

Knox News & Notes



February/March 2016

2016?

A New Year has dawned upon us and I believe there is one thing that is as certain as the sun rising every morning – we will face new and changing realities in 2016, just as 2015 brought with it unexpected surprises; some good some bad.

We have at least three options in responding to the new realities and challenges that await us in 2016.

We can become so bewildered by new realities that it knocks us down and we never try and get up again.

We can also choose to live in denial, ignoring the facts.

Thirdly we can assimilate new realities into our lives and go through a process of re-assessing life in the light of new realities.

As a church family we step into a new year convinced about the new life reality in Jesus who rose from the dead. Many in our world deny this new reality as fiction or fantasy but we Christians accept this new reality and allow it to change us.

In a world of many nightmares, we are a family that dream dreams of a better tomorrow.

One of the dreams the church dreams are found in **Acts 10: 34 – 43**.

Peter was called, along with his brother Andrew, as Jesus' first disciples. He was with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, until the bitter end at the cross. He was present at the empty tomb and witness to the risen Christ. He experienced Jesus' Ascension and the vortex of Pentecost. And yet, throughout these life-altering experiences, something inside of Peter refused to shift, refused to fully acknowledge the world- and culture changing wonder of Jesus' ministry and message. Peter had difficulty dealing with the: us them distinctions in his heart and mind – us Jews, them gentiles and non-Jews.

It is only now — after Easter the Ascension and Pentecost and yet another heavenly vision from God in Acts 10 that Peter gets it and is willing to move and change and say: I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism (34).

Hard to understand that Peter who was watching Jesus extend his love and compassion and healing powers to lepers and Gentiles and tax collectors and sinners of all stripes right through His earthly ministry found it difficult to rid himself of the us them attitude in his heart.

Peter stands in a new and unknown environment, in the house of Cornelius the Gentile – which he was not allowed to do as a Jew. But Peter assimilated a new reality into his life after receiving a special divine message - **Acts 10:15** what God has made clean you must not call profane and he gives testimony of what he now knows to be true: God shows no favoritism. All are equal; all are embraced by God's love.

The world has changed because of Jesus.

Jesus calls his followers from the first generation right up to our generation and for every future generation — to walk in his shoes, to slip on his sandals and continue His ministry. For Peter that meant traveling to the home of a Gentile and inviting him and his whole household into the Christian community.

What does it mean for us today? Where will we be willing to go? Whom am I willing to embrace because of the love of the resurrected Jesus?

Acts 10 is a story about outsiders becoming insiders because of Jesus and the resurrection reality.

The church is not a place of segregation but a place of hope - Everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name (43).

Questions as we enter 2016:

What good things would I like to see happen because of my actions?

Where would I be able to be an instrument of peace?

Where can I bring hope?

Am I willing to follow Christ wherever he leads without expecting to receive anything in return?

Am I willing to live generously because of God's grace and generosity in my life?

Rev Johan

♪ Musical Notes ♪

By Chris Fischer, Pastoral Musician

“The Future Is Bright!”

As I begin this article, I am excited for the future of the church. No, really! I am excited because God’s Reign is continuing to become closer and closer to reality, because the Holy Spirit is with us to ensure that we are never alone, and, most simply of all, because God always keeps God’s promises! No matter how totally evil seems to be winning, we have it on good authority that things are not as they seem: Christ has already triumphed and been raised from the dead. What more assurance do we need?

Are you excited about the future, too? These days there is an increasing level of anxiety about what used to be called “Christendom”: churches are emptying, membership is aging, and the world seems to pay less and less attention to the gospel message. I’d like you to think, for a moment, about what life must have been like for the Jews of first-century Palestine – after their great temple had been levelled by the Romans. For the residents of Jerusalem in 70 CE (including the earliest Christians), it must have seemed that God was dead. Yet the destruction of the temple occurred at the same time as the birth of what became the church of Jesus Christ: a movement that grew until it filled the entire world and changed the course of history forever.

Note the word “movement”: the church has never been about buildings, or institutions or membership rolls. It is about Jesus, and our calling is to follow him: to live, and share, the Good News, and to allow God’s Spirit to bring new disciples into relationship with Christ. When we meet as a congregation for worship, we come to be recharged so that we can do our part, as Christ’s “hands and feet,” to bring this vision to its fulfillment. But we also form a fellowship – a community – of believers, so that we can achieve together what we might never be able to achieve as individuals: a transformation of this neighbourhood, this city, this world, into the Kingdom of God.

How do we do this? We become community in worship, when we share God’s welcoming and affirming love for everyone, regardless of age or language or race or economic status. We become community when we sing together. When we breathe, in and out, we are energized and our stress levels are reduced; when we sing, our very atoms are transformed by the vibrations of music: electrical impulses release chemicals in our bodies and brains, and we really do become different people – we will never be the same again. How exciting is that?!

I want to leave you with some thoughts for how to encourage this transformation, through Sunday worship, in the future. The next time you come into the Sanctuary, reach out to someone you haven’t met. Perhaps consider sitting with someone you don’t know. Maybe even dare to sit closer to your neighbours. When you sing a hymn or a congregational response, look up and notice the faces of those around you. Sing to, and with, the person next to you, rather than into your hymnal... There is nothing more powerful than a family that sings together!

We may not be able to see the “big picture” of what the future holds for Knox, but if we do these things, we will be more present for God’s mission, here and now, to our homes, neighbourhoods and workplaces. This is, after all, how the church grew and the gospel spread: one transformed heart at a time. May this be equally true of us today!

Amen!

Syrian Refugee Crisis



The response in Canada and our Presbyterian Church has been overwhelming. Locally, the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington encouraged each quadrant to jointly sponsor one refugee family and allocated \$10,000 for this. In the Guelph quadrant, St. Andrew's took the lead and in 2015 Knox Session approved becoming a partner. First Baptist also is supporting St. Andrew's initiative. At a joint meeting with representatives from Kortright, they agreed to approach other churches to support a second family.

To date, **\$42,653.50** has been raised. This includes:

St. Andrew's - **\$35,898.50** (includes First Baptist -- **\$4,500** and Duff's -- **\$973** (Christmas eve service).

Knox -- \$6,755.00. (Our goal is \$25,000.)

On February 9, First Baptist is donating the proceeds from their pancake supper.

On February 21, Knox is hosting, "Hear Freedom's Ring!" with tenor Michael Toby, and a portion of the proceeds will support Syrian families in Guelph.

On April 23, the Royal City Ambassadors Barbershop Chorus are singing at Holy Rosary and the proceeds will be divided in support of the Refugee sponsorship.

Any excess money above what is needed will go to Refugees currently living in camps.

Join Our Knox Committee:

Your Knox Support Committee includes: Karen Duffield, Mission Coordinator; Marjorie Fraser; Margaret Olsthoorn; Joy Killen; Arnold Bethune, contact person in the Guelph Quadrant.

We invite YOU to join our Committee.

Government Assistance:

Our sponsorship is arranged in partnership with our Federal Government in what is described as Blended Visa Office Referred Refugee Program (BVOR). This means we are financially responsible for the first month upon arrival in Guelph. Months 2 to 7 are paid by the Federal Government and we are expected to assume responsibility for the remainder of the year. Since the Government has difficulty taking large families with sponsors, we plan to welcome a family of five or more.

Government support includes: Provincial healthcare and Interim Federal Health Program benefits, language classes and other newcomer services (employment training, job search et cetera).

Our Responsibility:

Our support group will help with: registration, transportation, orientation – social insurance numbers, Provincial/Federal healthcare, school, language classes, income support programs (child benefits), introduction to community, public transit, shopping wisely, friendship and emotional support.

It is expected that the application from St. Andrew's will be submitted in March and the Syrian Family will not arrive in Guelph before April.

Will You Help?

This is the first time in the post-World War II era the number of displaced people has exceeded 50 million. Most of us can hardly imagine what it would be like to flee the ravages of war with only the clothes on our back and what we could manage to carry. Even a momentary thought about what they have endured makes us aware of how privileged we are.

Will **YOU** participate in the spirit of generosity by **donating money**?

Make your **cheque** out to “**Knox Presbyterian Church**” and on your envelope and on your cheque memo, put “**Syrian Refugee Sponsorship.**”

When we know more about the family we will send out an SOS with specific requests for household or personal items. May you experience the blessedness of giving.

Knox Refugee Support Committee



Mission & Outreach

Just a few days ahead of Christmas our gift card donations were received in stockings specially made for 50 young people who are part of Family & Children's Services for Guelph Wellington. Our Knox family very generously donated an amazing total of \$1,375 in gift cards! I had the pleasure of sharing a meal with the youth while they received their gifts. Our donations were very much appreciated by everyone involved. There is a thank you card & picture posted on the Mission board in Metcalfe Hall. When we focus our minds & our hearts on where our love of Christ can make a difference, His Holy Spirit will keep us rooted & growing!

Blessings,
Karen Duffield
Mission Coordinator



Church Decoration Thank You

A HUGE thank you to the Logos kids, Logos leaders and volunteers as well as Jamie Holmes and Forrest Sanderson for their help decorating the sanctuary and trees for the Christmas season. It looked wonderful! Also, many thanks to Marshall and Bryson Dore, Karyn Stepien, Matt Anderson, Ray Funnell and Jeremy Duffield for helping with take down and storage. I truly appreciate ALL of you!

Shannon Dore

Ladies Retreat

The Spring Retreat date has been booked, so mark your calendars and plan to attend – May 27-29, 2016.

The **FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE** members wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Knox Congregation for supporting the 2015 Stewardship Campaign which was approved at the Annual Congregational Meeting in February 2015.

The donations during the year including the Thanksgiving Sunday offering of One Day's Wages/Pension totaled **\$35,287.63**. This has helped to strengthen our yearend financial position.

Diane Harvey

From the Library . . .

2015 Statistics with Some Observations:

- 521 items were borrowed from Knox Library in 2015 – up almost 10% from 2014
- An average of 10 items were borrowed each week – highest in August, lowest in October
- Children and Young Adults borrowed 34 books and 98 DVD's – An opportunity for (grand)parents to READ Bible stories with (grand)children is underused.
- 325 Adult Fiction and 43 Adult Non-Fiction books were signed out – Spending a large portion of our budget on Adult Fiction is justified.

If you have any questions about Knox Library and/or how to borrow material OR if you would enjoy volunteering at the Library one Sunday each month, please stop by the Library Cart before or after church!

Judy Steer and Marjorie Bethune (Library Co-ordinators)



We Want to Celebrate YOU!

If you are celebrating - a birthday, anniversary, baptism, graduation, marriage, or "just because" - and you would like to share your special occasion with your Knox family at Coffee Hour, your Congregational Life Committee is here to help. YOU supply a cake or other goodies, and WE will supply coffee, tea, juice and help with serving.

We would appreciate having a couple of weeks' notice, if possible, to make arrangements. Please speak to any member of the Congregational Life Committee, or to the team that's serving coffee on the Sunday you choose (list is posted beside the kitchen door in Metcalf Hall).

"Grief can take care of itself; but to get the full value of joy you must have somebody to divide it with." --Mark Twain

In God's love,
Nancy Dickieson, Convenor
Congregational Life

Look Into God's Word

Someone asked, "what is the purpose of old age?" It's a good question. Why do you suppose God made us so that we grow old and weak and sickly, sometimes years before we die?

Not surprisingly, God's word has a lot to say that would be very encouraging to know about old age and His care for us: my favorite, although I sometimes struggle with the meaning, **II Corinthians 4:16**--I think this verse should be prefaced by **verses 14 and 15**--"...we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly, we are being renewed day by day." This is very encouraging to me although I'm not altogether sure of the meaning. It would be very encouraging to say that we are growing spiritually, and closer to God each day, even during old age. Along with this, especially for women, who mourn the loss of looks through the aging process is **Proverbs 31:30** "Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised".

Psalm 92:14 delights me in its wording "They (the righteous, from **verse 12**) shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;" This from the King James Version. If you find yourself offended by the word fat, look at the same verse in newer translations that read "fresh and green".

Isaiah 46:4 is very consoling with the words of God saying "Even to your old age and gray hairs, I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you". If you ever think, as in **Psalm 71:9** "Do not cast me away when I am old, do not forsake me when my strength is gone", look no further than **verse 14**, "But as for me, I will always have hope, I will praise you more and more.

So, old age has a purpose from God; we can praise him as long as we live.

Submitted Anonymously

Church Register:

Deaths:

<i>Linda Kenny</i>	<i>Died November 30, 2015</i>	<i>Age 67 Years</i>
<i>David Scott</i>	<i>Died December 10, 2015</i>	<i>Age 73 Years</i>
<i>Walter Duerksen</i>	<i>Died December 17, 2015</i>	<i>Age 87 Years</i>
<i>Irene Nairn</i>	<i>Died December 23, 2015</i>	<i>Age 97 Years</i>
<i>Jean Copeland</i>	<i>Died January 21, 2016</i>	<i>Age 95 Years</i>

We are always saddened by the death of a good person. It is from this sadness that a feeling of gratitude emerges. We feel honored to have known them and blessed that they were in our lives. Their passing serves as a reminder to us that our time on this beautiful earth is limited and that we should seize the opportunity to forgive, share, and love. I can think of no greater way to honor the deceased than to live this way." May all of them rest eternally in the loving arms of Our Savior. You'll be sadly missed & forever in our hearts. Miss you Mom February 7th 2013 MJ

Invitation to Knox church family: Saturday February 6, 2016- 10 a.m. to 12 noon

12 Keys to an effective church review and proposed chancel renovation

It is important to at least bi annually have a review on our direction as a missional congregation.

This is an invitation to the congregation to join together for a short discussion and evaluation on the 12 Keys to an effective church in Metcalf hall on Saturday February 6, 2016 - 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

During these discussions there will also be a presentation of a proposal for renovating the chancel area in our sanctuary.

The plan is to have a congregational vote on the proposed renovation at the annual meeting Sunday March 6.

Hope to see many of you at the meeting Saturday February 6.

Rev Johan

CAN YOU GUESS HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE
FOR
THESE THINGS TO BIO-DEGRADE ?



- Banana peel : 3 -4- weeks
- Paper bag : 1 month
- Plastic bag : 1 million years
- Cotton bag : 5 months
- Woolen sock : 1 year
- Aluminum can : 200 -500 years
- Leather shoe : 40 - 50 years
- Glass bottle : unknown
- Tin can : 50 - 100 years
- Wood : 10 - 15 years
- Styrofoam cup : eternity!

