



Grace United Church

310 – 12th Street, Hanover, Ontario. N4N 1V6

Rev. Micol Cottrell

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"A church with heart in the heart of the community."

When you think of Christmas what comes to your mind? My favourite Christmas memories are from when I was between the ages of nine and eleven. During this time, on Christmas Eve, I would accompany my father as he led worship in the four congregations he served in Muskoka. I can still picture our car twisting its way between rock cuts and lakes as we made our way from church to church. I can still feel the candles and bulletins in my hand as I handed them out for the service. I can still smell the communion elements that I helped to prepare and serve. I can still see the warm light moving from the Christ candle and spreading across the dark sanctuary as we sang together. It was moments like this that opened me to God's presence and the beauty and blessing of life.

Christmas Eve continues to be one of my favourite days of the year. As I drive to the church listening to Christmas music, when the lights are turned on in the sanctuary and the doors are unlocked, when people start arriving and chatting, and when worship begins I find myself in the same sacred space that held me as a preteen all those many years ago

A building made of ordinary materials is a vessel of God's Grace. A sanctuary for weary and excited folk on a cold evening becomes a filling station where people are encouraged and inspired to live fully. Words, songs, stories, and companionship are shared and we become a little more aware of God's abundant presence. Familiar stories are told and we re-enter into the sacred stories: Mary and Joseph, ordinary folk, become the parents of Emmanuel, God with us. Ordinary shepherds doing their ordinary thing become swept up by the angels and are transformed into preachers of God's good work. Wise Ones from the east find themselves pulled from their ordinary lives into a grand adventure to encounter heaven and earth colliding in star light, holiness and hope incarnated in the ordinary and fragile body of a baby.

In our Advent wanderings as we journey towards Christmas may we hear angel promises, feel the growth of holiness from within our bodies, and search out new stars. As we prepare ourselves, may we know once more that holy things happen in ordinary places and that we are part of God's sacred story.

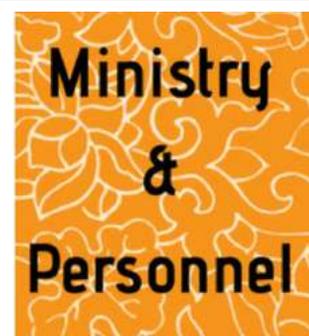
Blessings this Advent and Merry Christmas,
Rev. Micol



December 16
Third Sunday in Advent
 Children's Pageant

December 23
Fourth Sunday in Advent
 Senior Choir Cantata
 "Joy to the World"
 A Celebration of Carols

December 24
Christmas Eve Service
 7:30 p.m.



As we move into the colder months the Ministry and Personnel Committee is wrapping up 2018. We are a small committee of 4 and work with the staff of the church on projects and help to achieve their goals.

We are always looking for new members. If you have interest in helping our staff with their goals or input into their work, please consider reaching out to Adam Olivero to join our committee.



- January 14 Psalms
- January 28 Proverbs
- February 11 Ecclesiastes
- February 25 Song of Solomon
- March 11 Isaiah
- March 25 Jeremiah
- April 8 Lamentations
- May 13 Ezekiel
- May 27 Daniel
- June 10 Minor Prophets (Hosea to Malachi)

Bridge Plus will be meeting weekly again beginning January 11, 1:30 – 4 p.m. Everyone is welcome. For more information, contact Jeff, 519-364-3295 or Donna, 226-434-2006.

MUSIC CLASSES WITH HEATHER
 Music Classes for children of all ages will be offered during Sunday School on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Musician and Teacher Heather Saumer will be teaching everything from rhythm, to singing, to ukulele, to note reading. Christian Development is very excited to be able to offer this to all the children at Grace. Please be sure to join us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION

December 16th during the church service. Come out and enjoy our children of Grace as they present a paper bag play.

"GIFTS OF VISION" HOT CHOCOLATE
 Fancy hot chocolates will be served by the children after church on December 16th. Goodwill donations will be used by the children to pick gifts from the "Gifts of Vision" United Church Gift Catalogue as their mission project.



CHRISTMAS CANTATA

The Senior Choir will be presenting an interactive cantata entitled "Joy to the World", a celebration of carols, on Sunday December 23 at 10:30 a.m.



The Affirming Process

Encountering the Need

A need, question, or vision leads a ministry to ask how it can be publicly, intentionally, and explicitly welcoming.

Discerning

A group forms to start looking at how to become (more) radically and intentionally welcoming. They consider the Affirming process, and get in touch with the Affirming ministry coordinators.

Embarking

The decision to formally enter the Affirming process is made by the ministry's governing body. A working group is set up.

Engaging

Educating. Story telling. Praying. Hearing fears and hopes. Working with all in the ministry and wider community to discern what being Affirming could look like for your ministry.

Documenting

Before a final decision is made, an inclusive marriage policy, Vision Statement, Action Plan for the future, and more must be created.

Deciding Together

The community discerns how it's going to decide on whether to formally become Affirming. A positive decision needs to include a "yes" from at least three quarters of those involved in deciding.

Joining the Family

Holding a public celebration! Being welcomed formally to our Canada-wide family.

Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble works for the full inclusion of all sexual and gender identities in the United Church of Canada, and beyond.
Learn more! www.ause.ca Twitter: @affirmunited Email: communications@ause.ca
Look for both our group and our page on Facebook.



To become an Affirming Church is a 7-step process. It starts with Encountering the Need and ends with a public declaration and joining the affirming family. We are currently on Step 4: Engaging. As an Affirming Committee, we are hoping to hear from you in our church community about your hopes and fears and your stories. We will also be working hard to educate you on what becoming an Affirming Church means. To do this we might share stories during service as we have done before, or talk with you after church one on one with committee members. We're also looking at what becoming an affirming church will mean for us and the wider community. To help in the near future we will be bringing a questionnaire forward. Please take the time to answer and provide us with feedback. With your help, we look forward to becoming an Affirming Church in the near future.



SAVE THE DATE

February 24 following worship

Deadline for Annual Report reports is
December 31, 2018

Merry Christmas

Don't be alone on Christmas Day...

Come to
Grace United Church
a church with heart in the heart of the community
310 12th Street, Hanover

Free Christmas Dinner
with all the trimmings!
Christmas Day, December 25

Doors open at 11:30 am
Dinner served at 12:00 pm

All Welcome

Please let Faye know you are coming!

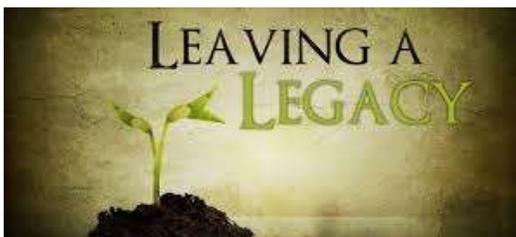
519-377-9774



Do you have someone on your Christmas List who is difficult to buy for? Consider honouring him or her with a gift to Grace United Church, or the Mission & Service Fund, or with a gift from the "Gifts with Vision" catalogue available at the back of the church. Your gift will be multiplied many times over through the work of the church.



When the hustle and bustle of Christmas has settled, why not consider making a New Year's Resolution that will help your Community of Faith (Grace United Church) carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ in the years to come. Think about making arrangements in your will for a Planned Gift to the church.



A Legacy Gift to your church is...

- a Gift of Love
- a Gift of Hope
- a Gift of Faith
- a Gift of a Lifetime at the time of a death.

*An Afternoon
of Music*

with Jim Skarnikat
(Eva Swanson's son)
Valleyview Recreation Hall
Wednesday, February 6, 2019
2 - 3 p.m.
Open to ALL!

