



Editor: Tom Forbes

“News from the Pews”

Newsletter

April 2019

Edition No. 41

Barton Stone-Mount Hope United Church

**21 Stone Church Road West
Hamilton, ON. L9B 1A1**

Church Mission Statement:

The Mission of Barton Stone-Mount Hope United Church is to be the people of God, called to respond with generosity of spirit, resources, and love; for the purpose of worshiping, nurturing, educating, equipping and caring within and beyond our church community.

Church Staff:

Ministers: The Rev. Peg Turner

The Rev. Ann Stafford

Music Director: Donna Dunn-Albert

Office Administrator: Alice Perniac

Office Hours:

Tues, Wed, Thurs: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Ann’s Hours: Tues. 12:00 am to 2:00 pm

Peg’s Hours: Tues 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Associate Ministers:

The Rev. Lee Claus

The Rev. Dr. Robin Wilkie

Contact Numbers:

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NOTE: Submissions for the NEXT News from the Pews by the THIRD Tuesday of each month.



Church Activities

April 18 (Maundy Thursday)

April 19 (Good Friday at Case United)

April 21 (Easter Sunday)

Peace in a Bottle: (Submitted by Joan Massey)

A 750 ml bottle of Palestinian Certified Fair Trade Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) is \$18 from Joan Massey. Zatoun is a non-profit, and proceeds go to projects serving Palestinian youth education, the planting of olive trees in Palestine, and promoting awareness of Palestinian issues and challenges. January to March is olive tree planting time in Palestine. Farmers who have lost olive trees to destruction and uprooting by the Israeli army, Israeli settlers and the Annexation Wall receive replacements, and support to pay for water for the seedlings. Olive trees provide Palestinians with a means of earning a livelihood. “Unless we plant now, there will be ... no olive branches to wave for peace when it comes.” – Father Mitri Raheb, Lutheran pastor in Bethlehem

“Religion is not a spectator sport.”

Keith Clark

News from the Covenant Team

On behalf of the team I would like to thank all of the people who have attended our information sessions and responded to our surveys either in person, by phone or by email. Your thoughtful comments and suggestions are helping us paint a picture of our faith community and our future direction. As an aside, I am noticing how many of us are starting to use the term “community” to describe ourselves. While it may not seem important, it may help us to think of our relationship with the broader community – we are a community of faith within a larger community. For those of you who could not attend the March 24 session, I am including some information from that presentation. Refer to Graphs.

Graph 1 shows the main reasons why people attend Barton Stone-Mount Hope. Respondents were asked to rank the top 5 reasons they attended church. Thirteen choices were given with space for people to indicate other reasons. The graph uses a weighted ranking measure where the first choice was multiplied by a factor of 5, the second choice a factor of 4, the third choice a factor of 3, the second choice a factor of 2 and the fifth choice a factor of 1. The graph has been organized with the highest ranked reason for attending BS-MH to the left i.e. the ministers are the main reason why people come to this faith community, the least given reason, close to public transit, is to the right.

Graph 2 shows the results to the question “How important is it that we try to retain our present staffing?” Over 75% of respondents rate the importance of retaining staff at 7 or greater.

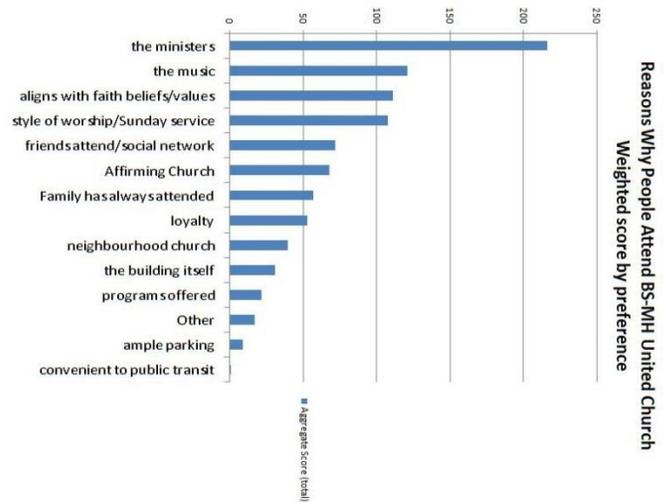
Graph 3 shows the results to the question “Should the staffing level in the next 3 to 5 years be to increase ministry, remain the same, decrease ministry?” Respondents were asked to rank their choices. The blue bar shows the preference for increasing the ministry (which increases from 1st to 3rd choice), the red bar indicates a preference for the level of ministry remaining the same (a very strong first choice) and the green bar indicates a desire to decrease our ministry. Of the comments received in this section 14 supported present levels of staffing or increasing the level while 15 comments expressed concern re: funding of more than one minister.

Statistically the survey is very strong. We have an excellent sample size and our method of collecting information was the best that could be expected.

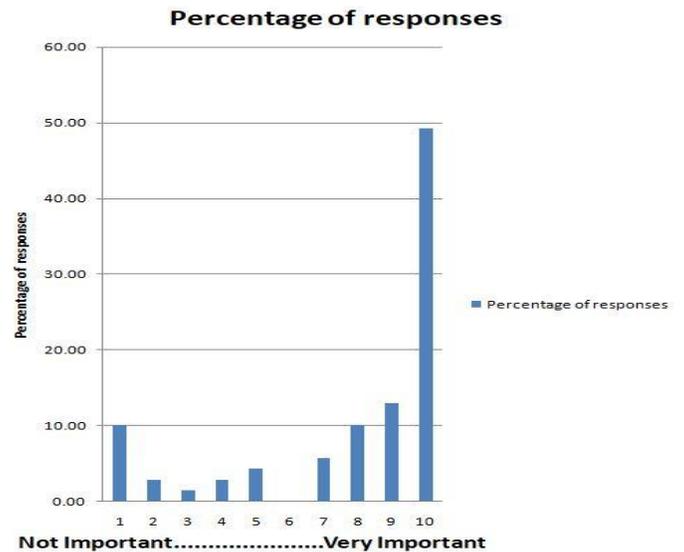
Keith Clark, Chair, Covenant team.

GRAPH 1:

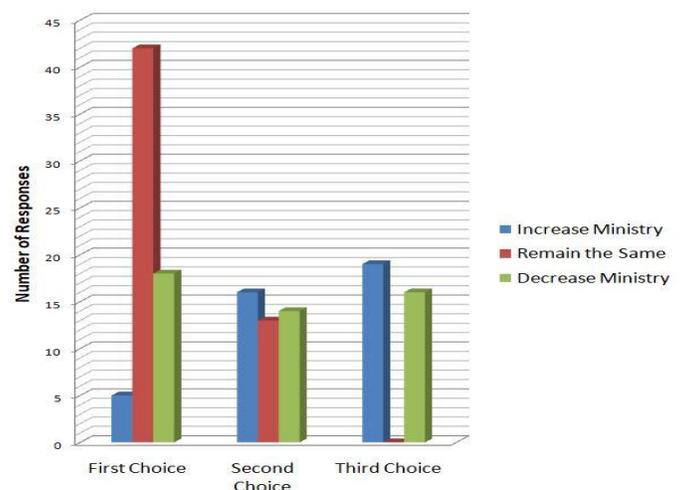
REASONS WHY PEOPLE ATTEND BARTON STONE-MOUNT HOPE UNITED CHURCH



GRAPH 2:



GRAPH 3:



(Fundraisers)

History of Barton Stone: Boil! Don't Simmer: the life and times of the Barton Stone Congregation, 1789 to 2017 Book Launch, Sunday March 31 at Barton Stone-Mount Hope United Church. \$25.00. All profits from the sale of "Boil! Don't Simmer" go to the General Fund.

Before this book had a title, it took the form of chapters serialized in our church newsletter, "News from the Pews". Since then, and two years on, new material has come to light necessitating rewrites to many chapters. And only parts of the last two chapters were included in the newsletter. In addition, a search of the extensive photographic collections in our church archives has uncovered a treasure of rarely seen photographs of our past. A number of these are included in "Boil! Don't Simmer".

So, even if you read all the serialized chapters, there are many reasons why you should buy the book. Here are two more,

1. In 1927, our own Walter Keyes earned the title of "little rocket man". Buy the book and find out why. It is a very interesting story!
2. In the summer of 1832, Hamilton, Upper Canada, indeed the Western world, was ravished by the "blue death". No one knew what caused it, nor how to stop it. Often those who caught it in the morning were dead by supper time. To fully understand the panic and despair caused by this epidemic consider how you would feel if, in the summer of 2019, such an equivalent mysterious, killer disease took the lives of 91,500 people in Hamilton! What impact did this "blue death" have on the congregation of Barton Union Church in the summer of 1832? Find out by buying "Boil! Don't Simmer".

"FRANKIE AND THE FAIRLANES" is coming to Barton Stone-Mount Hope United Church to rock the afternoon away on Sunday, May 5th in the C. E. building at 2:00 p.m. Lots of oldies to sing along with the band of musicians who perform what they enjoy! Tickets are available at church or the office at \$20 each. Call Alice at 905-385-0800 in the church office or see several 'oldies' gals at church for your tickets. Funds raised will go to the expenses of Barton Stone-Mount Hope. See you there

Did you Know

The first Tim Hortons drive thru was at Upper Gage and Fennell in Hamilton.

Lent Food Drive:

Again this year, we are asking our members to donate to Neighbour to Neighbour during Lent

Needed items are any non-perishable food items and toiletries.

Examples are canned meats or fish, soups, peanut butter, rice, pasta, pancake mix and syrup, cookies, crackers, cereal, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, baby food, etc.

Donations by cheque will generate a tax receipt.

Thanks to all for participating

Women's Group: (Submitted by Julia Cluas)

CRIME PREVENTION FOR SENIORS

"A presentation by Hamilton Police Seniors Crime Prevention Officer, on Wednesday April 10, at 2:00pm in church sanctuary.

Information on major scams (phone, computer and mail), high pressure sales and Fraud by POA. All welcome."

Why It's Important to be an *Officially* Affirming Church: (Submitted by Joan Massey)

We welcome everyone, so why 'officially' become an Affirming church? For LGBTQ2SIA+ people, it means we have been through a process, following which we intentionally and publicly agreed as a congregation to recognize and honour them. It is often stressful and dangerous for LGBTQ2SIA+ persons to 'come out'. Being an openly Affirming church, they will know that they will be welcomed and safe at Barton Stone-Mount Hope. Just as we support and work for racial and economic justice, sexual and gender justice is one more step.

First Contact: (Submitted by Joan Massey)

Episode 2 of the documentary film *First Contact* will be shown **Sunday, March 31** immediately following the service. It follows a group of 6 non-Indigenous people from across Canada who spend a month exposed to and immersed in Indigenous communities and culture. They start with strong opinions about Indigenous people. It is interesting to see if or how their views change - and some of their discussions become highly charged.

An encouraging number of people watched Episode 1 recently, and indicated they would like to see Episode 2.

Please bring a bag lunch.

The third and final episode will be shown the following week on **Sunday, April 7.**

Historical Hamilton Connection

William W. Cooke

(May 29, 1846 – June 25, 1876) Cooke was born in Mount Pleasant and attended the Brantford Collegiate School and the Central School in Hamilton. At the age of 14, he moved to Buffalo, New York to continue his studies. After graduating from school, he enlisted in 1863 with the 24th New York Cavalry, during the Civil War.

In 1871, he became the regimental adjutant under Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and rose to the office of First Lieutenant.

Cooke was killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. His body was found close to his commander. Cooke was scalped twice – the second scalp being one of his prodigiously long flowing side-whiskers.

He was initially interred on the battlefield with a memorial slab marking the approximate spot where he fell. In June 1877, he was reburied in the Little Bighorn National Cemetery. In August of that year, his family had the remains disinterred again and reburied in the family's plot in the Hamilton Cemetery on York Boulevard in Hamilton.

Easy as PAR! -- To Participate in Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR):

Making your contributions to the church through PAR is convenient for the giver, especially when you are away, and provides a dependable flow of income for the mission and programmes of the church. Simply talk to **Alice**, or call her at **905-385-0800**.

With much gratitude for your participation in any way at Barton Stone-Mount Hope United Church.

Stewardship - Care for Creation:

(Submitted by Joan Massey)

Congratulations to Hamilton City Council for taking the bold move of declaring a climate emergency. Details of what this will mean are not yet clear, but it is a first step, and while some argued that they couldn't vote for it until

they knew the cost, what is the cost of doing nothing? With the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) telling us we have until 2030 (11 years!) to get our act together by reducing carbon emissions by 45% of 2010 levels, we have to make dramatic changes sooner rather than later to keep global warming from increasing by not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius - at a minimum.

While some are still climate change deniers, more and more we see politicians raising the climate change issue. One United States Democratic Presidential candidate, a Governor from Washington, is making the environment his number one platform issue.

And while our provincial Progressive Conservative government has eliminated the cap-and-trade program and is fighting the federal carbon emissions tax, they are proposing banning some single-use plastic products, as are the New Democratic Party. Some of the proposed items are plastic straws, plastic cutlery and dishes, and plastic water bottles. These fill landfills and often end up in waterways and oceans, taking years, if ever, to break down.

As I was thinking about single-use plastic products, a few more came to mind.

- Clear iced-drink cups with the matching clear domes
- Hot and cold drink lids
- Clear and black plastic, and polystyrene (Styrofoam) restaurant take-home containers
- Individual condiment packages from fast food restaurants
- Individual milk and creamers for tea/coffee
- Plastic coffee stir sticks
- Plastic toothpicks
- Floss
- Dryer sheets
- Cigarette filters (which contain tiny plastic particles)
- Garbage bags
- Grocery/shopping bags
- Cotton tipped swabs
- Pet waste bags
- Disposable Communion cups
- Single-serving sandwich, salad and pie take-out containers

This is just a short list that came to me quickly. There are certainly many more that you can probably think of. Politicians, manufacturers, suppliers and retailers, as well as consumers, need to consider more environmentally friendly options.

And kudos to local teacher, Karen Cumming, for initiating an on-line petition and for meeting with Loblaw Senior Director of Corporate Social Responsibility re: reducing plastic packaging and moving to sustainable packaging. As consumers, we have a lot of power by what we choose to buy – or not buy. We can all do our part.

PHOTO QUIZ:

Any guesses as to the photo? If you know, let the editor know by email in Church Directory!



The March photo was the city of Hamilton taken from Sam Lawrence Park at Concession and Upper Wellington Streets. Congratulations to Joan and Doug Massey, Debbie Crickmore, Joanne and John Eagles, Alison Turner, Linda and Larry Smith.

A Modest Proposal: (Submitted by Doug Massey)



What might Barton Stone-Mount Hope look like in the near future and also farther down the road?

Here is my dream. I absolutely refuse to gamble in a casino, but I do risk in other ways and this proposal is yet another example of my limb walking. I would be honoured if you would give it a read and a think. Doug

A Modest Proposal: Boil, don't Simmer.

Music is an intricate part of worship at Barton Stone-Mount Hope: The organ, the organist, the choir and the hymns sung by all are beloved. Who among us would wish to see any of this go? Yet it must be understood that before the organ, the organist, the choir, anthems and hymns there was another grand old tradition of singing that our community of faith thought would never be abandoned. This was the centuries old Scottish tradition of sacred music that involved a precentor singing a line of Holy Scripture to the congregation which then lined it

back. Yet back in the late 1870s this ancient form of music *was* abandoned at Barton Stone! So, might the unthinkable happen again? Might our “modern day” form of sacred music also fall silent? The answer is yes. And when would that happen? Soon after we can no longer pay our bills. That is far from comforting. As I write this, our community of faith seems strong and growing stronger. But my sense is that we are not as strong as we think. Indeed, our condition is rather fragile. So, discomfort is good. The road to recovery runs through such upset and requires action to protect what we now hold so dear.

Luckily the story of the coming of the organ, choir and hymns to our congregation in the 1870s also holds out a template for the future action Barton Stone-Mount Hope must take if we are to enjoy longevity. Research into the history of this congregation has led me to this conclusion: Like musicians who have enjoyed long careers, we have always been willing to rejig (no pun intended) our style when change is needed. And repeatedly, the change we have introduced has been radical. But, most importantly, when we have made big changes we have done so democratically, and gradually. It has always been the “sovereignty of the people”. The congregation has first heard the ideas of individuals. Discussion, rather heated at times, followed and finally we have voted. Back in the 1870s, the idea of an organ and choir started with one person, John Hunter Young. However, Young was wise enough to lobby his neighbours in order to convince them that his plan for change was necessary. Young was concerned that if Barton Stone Presbyterian Church continued with its old way of doing sacred music it would lose its children to the Methodists who had already embraced the organ and fitted it into their own rich musical heritage. It worked and the innovations he championed continue to this day. Out of discomfort came longevity.

I do not profess to be another John Hunter Young but am willing to stand on the man's shoulders! And although I do admit my membership in our church establishment, I, like so many other old boys and girls, am quite ready to be replaced by new faces. And having bared my soul, do now shamelessly present a two-part plan for change, one based on my research, ruminations and writings that have formed the basis of this congregational history: first comes a daring interim proposal; and second, an even bolder, long- range course of action. Do I have all the answers? No. This is all at the dream stage right now. **But I seek to start a discussion that leads to better ideas.** For there is a collective wisdom in our congregation which will lead us to a vision far better than my own, one which will ensure longevity. Out of uncertainty and then synergy come great ideas.

Immediately

Outside of Sunday worship, the sanctuary stands empty and unused for the great proportion of the time other than for choir rehearsals on Mondays and Tuesdays. Although an historic gem, the sanctuary must once more change with the times to work for the living. It must become the heart of our community of faith seven days a week. We do worship well. So, much of what we do every Sunday must stay. The pews, however, should be replaced by chairs. The integrity of the architecture must be maintained, but the contents of the old meeting hall need to become multi-purposed. Pews are anchored in place. Chairs can easily be moved to allow far greater flexibility. For one thing, with chairs we could now provide that centre isle that brides and grooms have always preferred. Or chairs will allow us to do worship differently *from time to time*. As well, chairs could be reconfigured to allow for church committee meetings, many at the same time for better communication. Also, the short walls around the choir might be removed and risers introduced that could quickly transform the front of the sanctuary into a stage used for conferences, and performances of all kinds. And if efficient heating and cooling technology along with better insulation were installed, we could do all of this, cut costs and be better stewards of the environment.

But money saved in this way needs to be invested in people rather than the stock market. It's time to "go big or go home". We have the money. It's time to spend it. Think of it as *risk* capital. Or do we want to wait for change to happen to us, gently sinking into a pool of wine? Do we want to die with all the toys? With money in the bank? I hope not. First, **we need to hire a youth minister to create some form of updated "Sunday school" and a youth programme.** The old folks of our congregation certainly committed to youth in the 1920s, 30s and 1960s. But this time the "Sunday school" or youth programme need not even meet on Sunday. It might not even be a school. It could meet on any weekday evening, or on the weekend. It could meet either in the sanctuary or in the C.E. Building. But it does have to happen and the sooner the better. Indeed, this concentration on Zillennials and their Millennial or Gen. X parents is critical if we hope to find longevity as a congregation. Meaningful "Sunday school" which offers the young a role in worship must be our goal. We need an expert, a young person dedicated to this ministry alone. And she or he needs a budget to build a programme.

As soon as possible we must end our involvement in the onerous task of maintaining the Christian Education Building. It drains far too much energy, time and money out of our congregation. Yet the burden of this maintenance needs to continue for a bit, for the building must, at least in the short run, continue as a rental structure. We have invested too much in the structure just

to sell it off or tear it down now. If more of the life of our church took place in the sanctuary, if our use of the C.E. Building were limited to office space for administration, the ministers' study, congregational luncheons, bazaars and rummage sales, then a campaign to increase rentals could begin in order to meet the need for increased revenue. But first there must be a congregational visioning process leading to a new mission statement. New rental programmes must fit within the overall goals laid out by this statement.

An emphasis on the young should be the big idea that directs rentals. For example, we have a co-op preschool now that occupies the basement of the C.E. building till noon every weekday. Might a programme of affordable day care be added to utilize that same space in the afternoons? Or might we seek to attract teachers of voice, musical instruments, drama, literature or dance? These children could showcase their skills on the stage in the sanctuary, possibly during Sunday worship but most likely through the week in the evening. The youth minister would help coordinate this. Or we might seek partnerships with Mohawk College to include older youth and young adults. As well, the 13th Scouting movement needs our support. How might we better aid this critical youth programme that is presently rather fragile?

To soften the more businesslike landlord-tenant relationship that now exists, there should be an attempt to more fully integrate rentals into the life of our church. Moreover, **it would likely mean the hiring of a part time, temporary rental agent or manager to deal with the ever-growing issues that will result from increased rental traffic.** This would, of course lessen revenues but if done with the mission statement in mind, would underscore the spiritual direction of our community of faith. After all we are not a business!

Our rental agent would also have to be guided by the knowledge that the C.E. Building could slowly morph into a community hub. Recently, a large majority of our faith community said that surveying the needs of our immediate surrounding neighbourhoods was either "very important" or "important"; and an even greater majority responded that we "definitely should add", or it is "worth considering" programme to meet those needs. For example, this might, if needed, take the form of free meals for the community, or extended child care space in our building. We would have to wait for the survey results of our surrounding neighbourhoods, but it is a well-known fact that affordable child care is a huge need among Millennials. For some time now we have been "invisible" to our surrounding community. By moving toward being a community hub we could greatly increase our profile and in doing so attract young families and their children.

Then, finally, we need to be aware of the growing threat of climate change. The roof on the C.E. Building continues

to be an existential threat: from experience we have learned that flat roofs leak and water plays havoc in walls! This problem will be ongoing but perhaps we can lessen it by utilising the roof for a solar array. Might we be able to offset roof repair costs through lowering our energy footprint? We have already begun this movement to green the C.E Building with the installation of an efficient boiler, and air conditioning system. It just seems logical to keep going. Again, think *risk* capital. Moreover, we must avoid the temptation to solve our parking problems by paving over “the meadow”. Down the road, in the long-term part of my proposal, the green area of our property will come to be a huge asset.

Down the Road

In truth, we are an extremely wealthy community of faith in a worldly sense, in investments yes, but more so because of the real estate that is ours! Stone Church and Upper James literally hum with activity, making that property that we purchased from the Downie family in the 1950s worth a fortune. Location, location, location! And there is one portion of our property that remains woefully under-utilized. Yes, we worry about the parking lot, especially in the winter with regards to snow removal, and yet talk of expanding it. But what is the opportunity cost of keeping that black topped portion of our property in its present incarnation? Granted, the parking lot is critical for our own congregational use and for rentals in the immediate future and must stay. But in a decade or so it must go, perhaps underground, to make way for a multi-story apartment or condominium complex that would more perfectly suit this expensive real estate. And who knows what will happen even further down the road (pun not intended) given the United Nations warning that drastic change must happen soon to save this planet... “1.5 to stay alive”. (Temperature rise must be kept to 1.5 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels.) What will be the implications for travel? We need to think beyond the confines of the present and be proactive. How will the Barton Stone-Mount Hope community of faith get to church? We once came by horse and buggy. But these days there is no horse shed!

Hamilton, indeed, all of Canada, desperately needs more affordable housing. The apartment building that could be built on our property might be given over to that, at least in part. I propose that it should, but that it will also be a retirement home and extended care facility. And there is another concept that we might consider - “Intergenerational living”. Let’s face it, Barton Stone-Mount Hope United Church is an aging congregation and will someday need to ‘downsize’, move into a retirement home or into extended care. What if we could do so and yet at the same time remain an active part of our community of faith? The apartment complex I suggest would do that. Here is how.

The biggest downside comment about senior housing expressed by elders is that, “I don’t want to live with a bunch of old people”. There are many for-profit retirement residences and extended care facilities on Hamilton Mountain, but in my experience, they are shiny, attractive communities housing a “bunch of old people”. Today, families live apart from relatives. Adult children of the eldest generation (the Traditionalists) are usually in a situation where both partners work. Yet today there is the possibility of new intergenerational families in relationship with one another. Five generations could live together in a building that includes long-term care with those who average 84-87 years.

Earlier in this chapter I outlined five generations – the Traditionalists (74-100 years in 2018), Boomers (54-73), Generation X (38-53), Gen Y or Millennials (24-37) and Gen Z or Zillennials (6-23). While each of these generations is unique, they all share at least one thing in common – all are co-participants in today’s workforce. Due to longer life spans, delayed retirement and an eagerness to begin working earlier, we have, for the first time, five generations working together. Gen Z are starting work earlier than most. They are entrepreneurs and early adaptors of social technology, mentors of same, and teachers. They would most likely not be residents in our building but would install new technology that will allow elders to stay connected with family. They would be the generation of teenage volunteers who bridge the gap between elders and social media.

One best practice of organizations such as Compass Senior Living is a programme called “Tiny Stories”. The elderly are “libraries” – they are the source of many fascinating stories that make up a long life. However, when they pass away taking their stories with them it is like a library has burned to the ground. So, let’s put an end to this by collecting those stories! Let’s create an interview process whereby the elderly interact with teens, where the elders pass on their stories and volunteer teens record it with their tech. The elders will feel wanted and important. At the same time, they may just pass on some of those interpersonal skills that our social media and gaming directed youth are missing. And when a trust level develops, perhaps the young will be able to overcome fears held by the elderly with respect to social media and tech generally. Whole new vistas could open up for seniors, yes but also youth. When learning goes both ways, everyone wins.

Millennials and Gen X might do the same but also be residents in an apartment complex that features affordable housing. Those of us who are Boomers and residents would take a leading role in bridging the generational gaps, promoting collaboration. The Traditionalists would be the “heart” of the community. Family would give these elders a purpose. They would be included on any

interviewing team seeking to hire staff, teach a life-skills class to their care team if they wished, or work with a team on a community outreach project. Think pastoral care writ large. Our elders could continue to worship in the sanctuary they love, our sanctuary, participate in the life and programmes delivered by our community centre or hub if they desired, (the Christian Education Building), enjoy “the meadow” which would now become a garden quiet space where they could just sit or participate in gardening in special raised beds. They would live right in the centre of it all, not in some distant seniors’ residence. This would be our expression of Christian evangelism, one of doing.

There is also a rather practical aspect to all this. It is always the elderly members of any congregation who give the most money to support their church. If we were to stay the course and continue to do things as we do now, our elders will slowly pass away or move away to retirement or extended care institutions and their financial gifts to the church would end. But if they continued to worship with us, they would remain sustaining members of the Barton Stone-Mount Hope community, the community that they love. Speaking of high-end retirement facilities, seniors say, “It’s good here but it was better at home.” If our seniors were here, they would be home. We would be home.

The development of our property must also be a testament to our stewardship of the environment. That would mean the continuation of the “meadow” as the heart of the greening, but much more. The very construction of any buildings on our property must be green. Such construction methods most definitely exist and must be utilized. One example would be carbon capture technology connected with concrete. As well, we must incorporate the latest tech connected with renewable energy generation and storage. It can be done, has been done. We don’t have to invent all of this, just explore the best practices already used by others such as Parkdale United Church in Toronto which ten years ago built a multi-storied affordable apartment complex called Green Phoenix. This would be stewardship of the environment in the doing.

At the same time, we should stand up for justice in the workplace by paying any of our staff at least a living wage. The fact of the matter is that the Canadian workforce is shrinking. It will become harder and harder to attract good workers. So, paying well and being concerned about the well-being and happiness of our staff is as smart as it is Christian. Through justice comes peace.

Finally, there is the huge issue of finance. How could we afford all this? The answer is *we alone* can’t. We would need to partner with a developer, one who would share our vision. But we are a community of faith that is wealthy when it comes to investment capital. Do we have the

political will to take at least part of this money out of the stock market and reinvest it in real estate? When we built the C.E. Building it cost us \$100,000 in 1950s dollars. That was a lot of money back then, but we did not shy away from the challenge. Individual families increased their givings to help pay the bills. However, to meet monthly payments to the contractor we floated our own bond issue. It was a huge success. Why could we not do the same again? As well, there would be numerous grants that we could pursue either through the United Church of Canada or the government. A key partner in the application for government grants might be the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. Or what if two floors of the apartment building were given over to condominiums that only members of our congregation could purchase? Might these monies be part of our financial investment in the project? We would need to bring more to the table than property. If we were ready to make such a commitment, along with the very important fact that our property is zoned as commercial, we should not have too much trouble finding a reliable and responsible developer willing to help bring our vision to reality.

An intricate part of this plan to create a high-rise residential building would be the demolition of the C.E. Building down the road. It would be replaced by a new structure that would continue to mesh with the residential building while delivering programmes for both our immediate faith community and surrounding neighbourhoods. It would remain as a community centre. Furthermore, our developer partner would assume a leading role in the maintenance of all the property, with our community of faith acting in a consulting role only.

Risk is involved. Yes, that is a scary thought. But simmering gets you nowhere. Boiling is what we have always done. It is our heritage.

So, let’s boil!

