



the epistle

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

By Dorothy Wilkins

We are on the road again, like it or not — looking for a new minister and moving into a brand new year full of uncertainties.

God is always doing something new and we choose whether we will be a part of it. God asks us to risk and trust. That is the theme of the feature article in The Upper Room for January written by Mary Lou Redding. She looks at the story of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-9) as he packs up his family and possessions and starts out on a journey to the land God has promised and he has no idea where that land is. She proposes that stepping out requires some changes. “If we do what we have always done we will get what we have always gotten. So if we want our relationships to be different, we must interact differently with those near us. If we want our jobs to be different, we must work in ways we haven’t tried before. If we want our spiritual life to be different, better, deeper, we will have to try spiritual practices that nudge us into new territory. If we want to see Christ in new ways, we will have to serve in places we have not served before.”

Abraham’s story offers several strategies for this journey, according to Ms. Redding. First we need to look honestly at our situation. Then we need to spend time listening to God for direction. We should not try to go it alone – we need one another and others who will help us. Good relationships and new relationships are gifts from God. We need to be prepared for stops and starts along the way and finally we need to take time to celebrate what God is doing and has done.

Now what does traveling have to do with “Love”? It’s God’s love that determines the success of our traveling just as it did Abraham’s.

According to my dictionary, love means a strong affection for something or someone. Agape love is the highest and noblest form of love, which sees something

infinitely precious in its object (NRS Life Application Bible). This term is used of love from God to man, from man to God and from man to his neighbour. In the Bible John is certain that God is love (1 John 4:8).

That means that God sees something infinitely precious in each one of us. We are his favourite. God is the God of all creation and He has a personal relationship with each one of us and each one is His favourite! That is an awesome thought. And God wants everyone to know this. God sent Jesus to show us His love but we can't experience it unless we *believe* in it and *accept* it and *walk* in it. Jesus did not often tell people directly that God loves them. He most often just revealed it: in his countless acts of compassionate healing, his teaching about God's acceptance of sinners, his grief over human disobedience and by his personal friendships with tax collectors and sinners (RSV Life Application Bible).

If you haven't been in the newly renovated kitchenette next to the Fellowship room you should visit. There is a picture on the wall that reads

“Love

Continues endlessly as long as we honour its presence in our lives”

How can we honour the presence of Love in our life? By believing in it, by accepting and treasuring it and by thinking and acting in ways that help love grow.

It is God who is love.

It is God who has chosen and loves each one of us.

It is God who is always doing something new to make his love known.

And it is God who will never let us go as we travel this new road.

Do you remember the beautiful old hymn “O Love that wilt not let me go.” It was written in 1882 by George Matheson who was going through some very difficult personal suffering.

*O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

Such release and peace and, oh, such “Love”!

OUTREACH

HELP NEEDED!

Submitted by Karen Strong

The Youth Shelter on King's Cres. (Joanne's House) is in need of supplies. They are in particular need of toiletries (especially travel size) and T-shirts and pj bottoms to fit older teens. There will be a box in the narthex to hold the donations. Valerie Grant will make sure the items are delivered.

*Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Matthew 22:37–39



BLOOD DONOR CLINIC

Submitted by Gladys Snelling

The Blood Donor clinic to honour Jeff Shaw is a definite 'go'. The confirmed date is March 24. The time will be from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. The site will be at St. Paul's parking lot in a bloodmobile. Please schedule your appointment online @ www.blood.ca or by telephone 1-888-2-DONATE. We can accommodate about 6 more donors, so if you have been procrastinating — please step forward. For more information contact Gladys Snelling at 905-683-3260.

May God bless!

CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

There are always two aspects of life involving a congregation: people going and people coming. Sadly we seem to have more of the former than the latter in the United Church. Over the past year we have seen members leave for a variety of reasons: death, life circumstances, loss of faith and for many other reasons. I pray that they are able to find the path that the good Lord has laid for them. Below I submit to you a story of people who came together and gave to each other their gifts.

As a member of the Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, I found an article written about an Anglican church in Broad Cove, Newfoundland, being built in 1893. It is a testimony to faith. It shows what people can do without wealth, using only their dedication, strength and skills.

This small community had to erect a new church building. They had a building from 1848 and for reasons not specified, they needed a new structure. The membership of 400 decided to build a new one that was sized for 300 at a sitting. Over the previous year they had gathered all their materials and cannibalized their old building. The following entry struck me as crucial to their situation. Within 13 days they were worshipping in that new building.

Eighteen window-boxes were made, including 6 from the old 1848 church building, [and] were Duly Put in Place. Temporary seats for 300 people had been put in. A permanent platform with Its Three-fold Graduation had been duly completed and the font placed thereon. A full service, with a very large number of communicants, was held in [the church], on Sunday morning last. – all the work Done in Only Thirteen Days.

We have only spent two hundred and eighty-two dollars in cash as yet. Every cent of this, except less than ten dollars, has been subscribed by ourselves. No bazaars, no lotteries, or sales of work, all straight givings. Best of all, every sitting in the new church is to be Free and Unappropriated. No renting, or sale, or purchase of

Chat from the Chair cont.

pews to be allowed. We are all one in God's sight and in his House; rich and poor meet together. We only desire that others should be partakers of this gift; therefore, we labor freely for this end in the erection of our new church "Freely we have received, freely we give."

(the Rev. Walter R. Smith, June 26, 1893)

I appreciate that times are different today and finances are required for churches to survive. The Lord has given us all unique gifts; we have only to recognize them and share them. Let us, as they did one hundred and twenty years ago, remember that "Freely we have received, freely we give."

God Bless,

Bill Sheaves

STEWARDSHIP

Financially Speaking: Update January 2012

There is not any financial information in this Epistle since the Annual Report may already be in your hands. If not, it will be soon. Please remember that Sunday, February 5th is our annual congregational meeting. Please plan to attend and share your opinions with the rest of the congregation.

Your givings are what helps keep St. Paul's a place for you to reach out to for prayer, for comfort, for social interaction, and for help.

Your Finance Committee

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Submitted by Diane Flemming

CELEBRATING
"OUR TAPESTRY OF LOVE"



UNITED CHURCH WOMEN
1962 - 2012

Women within the United Church have been forming UCW groups since the organization was formally inaugurated on January 1st, 1962, through the amalgamation of the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) and the Woman's Association (WA).

This means that UCW is celebrating our 50th anniversary this year!

Anniversary Highlights

The National UCW has chosen a special project for the anniversary that will help fund the Maternal Health Care Training Centre in Tanzania. St Paul's UCW has contributed funds to that project. The money will be used for training Maternal Health Care workers over a 3-year period. Currently, in Africa, there are 1500 maternal deaths every single day. There is a huge need to train birthing assistants in birthing techniques, nutrition, emergency first aid and CPR.

Wednesday March 21 is the date for the Oshawa Presbyterial UCW 50th Annual meeting to be held in Brooklin United Church. Betty Turcott, President of the National UCW, will be the guest speaker. All women within our congregation are welcome to join the UCW members. Please see any member of the St Paul's UCW Executive for further details.

We will continue to celebrate our 50th Anniversary during the UCW Sunday worship service planned for June 3. Our theme will be "Our Tapestry of Love". See you there!

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS FOR THE 2012 UCW EXECUTIVE

UCW members would like to thank Dorothy Wilkins for performing the service to install the Officers for the UCW Executive for the year 2012. The installation service took place at the UCW annual business meeting held on Jan 22.

2012 Officers are

Past President	Diane Fleming, Karen Strong
President	Grace Sheaves
Vice President	
Secretary	Doris Tietze
Treasurer	Carole Perley
Group Leader	Val Wilson
Membership	Paulina Morgan
Kitchen Convener	June Gellatly
Social Conveners	Karen Strong, Debbie McAdam, Marilyn Cruickshank
Bazaar Convener	Jennifer Cree
Supply Convener	Arlene McKnight
Literature Convener	Marilyn Cruickshank

OUR PRAYER

*And now go with us, Lord
Into the days ahead.
Strengthen us for peace.
Give us wisdom. Keep us humble.
And may we live and work together, and so striving
Build a new and better world for tomorrow. Amen*

UCW IS TRYING SOMETHING NEW!!!
A BAZAAR... PART 1
Submitted by Deb McAdam

On Saturday April 21, 2012 we are going to have a combo garage sale, attic treasure, jewelry and used books sale and maybe we will even throw in some muffins and coffee. These items WILL NOT be offered again in the fall. Some of the logistics are still to be worked out.



So when you have a cold winter day and time on your hands, sort through some of your tucked-away stuff and save what you no longer use or need for us (at your house PLEASE just until April, no room at the church). We can turn them into RECYCLED TREASURES. Every little drop in the bucket of fund raisers helps. We want to do our part to help St Paul's.

Bless you in advance for acting on our request.

MUSIC

SENIOR CHOIR NEWS
Submitted by Lois Craig



Members of the congregation are invited to create some 'short term memories' by being part of the choir for two favourite anthems. By attending two or three rehearsals before the anthem date, you can be part of a wonderful choral experience.

To join with the choir to sing We Sing the Almighty Power of God on Feb. 19, attend choir rehearsals on Feb. 9, and 16.

To join with the choir to sing Sweet Hour of Prayer on Mar. 11, attend choir rehearsals on Feb 23, Mar. 1 and Mar. 8.

If you have any questions about either of these Short Term Memory songs, give Lois a call at 905-428-1457 or just come to any of the practices listed above.

THE CHURCH OFFICE

IN MEMORIAM



Janet Miller loving sister of Jennifer Cree, sister-in-law of Rick and aunt of Melissa, Sean and Joshua.

Mildred Toogood, loving aunt of the late Ray Reiffenstein and his wife Bernice.

Kay Sheaves, loving step-mother of Bill, his wife Grace and their children Brittany and Connor.

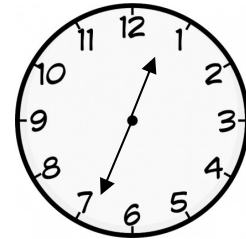
Everyone says love hurts, but that is not true.
Loneliness hurts. Rejection hurts.
Losing someone hurts. Envy hurts.
Everyone gets these things confused with love.
But in reality, love is the only thing in this world
that covers up all pain and makes someone
feel wonderful again.

NEWS FROM THE JOINT SEARCH COMMITTEE

During the past month, the Joint Search Committee has placed the following listing on the United Church vacancy list.

Are you ready to experience new growth? St. Paul's United Church, Ajax, known as the "Church with the Open Arms", may be the right place for you. We are a pastoral church in a vibrant community located on Lake Ontario just east of Toronto. We are looking for a full-time ordained minister to lead us in exploring new possibilities for ministry. Our key mission is to experience, show and share the difference God's love in Christ makes in our lives. Our strengths include creative lay participation in worship, an inspiring music program and many fellowship and faith-based groups.

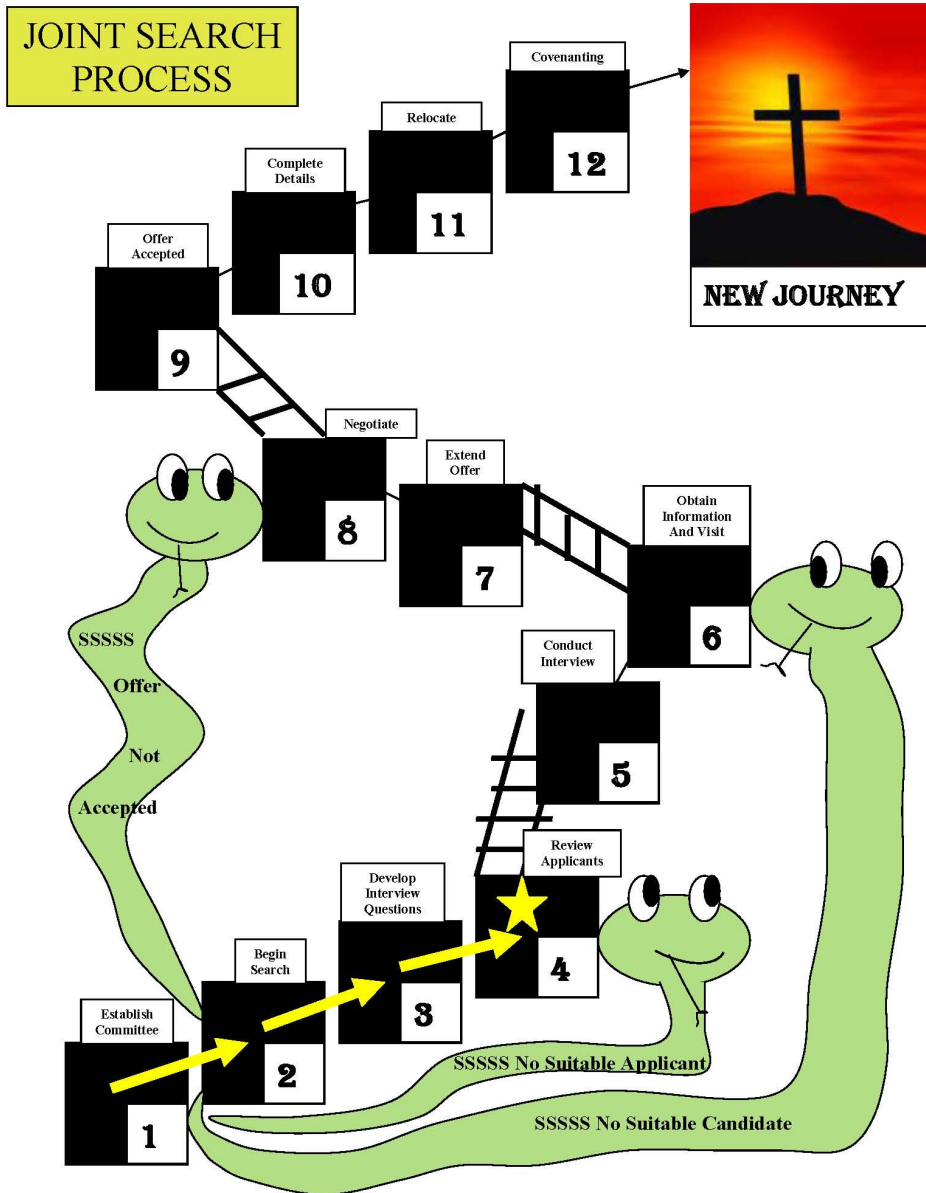
Check out the February issue of The Observer to see St. Paul's ad. The team has its first round of interview questions ready. As the first applications start to come in, the committee is reviewing them. As we move closer to our one new minister, we ask for God's blessing on our team.



What's next? The committee has developed a handy snakes and ladder visual that helps to explain the process by using the twelve rungs to highlight the steps along the ladder of our journey as well as the few snakes that may take us back to the beginning of the process. The poster will be on the bulletin board. Currently, we are on step four of the process.



PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF GOD'S HEART.



FOR KIDS ONLY

ST. VALENTINE

Within the Roman Catholic tradition, people who have lived a life of Christian holiness or who have been martyred for their Christian beliefs can be named as Saints. One of the early saints of the Catholic Church was St. Valentine.



St. Valentine was a Roman priest who lived in the third century AD. He was jailed and executed because he refused to follow the Roman law and continued to live according to his Christian beliefs. Legend says that while he was in jail, he performed a miracle by restoring sight to the jailer's daughter. On the night before his death, he wrote a note to the jailer's daughter to say farewell and signed it 'From your Valentine.' February 14 was declared as a day of celebration for Saint Valentine.

How much do you know about Valentine's Day?

What is

a valentine colour that rhymes with bed? _____

a valentine colour that rhymes with sink? _____

something you give that rhymes with hard? _____

something that Cupid shoots that rhymes with go? _____

an emotion that rhymes with glove? _____

a valentine symbol that rhymes with art? _____

something sweet that rhymes with dandy? _____

a feeling of happiness that rhymes with toy? _____

a way to hold someone that rhymes with rug? _____

THE EASTER SEASON

SHROVE TUESDAY:

Shrove Tuesday (February 21) is better known as Pancake Tuesday. It is the last day before the Christian season of Lent. Traditionally Lent is a time of giving things up, so Christians would use Shrove Tuesday as a day to indulge themselves in foods that they would have to give up during Lent. Pancakes are eaten because they contain fat, butter and eggs, foods that would be forbidden during Lent.



Shrove comes from the old word 'shrive', which means to confess. Christians in the middle ages would confess their sins on Shrove Tuesday so they would be forgiven before the season of Lent.

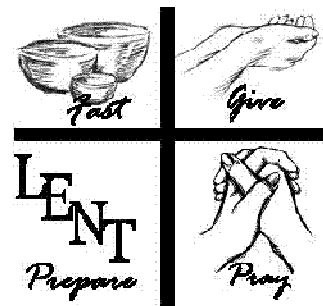
ASH WEDNESDAY:



Ash Wednesday (February 22) is the first day of the six and a half weeks of Lent. For Christians, ashes are a symbol of being sorry for things that were done wrong. On Ash Wednesday, Christians would put a cross of ashes on their foreheads to show their commitment to Jesus Christ and to show God that they were sorry for the things they had done wrong in the past year.

LENT:

Lent is the 40 days prior to Maundy Thursday. Since Sundays are a day of celebration, they are not included in the season of Lent. The forty days of Lent symbolizes the 40 years the Israelites wandered through the desert and the 40 days that Jesus went without food when he was being tested by the devil in the desert. Lent used to be a time when Christians fasted. Now, Christians will try and give up a favourite food (such as chocolate) or an activity (such as watching television). By giving up something we enjoy, Christians remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.



WHAT'S ON

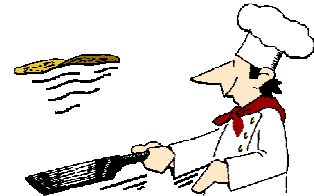
SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

**Tuesday,
February 21,
5:00 pm**

The Men's Breakfast Club will be hosting a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday February 21st starting at 5pm. Tickets will be on sale starting on January 29th, which you can pick up during the coffee fellowship after each Sunday Worship or by calling Sharon in the office. Please note however that tickets will only be available during the Congregational Breakfast on February 5th.

We're working hard to get the word out, so we're hoping for a large turnout. As a result, we're organizing 2 formal sittings. The first sitting will begin at 5pm, and the second sitting will begin at 6pm. Ticket prices are as follows: children 3 and under are free; children 4-12 \$3; youth 13-17 \$5; senior \$5; adult \$7; and families are \$20 (max. 5 people).

So please mark this date in your calendars and plan on joining us with your family and friends. But make sure everyone brings a healthy appetite because the men have certainly proven their worth in the kitchen this year.



SAVE THIS DATE!

**Sunday,
March 4,
10:30 am**

On Sunday, March 4, 2012, St. Paul's will be celebrating its 62nd anniversary. The Rev. Karen Smart will be leading the worship service that day and she will be presiding over the traditional sacrament of Communion. It is also the day that the church council will be installing their new slate of officers for this year. Join us for cake after the worship service, downstairs in the big hall.

WHAT'S ON!

**Friday,
March 2,
1:30 pm**

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2012

All are welcome to attend World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 2, 2012 at 1:30pm at St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church, 97 Burcher Rd., Ajax.

It is an ecumenical celebration on the theme "Let Justice Prevail." The service had been written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Malaysia. The Reverend Dennis Cook will be the theme speaker.

UCW members from St. Paul's will be participating in the service with members from St. Timothy's. This is a worldwide celebration that is carried out by women in more than 170 countries. It is a movement of Christian women who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year.



Come one, come all (men too) to the service on March 2 and be enriched by the faith experience of the women of Malaysia.

**Sunday,
March 11,
11:30 am**

**CGIT INVITES YOU TO LUNCH**

The Canadian Girls In Training will be hosting a Hot Potato Lunch on Sunday, March 11th, 2012 immediately following the morning service. Bring your family and friends, it's sure to be a great time and a delicious meal!

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

- February 5** **BREAKFAST, COMMUNION AND ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**
The Rev. Karen Smart
10:00 am
- February 12** **Ken Collins**
2:00 Volunteer Tea
- February 19** **Laura Springate**
- February 26** **SCOUTING SUNDAY**
Kim Lawrance
- March 4** **ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY AND COMMUNION**
The Rev. Karen Smart

The next Epistle will be issued on March 4, 2012. DEADLINE for articles is February 26, 2012. Please send articles to Susan Reed at svreed@bell.net



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