

GRACEVIEWS

March/April 2023

Our mission is to worship God, to spread His word, and to serve communities near and far.



Graceview Presbyterian Church
588 Renforth Drive, Etobicoke ON M9C 2N5

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. (1 Peter 4:8-10)

Our Church, Our Life

Kathy Twynam

On Sunday, January 15, when Rev. Jan Hieminga was preaching at Graceview, he was telling me about the churches in his hometown in Holland. There were seven Christian Reformed churches, each with its own minister – but those seven ministers rotated around those seven churches, and you only saw your own minister once every seven weeks. You were not supposed to follow your own minister around from church to church but were urged to attend only your own church, thereby getting to see different ministers and different styles of preaching. Jan also told me that occasionally but rarely, the assigned minister for a certain Sunday would be late arriving or did not arrive at all. To guard against the scenario where church leaders were scrambling to provide a last-minute short-order service for the faithful on such a Sunday, there was a pre-written sermon kept on file. If perchance the minister did not show up, one of the elders would take that sermon and preach it to the congregation.

Having a pre-written, preachable sermon on file struck me as a good idea that might be worth considering at Graceview, given our present pulpit vacancy and the slim pickings among the ministers who are available to fill our pulpit on a week-to-week basis. There are twenty-two churches in our presbytery, nine of which have vacant pulpits and need a visiting minister on Sundays. We are fortunate in our hard-

working Interim Moderator, Rev. Tim, who is keeping our pulpit supplied most Sundays.

Our service on January 8, 2023, for example, could have presented us with a problem. Three days earlier, on Thursday of that week, an email arrived from Tim saying that he was unable to find a minister to preach at Graceview that Sunday. He suggested several options, none of which were very satisfactory. One option was an elder-led service using one of Rev. Cam Taylor's sermons so kindly made available to us by Sandy Taylor. But to find a lay person (it doesn't have to be an elder) who would be willing to deliver a sermon on such short notice with little preparation time would likely have been a problem. Way out of the comfort zone of most lay people. Possibly, one of those brave souls who had already done it might have stepped up and volunteered to do it again. When the choir arrived for choir practice that Thursday evening, it still wasn't certain who, if anyone, would be in our pulpit on the Sunday. Undeterred, Kento and the choir chose the hymns, having no idea what the theme of the service might turn out to be. But there is a God in heaven, and He was watching over us. As we were leaving the church after practice, Kento, checking his email, suddenly said, "Oh, guess what, Shelley Howard is coming this week!" Thanks to God and Reverend Tim's persistence, we went from having nobody, to welcoming one of the best in one fell swoop, and all was well. But that was cutting it a little too close for comfort! We were delighted to welcome Shelley that Sunday, and her sermon was a home run.

And then there was Sunday, February 5, when our guest minister didn't arrive until 10:25, causing considerable consternation as the anxious group gathered in the hallway tried to volunteer each other to do the sermon! Everyone

was all a-flutter for a while, but the minister did show up and put our fears to rest. A pre-written sermon might have been a handy thing to have that day!

As we continue our time of pulpit vacancy, which is now approaching a year, our elders and other members of our congregation are to be commended for their diligence in the work they have done to keep our church functioning and vibrant, serving our people and the people in our community. I have no doubt that, if Tim had not been able to engage a minister for January 8, a lay person from among us would have taken charge to ensure that there was a worship service, including a sermon, that day. I harken back to our Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols, which was arranged and presented entirely by ourselves with no minister present. It was put together by an elder, Susan Chopp, and no arms were twisted to find willing participants. I was very proud to be a part of it. Fellow Graceview-ites, we can do this!

This, folks, is village mentality, people stepping in to take care of business and keep the village robust and healthy.

In the summer of 2008, Janet Ottewell and I completed our work on the history of Hillview and Grace churches (Journey of Faith) and made it available to our church family. There are copies in the Adamson Lounge. Pre-pandemic, we had almost completed the text of an update to the history, covering the time period from 2008 – 2020, when we were forced to put the project on hold due to pandemic restrictions. All we needed to do was include some pictures and it would be ready for publication, or so we thought. Well, a lot has happened since March 2020, and Janet and I now have more work to do. Our pulpit vacancy and the events

leading up to it have created a considerable extra workload for us as elders, but our plan is to get back to work on the history update as soon as that workload eases.

Shortly after Journey of Faith was completed in 2008, my sister Anne came to visit. She had known that I was working on the history and had expressed much interest in what we were doing, and she asked to see the finished product.

Although my sister does not know anyone mentioned in the history, and did not read every word, she spent some time turning every page and looking at the pictures. Then she closed the book and the first thing she said to me was “This is like a village. I’ve never seen anything like it.” I was surprised, because I have long used the analogy of village life to describe church life.

Seeing my church through the eyes of my sister, a stranger to Graceview, I was infused with a profound sense of thankfulness for the atmosphere of caring and peace and engagement that I had found here at Graceview. I still feel that way. At Graceview it seems that every time someone is in need, someone steps forward to try and fill that need.

Most of you have grown up in the Presbyterian Church and may take for granted many of the village-like features that are so attractive to someone like me, who was not raised with them. Things like our system of church government, for example. We have a council of elders, democratically elected, who regulate our church life and who are responsible and accountable for everything that transpires in our congregation. All local decisions in each Presbyterian church are made by ordinary people, the Session of that church, not handed down from above by a pope or a bishop

or a king. I view this as quite a remarkable product of the Reformation, a feature that should be appreciated and celebrated, even though, as we shall see, it is not perfect.

When Kento first came to us, I was explaining to him how the Presbyterian form of church government worked, and the first thing he said was, and I quote, “It’s so democratic.” Yes, it is democratic, and it works very well when everything is running smoothly and everyone is more or less happy. Everyone, at every level – session, presbytery, synod and general assembly - has one vote. Everyone is equal. The authority is given to the group, not to any individual. The system works just fine – until it doesn’t. The flaw in the system only becomes evident when things are not going smoothly and there are major problems to solve, such as we were dealing with this time last year. Or when, for example, there are two churches with dwindling congregations and financial woes, and it seems obvious that an amalgamation should be considered. Who has the authority to cause this to happen? As far as I can see, no one. The Presbytery – the ministers and representative elders in a given district - could intervene and act as a mediator to persuade the two churches to start the amalgamation process. But to get the process started there must be one leader to initiate it, each member of Presbytery has one vote, and sometimes the democratic process takes a very long time.

On Sept. 13, 1921, long before he was in charge of Britain’s participation in the Second World War and became universally known and honoured, Winston Churchill was said to have commented, “Democracy is the worst form of Government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” How right he was. The successful amalgamation of Grace and Hillview came about only

because a strong visionary, Rev. Dr. Bill Adamson, stepped up to lead, and made it happen. He had no special authority other than that granted to him as Interim Moderator, but he had powers of persuasion and the leadership skills he needed to guide us to a successful solution of our difficulties. Would we have thought of it ourselves and taken the action necessary to bring it about? I don't think so.

There are other things that you who have grown up in the Presbyterian Church may take for granted, but I do not:

- We invite every believer, not just fellow Presbyterians, to partake of communion. This is the way it should be, but is not the case in the church of my childhood.
- We now accept as a matter of course the ordination of women, although it took more than ten years of debate and struggle to make this happen.
- Our clergy have family lives much like our own. They know first-hand the joys and stresses of married life and the raising of toddlers and teenagers, and the delight of grandchildren – and in our personal experience are not above pulling out the wallet (or phone) full of pictures!
- As of General Assembly 2022, our national church has come to terms with the thorny issue of sexual orientation and same-sex marriage. After years of debate, struggle, and deferral, the national church has remembered that the defining virtue of Christianity is love, and the love and inclusion that Jesus showed and preached throughout his years of ministry has won out. If you have not read the message from Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, Moderator of the 2022

General Assembly, printed in the Fall 2022 Presbyterian Connection, I urge you to do so. I have a copy.

Take another look at the verse from 1 Peter, at the top of this article: *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”* Aren’t we doing just that? Let us take time to appreciate and thank those who are using their gifts in the service of the Lord:

Eldrin and Eric Charan for stepping up to help us sort out our technical difficulties and going way beyond the call of duty with their enhancements to our on-line church services and our website;

Ena Wallace, who spends much time alone downstairs at the computer quietly organizing our finances, “unwept, unhonoured, and unsung”.

Our Annual Report Design Team which in late 2021 spent many hours designing a new, modernized, easy-to-read 2021 Annual Report that we can be proud of, and which reconvened in late November 2022 to produce the 2022 Annual Report. Team members are: Lynne Bishop, Joan Duncan, Nancy McPherson, Janet Ottewell, Bob Twynam, Kathy Twynam.

Bob Twynam, for doing our announcements faithfully every week and for the many hours per week he spends at his computer doing church-related work, in our service and in the service of the West Toronto Presbytery;

The many others who are volunteering to read, to pray, to decorate the sanctuary, to clean and maintain our property, to look after our finances, to maintain our connection with

our community – even to preach! Friends, participation in the worship service does not have to be done by elders. Anyone who feels moved by the Spirit to assist with this has only to let their elder know.

Our faithful congregants -you- who come out to church every Sunday, whether or not the guest minister who will be there is your favourite. God will bless you for it.

We gather every Sunday for worship, and we seem to like each other so much that we hang around for a long time afterwards. This in itself epitomizes the village-like atmosphere at Graceview. I do not take this for granted, but feel a renewed thankfulness for our good fortune, and for our willingness to share that good fortune with others.

Come to a Bible Study!

Wednesdays, April 12-May 31, 7:00 PM at the church, led by volunteers from Session and the Music and Worship committee.

Based on **The Chosen**, a historical drama television series about the life of Jesus. We will be watching the episodes and discussing Season 1, using the study guide available. The episodes vary in length, with the longest being about 54 minutes. We will watch the episodes together at the church before our discussion. The series is available on Netflix, if anyone wishes to watch them ahead of time.

*Rev. Cam Taylor still speaks to us.
Submitted by Sandy Taylor*

I WAS BORN TO PREACH

I was born to preach
Touched and called to this great honour
But I have no opportunity now.
With so many good things to say
How do I stay quiet and sit receptively?

Sandra said do I want to have a church again?
Half jokingly but still wondering
No – I wish to be a free ambassador of hope
And love wherever I can be
That “breath of fresh air” someone once said I was.

I am learning so much in daily readings
Excited to proclaim good news
Yet now I am quiet
So filled and yet so stilled
What am I to be doing, Lord?

I love the way your love inspires me
I want to be your best person
Show me how to be that, Lord.
Give me the opportunity to proclaim your great Word
And stir your people to faith and action.

I am always your faithful servant.

24 January 2011

Robert Campbell Taylor, B.A. B.D. RED.



During the early part of January, the Mission Team decided to find out how it could continue to help the Canadian Ukrainian Parachute. This is an organization made up of volunteers who work at helping out new Ukrainian refugees by supplying, through donations of clothing and household goods, the necessary items to survive their start here in Canada.

We found out later in the month that they were in need of mittens and gloves. Anna Cherniak, in consultation with Maureen Screen and the Mission Committee, was able to connect with Bargains Group. This is a company that has warehouse prices for goods that are to be donated by charities or organizations to those in need.

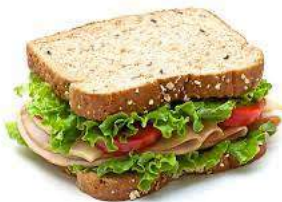
We were able to purchase 24 pairs of each size: infant, toddler, teens, ladies and men's mittens and gloves. Maureen and I purchased these on behalf of the Mission Committee at Graceview, having ordered them ahead of time, and delivered them to the Canadian Ukrainian Parachute that same day. You can see this in the picture.

The volunteers were very excited to receive the parcel we brought them as the need for warm mittens and gloves was great with the cold snap enveloping the GTA at that time.

They were really happy when we opened the box to show them what we were donating. They immediately took some of the gloves to the front where several families were picking up needed items for survival. These families arrived in Canada in mid-winter with basically what was on their backs. Their need for warm clothing to protect themselves from the cold was urgent.

Thank goodness we have compassionate people who volunteer their time at the Canadian Ukrainian parachute to help the refugees fleeing war-torn Ukraine. Let us not forget our wonderfully generous, compassionate congregation and hard-working committee members here at Graceview Presbyterian Church, who continue to do the work Jesus taught us by example, as we give of our hearts to help those in need.

Lenten Lunches



There will be three Lenten Lunches this year:

Tuesday, March 21, 12:00 noon

Tuesday, March 28, 12:00 noon

Tuesday, April 4, 12:00 noon

Come on out and enjoy a social time with friends, and read and discuss a devotional passage appropriate to Lent (booklets have been ordered - thanks, Nancy M!) Bring your lunch - dessert and tea/coffee will be provided.

**Saturday March 4th at Renforth Baptist Church, 627
Burnamthorpe Road at Renforth at 1:00 p.m.**

The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement which brings Christians of many traditions together to observe a common day of prayer each year. Through preparation and participation in the worship service, we can learn how our sisters of other countries, languages and cultures understand the Biblical passages in their context. We can hear their concerns and needs and can join in solidarity with them as we pray with and for them. In this way, it is possible to enrich our Christian faith as it grows deeper and broader in an international, ecumenical expression.

The motto of the World Day of Prayer movement is Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action. Through our participation in the World Day of Prayer we affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have immeasurable influence on the world.

The Canadian Committee organizing the World Day of Prayer is the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Between 2021 and 2022 the World Day of Prayer organization gave a total of \$60,500 to projects around the world, such as Talitha Koum Society in British Columbia for an Employment Readiness Computer Lab for Women; Change Her World in Malawi for a revolving Goat Project Training Women farmers; Partnership among International Needs Canada UNAPER and Rotary International for a Midwife Training Program with Covid-19 protocols as well as many others.

The theme country is Taiwan and the program is always

written by the woman of the subject country. The theme, this year, is “I have heard about your faith”.

Imagine over 1.5 million Christians speaking 90 different languages in 150 countries coming together in spirit; uniting to pray for relevant issues affecting women and children. This was the 2022 reality for this tremendous movement that has been active for nearly 100 years.

Hope to see you at Renforth Baptist Church on March 4th at 1:00 p.m.

Mission Awareness Sunday, April 30th, 2023

Once again, Graceview’s Mission Team will lead the service. This is our chance, once a year, to up-date our church family on what we have done during the past year and to introduce you to any new project we are undertaking. This year we are very hopeful that arrangements with a group in another part of Africa will be in place and can be presented to you at this time.

We hope you are intrigued and that we will see you on April 30th!

Good Friday Hot Cross Bun Breakfast hosted by Outreach

Friday, April 7, 9:30 AM

Come and enjoy a light breakfast with your church family before we adjourn to the sanctuary for the sombre Good Friday service and Communion.

Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday – Jesus’ Final Week

Kathy Twynam

I have been a seeker all my adult life. Buy “seeker”, I mean one who, having been brought up in a devout Catholic household, is constantly striving to know and understand Christianity in its broader terms. In my university days, when I was at York U. studying Sociology and Psychology, I was introduced to some of the world’s great theologians in my mandatory first year Humanities course. The writings of people like St Augustine, Paul Tillich, Søren Kirkegaard and others, started to influence my thought.

I read a lot of theology in those days. I began questioning the teachings of the Catholic Church – not the doctrine, which is not so very different in most ways from the mainline Protestant churches, but the infrastructure, the man-made traditions such as an all-male priesthood, priestly celibacy, the teaching that the only way to heaven, if you will, is through Catholicism, and the like. As a young adult who had been the product of an exclusive, sheltered religious education, I wasn’t mature enough at that time to fully appreciate that I was in the early stages of pulling away from the notion that Catholicism is the only way to God. I didn’t know then that the ultimate result would be a final rejection of that notion.

And now here I am, an active and dedicated member of the Presbyterian church for fifty years – how my father would roll over in his grave! I am still reading a lot of theology in an effort to understand – What to believe? How to believe it? How much must be accepted on faith, the “essence of things

not seen”? Is the Holy Bible, the foundation of Reformed denominations, the infallible word of God or a historical anthology of ancient documents giving us insight into the thought processes of ancient people? Questions, questions, questions...

One theologian that I happened across a few years ago, and whom I have mentioned in Graceviews before, is Marcus J. Borg, an American New Testament scholar who died on January 21, 2015, at the age of seventy-two. When he retired as Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University in 2007, he was among the most widely known and influential voices in liberal Christianity. Chances are he is not well thought of by conservative Christians, but I love this guy! At last, someone who in his prolific writings explains many different facets of Christianity in ways that are quite readable, understandable, and believable by a lay person.

I have read, and own, a number of his books. The one I have just finished reading, *The Last Week*, written in collaboration with John Dominic Crossan, is a day-by-day account of the final week of Jesus’ life, beginning with Palm Sunday. After reading the first chapter of a library copy, I ordered it from Amazon. Since the most important day in the Christian calendar, Easter Sunday, is fast approaching, I thought it timely and appropriate to use this book to help us focus and reflect on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the founder and only head of our church.

Borg and Crossan base their commentary on the gospel of Mark, the earliest written account of the ministry and death

of Jesus, written in about the year 70 CE. They remind us that since Jesus was crucified in about the year 30 CE, the author of Mark's gospel would have had as his main source the several decades of oral stories that had been passed around among the very early Jewish followers of Jesus. These were people who would have either known Jesus personally or who knew of him and had been persuaded to follow him.

So how do Borg and Crossan go about telling the story of the final week of Jesus' life? They start by discussing in great detail the political, economic, and social situation of the time. Jerusalem became the capital of ancient Israel at the time of King David, around 1000 BCE. When Jesus was born, Israel, and most of the known world, was occupied by the great domination system of the time, the Roman Empire. A very prominent feature of this oppressive system was Roman imperial theology, which proclaimed that the emperor (Caesar Augustus and then Tiberias during the lifetime of Jesus) was not just the ruler, but a divine being whose father was the Roman god Apollo. Beginning with Augustus, the Roman Emperor was referred to as the "son of god, lord, and saviour". Sound familiar? The "divine right of kings" that we all learned about somewhere along the line in our high school history courses, was very much impressed upon the people. So you can imagine how alarmed the Roman authorities would have been when Jesus came riding into Jerusalem, celebrated as a king and and acclaimed by the emperor's subjects shouting such things as 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!', "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" (Mark 11, v. 9-10 NIV). The message they heard was, "Jesus is king - not the emperor."

The Romans were not the only segment of society that was alarmed at this display. The Jewish authorities, trying their best to live peacefully within the Roman domination system while following Mosaic Law, would also have been very much alarmed. Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem pushed him forcefully to the front of their consciousness as a person to be watched ever more carefully.

On the Monday of what we know as Holy Week, several important things happened. One of the most significant was the clearing of the temple. Mark places the clearing of the temple by an angry Jesus in the last week of his life. (John, alone among the gospel writers, has it near the beginning of Jesus' ministry, a biblical discrepancy about which there has been much theological discussion and explanation, which does not concern us here.) What did Jesus do and say that day? He "began driving out those who were buying and selling...overturned the tables of the money changers and benches of those selling doves... and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts." He said: "Is it not written: My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of robbers." Borg concludes this very rich chapter by remarking on the significance of Jesus' actions and words that day – they were a direct criticism of any religious collaboration with the violent domination system that defined the Roman rule of the land.

Tuesday was a very busy day that week, much of which took place within the temple courts, and which involved Jesus' conflict with temple authorities. Jesus is repeatedly challenged by the authorities and repeatedly gets the better

of them, using parables or pointed, aptly phrased questions right back at them. The temple authorities fear that the crowd, hearing Jesus' masterful responses to their challenges, will turn against them. All the more reason for them to fear Jesus and look for reasons to silence him.

Wednesday – two days before the Passover. Mark's gospel account of this day includes the "poor are always with you" scene where an unnamed woman anoints Jesus with very costly oil, prompting anger from those gathered, who in turn receive a scolding from Jesus. Enter Judas Iscariot, who almost immediately goes to the high priests to offer his help. The wheels are set in motion for the betrayal of Jesus. Borg and Crossan then go into a lengthy discussion about the reasons for the need for a traitor and a secret arrest in the middle of the night. The crowds that follow Jesus and who are "listening to him with great delight" (Mark 12:37 NLT) are anything but hostile to Jesus and are much feared by the temple authorities. Who were the mob the next night who wanted to crucify him?

Thursday is a day full of drama as the story moves toward its climax. Jesus eats his final meal, where he gives us the words that have become central to the Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper (Eucharist, Mass, or Communion.) He prays for deliverance, is betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and abandoned by his friends. He is arrested under cover of darkness, interrogated, and condemned to death, all before the sun rises on Friday. Borg and Crossan take the reader through each event, explaining the social, historical and political significance as they go along. That Christians call this day in Holy Week "Maundy Thursday" is based on

John's story of the "new commandment" that Jesus gives his followers, "that you love one another; even as I have loved you that you also love one another." "Maundy" comes from the Latin word "*mandatum*", which means "command".

So now we come to Friday, the day of the crucifixion, known as "Good Friday" in the English-speaking world. Although Borg and Crossan say that the origin of the term is uncertain, Wikipedia tells us that "Good Friday" comes from the sense of "pious" or "holy" meaning of the word "good". That seems like as good an explanation as any. Borg and Crossan comment that the term Good Friday may have been applied because, despite its horror, it was on this day that the redemption of the world was accomplished. How was it accomplished? Through what they call "substitutionary sacrifice". Jesus is the sacrifice, and Good Friday is the day that makes our forgiveness possible. This is the way most Christians have been taught to understand Jesus' death, and the hymns we sing in Holy Week reinforce this understanding. There is a contemporary hymn in our blue Graceview hymnbooks called "The Power of the Cross", that proclaims "We stand forgiven at the cross." Right in line with orthodox interpretation of the crucifixion.

There are a number of significant scenes leading up to the actual crucifixion – the interrogation by Pilate, the releasing of Barabbas (which Borg believes is historically questionable), the mocking and physical torture of Jesus, the carrying of the crosspiece of the cross to Calvary...Mark refers to the crucifixion itself with only a short sentence, "And then they crucified him." Borg and Crossan describe crucifixion as a form of Roman imperial terrorism, reserved

for very special victims. It was a “*very definite type of capital punishment for those such as runaway slaves or rebel insurgents who subverted Roman law and order and thereby disturbed the Pax Romana.*” It was always as public as possible, to serve as a public warning. The “supernatural” events that occur throughout the day – the darkness that came over the land, the tearing of the temple curtain, Borg and Crossan attribute to Mark’s use of religious symbolism, to emphasize the colossal importance of what was happening.

Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, in Mark’s gospel is completely silent, not mentioned at all. Despite this, Borg’s chapter on “Saturday” is fairly lengthy, and contains much explaining and philosophizing about Jesus “descending into hell” as proclaimed in our Apostles’ Creed.

And so we come to Sunday, the events of which are utterly central to our faith. Without Easter, we would not know Jesus. He would likely have been remembered only by his family and close friends, in the same way that we remember loved ones we have lost. But look at what has happened, stemming from one man, one revolutionary, passionate about social justice, living in a world dominated by a superpower. The Jesus movement, his “Way”, whose defining virtue is love, grew exponentially, until today Christians comprise the largest religion on earth, as of 2020 making up almost 32% of the global population, with 2.4 billion adherents. The ember of Christianity burst into flame and could not be extinguished, although many have tried. Borg and Crossan leave the historical factuality of Easter Sunday open to interpretation, and spend pages discussing

the philosophical, historical, and symbolic meanings of the empty tomb. But it cannot be doubted that something magnificently earth-shattering happened on “the third day”, something for which countless numbers of Jesus’ followers over two millennia have been willing to die.

Mark’s story of Easter is only eight verses long and ends very abruptly. He does not report an appearance of the risen Jesus, although the other gospel writers do report post-Easter appearances. However, he does say that the women at the tomb were told to tell the disciples and Peter that they would see Jesus in Galilee. But then, puzzlingly, he says that the women “said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” And that’s the end of the story.

One of the things I like about Marcus Borg’s writings is that he will often present the actual Greek word that was used and give its literal meaning, which in most cases really helps to clarify the meaning. For example, according to Borg the word translated as “robbers” - “...*you have made it a den of robbers...*” more properly means “brigand”, “rebel”, or any form of armed resistance to established authority. I will have to take his word for it, since I can’t read Greek. I also like the fact that when describing the historical setting Borg frequently cites Flavius Josephus, the first century Jewish historian who had written extensively about that period in history.

Marcus Borg and John Crossan end their book, *The Last Week – A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus’ Final Week in Jerusalem* by capturing the meaning of Christianity in a few succinct words: “(Christianity) involves loyalty and

commitment to God's passion as disclosed in Jesus, a passion for compassion, justice and non-violence. Compassion – love – is utterly central to the message and life of Jesus...love is the soul of justice, and justice is the body...of love."

In the pages of *The Last Week*, we are informed, challenged, and inspired, as we are introduced to a new Jesus who engages us and invites us to follow him.

Outreach - Loonies for Lent

This year as we begin the season of Lent let us remember the story "Jesus Feeds Five Thousand" which is mentioned in the first four books of the New Testament. The multitudes were able to be fed from five loaves of bread and two fish because Jesus looked up to heaven and gave thanks to God. We do not have the ability to miraculously multiply a small amount of food to feed all those who are hungry. However, through setting aside loonies and toonies or other monetary donations during the Lenten season, we will be able to send a large donation to the St James Food Basket. They will use our donation to purchase large quantities of sardines to help feed the hundreds of people who turn to this organization for their weekly nourishment needs. Acting together, we will put into action our calling to serve others in need, for as we serve others we are serving Christ as he taught us to do long ago. Outreach is asking our members to send monetary donations to the church (loonies/toonies in containers, cash, cheques or e-transfers) to support this initiative. Please mark your envelopes for "Loonies for Lent, Outreach" and include your name and envelope number. We would appreciate receiving your contributions by April 9th.

A number of times during our vacancy we have been blessed to have Rev. Elias Morales in our pulpit. He has graciously agreed to lead our Good Friday service and celebrate communion with us. I wanted you to know what this humble and devout man has accomplished over a lifetime in the service of the Lord. We are privileged to welcome him to Graceview.



Rev. Elias Morales is a minister within The Presbyterian Church in Canada, former Roman Catholic Priest, private secretary to Mons. Oscar Arnulfo Romero (Archbishop assassinated in El Salvador), and Chancellor of the Santiago de Maria Dioceses.

Before his theological studies he graduated with a BA in Psychology.

- Former Moderator of the West Toronto Presbytery.

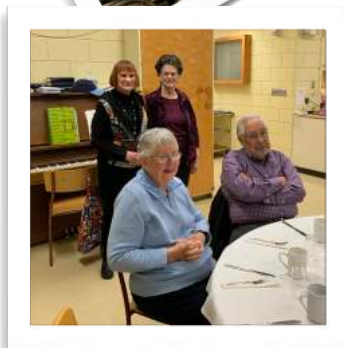
- Former Convener of the Committee to Advise with the Moderator of the General

Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

- Former Chaplain of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the PCC.
- Former New Testament Professor at Canada Christian College.
- Founder of the Refugee Information Centre (RIC).
- Cofounder of Access Alliance Multicultural Health Centre, in Toronto.
- Cofounder of Canadian El Salvador Relief Fund.
- Member of Latin American Civic Participation Campaign.
- Former president of the Center for Spanish Speaking Peoples.
- Past president of the Canadian Hispanic Congress.
- Retired minister of Presbyterian Church in Canada, served North Park Presbyterian Church in Toronto since November 1994 to May 2022. During his tenure at NPPC he founded North Park Community Centre, where he still coordinates a program serving new immigrants, refugees, refugee claimants, and undocumented people. He also coordinates, within the Community Centre, a Mental Health Program.

Pancake Supper

On Tuesday, February 21, after a three year pandemic hiatus, Outreach was pleased to host our traditional pancake supper. It was wonderful to see our church hall filled with people for the first time since February 2020. About 70 people enjoyed a meal of soup, pancakes, sausages and a dessert of frozen yogurt bars. This was followed by a sing-a-long, led and accompanied by Harry Learoyd. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves - just like old times!



A Respite from Winter in our Own Backyard

Graceview's intrepid walkers are still at it! This is a legacy we owe to Rev. Rebekah, who initiated it in the summer of 2021 as a way



to provide some healthy outdoor exercise and the company of friends, at the height of the pandemic when there wasn't much social life happening. When summer that year turned into Fall and Advent lunches started, we would time our walk to mesh with the Advent lunches, so after the walk we would stay, have our lunch, and participate in the Advent

Lunch devotions. We discovered that we really enjoyed eating lunch with friends on Tuesdays, so we just continued to bring our lunches and enjoy a social hour at the church after the walk.

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023 our usual walk in Centennial Park took us to the Centennial Park Conservatory, where I am ashamed to say I had never been. What a serendipitous, delightful experience that turned out to be, a real respite from the dreary winter day outside! My companions that day, Lynne Bishop and Nancy McPherson, were telling me how, when their kids were young they would often visit the conservatory with their family and how much the kids loved it.



The conservatory is comprised of three greenhouses - a tropical house, a cactus house, and a show house for seasonal displays. It is cared for by Toronto Parks, and is absolutely free. If the winter is getting to you and you long for a bit of warmth and greenery, spend an hour amid the beauty that will surround you in the Conservatory. Your spirit will be revived and your soul will soar.

Here is a great one-pot meal that I have made many times. I adapted it from a recipe I clipped from the Milk Calendar many years ago. It's very flexible, in that you can use whatever short pasta and veggies you like.

Pasta and Italian Sausage Stove-top Casserole

You need a large non-stick frying pan with a lid.

1 lb Italian sausage. (I use 4 or 5 Costco Italian sausages.)
2 tsps. Italian seasoning
1 onion, diced
1 green (or red) pepper, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
½ tsp crushed red pepper, or a few shakes of hot sauce such as Frank's
2 tbsp. cornstarch
1 cup milk
1 can diced tomatoes
½ lb (250 gm) penne pasta (or fusilli, rotini, or bowties).
1 cup grated mozzarella cheese

- Cut sausage into 1-inch pieces (I always remove the casings first.)
- In large frying pan, cook sausage over medium-high heat until browned on all sides.
- Add onion, green pepper, garlic, Italian seasoning and crushed pepper or hot sauce, and cook until the onion and pepper are tender, 3 – 4 minutes.
- Stir in cornstarch and milk. Stir until the mixture comes to a boil and thickens.
- Add tomatoes and pasta. Return to a boil, lower heat, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes until the pasta is tender.
- Stir in mozzarella and serve. Makes about 4 servings.

Dear Graceview Family,

I hope you have enjoyed the March/April issue of Graceviews.

The May/June issue will be available end of April or the first week of May. The deadline will be Sunday, April 23, 2023.

Susan's weekly newsletters are doing a marvellous job of keeping us up to date, but please don't hesitate to submit to Graceviews anything that you would like included in the next issue. Blessings to everyone.

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