate for at least 3 hours (or freeze for several weeks) before baking.
- Slice logs into 5-mm pieces and place on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.
- Preheat oven to 375 F and bake about 10-12 minutes till golden.

Marlene Holman



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