

# *Knox News & Notes*



October/November 2017

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## *Everything happens for a reason*

“Everything happens for a reason” is a very popular comment not only for Christians to make but also for other people with a different spiritual bent. We even sometimes hear the expression in TV series and in movies.

Many believers feel this is a Biblical truth based on what we read in Paul’s letter, Romans chapter 8 especially verse 28: We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose (NRSV).

Romans 8:28 is a wonderful Biblical comfort to live by, but there is also a danger of misunderstanding this wonderful Biblical promise. “Everything happens for a reason” should never be understood or used in portraying or understanding God as an impersonal heavenly programmer who pre-programmed everyone and everything on earth.

If this is what we mean - God being an impersonal heavenly programmer who pre-programmed everyone - when we use the expression: “Everything happens for a reason” then we are robots. Then our lives and what happens in the world around us will amount to, us and circumstances being part of a heavenly movie just playing in heaven; a movie that has been edited and finalized and no changes can be made at all.

Why would we then even pray? If we are robots and nothing can change in the script of the heavenly movie, prayer amounts to nothing and the joke is on us.

Fortunately, God who revealed himself to us in the Bible is not like this. God is not a robot-like figure and he did not create human beings as robots. When we use the expression: “Everything happens for a reason” we don’t do this to try and give a rational answer to things we don’t understand happening to us or around us.

We know God not as a robot-like figure but as the Almighty God who is also our Father.

December 3<sup>rd</sup> is the First Sunday of Advent and Advent and Christmas shares the wonderful truth that in Christ we know our Father in heaven as the God of Relationships. In Christ he is to be found by anyone who seeks Him. He listens to our prayers and changes our circumstances.

A robot-like theology only works when everything is stable and life is like maple syrup, but definitely not when things go wrong.

God is our Father. That's how he is present with us; he comforts and carries us. Our consolation is not first and foremost that God is in control but in the Biblical reality that we hear him say to us: "I am here; I am with you!" It is in this relationship with our Father in Christ that we understand more clearly what it means when we say God is in control and everything happens for a reason.

The problem in our misunderstandings sometimes coincide with the reality that the Biblical comfort from Romans 8 has never been "trained" into all of us Christians.

When Paul asks in verse 35: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? he answers this question by listing all possible things that have the potential to do just that; separate us from the love of Christ - trouble or calamity, persecution, hunger, destitution, being in danger or threatened with death. Paul believes because of his relationship with his heavenly Father that despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. He is convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love - neither death nor life, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow - indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Just to summarize: The New Testament's great answer to the question about God is relational, not rational! Rational - the kind of comment people sometimes make: don't worry, you'll understand later. Relational - God is our Father, he does not work "incidentally" but relationally; He is the God of relationships, not of incidents; He is with us always and everywhere as Jesus said in Matthew 28:20 - be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Rev Johan

## Dove of Peace

Here is a symbol of peace.  
Connect the dots.



## ***Follow Up Information Re: The Alzheimer's Coffee Break Event Held at Knox on Sunday, September 17, 2017***

As you may know the 22nd annual Alzheimer Coffee Break kicked off across Canada on Thursday, September 21, 2017 (World Alzheimer's Day) and continues into October. Knox hosted one of these: "Coffee Break Events" on September 17th following worship. It was part of our regular fellowship time in Metcalf Hall. Along with the very tasty refreshments - coffee, tea, juice and home baking, supplied by Nancy Dickieson and those who assisted in the kitchen and with serving, there was a display of assorted brochures that provide information regarding the many services (many services without charge) that are provided by the Alzheimer Society in Guelph along with important contact information.

"Alzheimer Coffee Break Events" are the Alzheimer Society's major nationwide annual fundraiser where participants may make a donation in exchange for a cup of coffee or place a donation in the donation box provided by the Alzheimer Society. The support of the public and organizations and churches make a huge difference—each year, "Coffee Break Events" raise over \$1 million to fund local programs and services for people with dementia, their caregivers and families. Programs like counselling, day programs and respite-care can make all the difference in the way families are able to live with the disease.

At Knox the "Coffee Break Event" raised \$227.70 for the Alzheimer's Society to aid their work in our community and beyond. I want to thank Nancy Dickieson, and those who assisted in any way with this event, your gracious help has been deeply appreciated. I also want to thank two members of the Alzheimer Society, Robin Smart (Public Education Coordinator) and Joy Noble, (Development Coordinator) for the time they spent with me in meetings and for the help and supplies they provided.

Even though this "Coffee Break Event" has passed the opportunity to receive information and help, or to add your support to the work of the Alzheimer Society has not. The contact information for the Alzheimer Society in Guelph is printed below. Please know they welcome your interest, your questions, your support and welcome opportunities to assist you in any way possible.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Robin Smart,  
Public Education Coordinator  
Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington  
207-255 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph N1H 8J1

Direct Line: 226-314-0949 x 3013  
email: [rsmart@alzheimerww.ca](mailto:rsmart@alzheimerww.ca)  
website: [www.walkforalzheimers.ca](http://www.walkforalzheimers.ca)



Thanks to the Knox church family for your support which is greatly appreciated.

Shirley  
Submitted by:  
Dr. Shirley Gale, Pastoral Assistant

## ♪ Musical Notes ♪

By Chris Fischer, Pastoral Musician

### “Sing the Circle Wide”

Here at Knox this fall, I am hoping that we'll all pay special attention to the words of our worship songs. As we seek to become a more and more welcoming, inclusive congregation, texts such as this one, by Canadian Anglican bishop Gordon Light, take on greater urgency:

“Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.

Let this be our song, no one stands alone, standing side by side, draw the circle wide...

Let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and small;

let our loving know no borders, faithful to God's call.”

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Our community, in partnership with St. Andrew's and First Baptist congregations, is supporting a refugee family from Syria; hopefully by now, some of you will have met them. (On November 5, they will be here in church with us, so we can welcome them into our family at that time.) Also, through our support of Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service and Development, we are supporting important mission work in Malawi, among our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and alongside social and environmental justice organizations such as Kairos.

My hope as your Pastoral Musician is that our congregational song will act as a springboard to further action, in these and other areas, as we look to 2018 and beyond. To that end, you will notice a renewed commitment to the music of the world church, from Syria to many regions of Africa and Latin America to Indigenous North America. Our beliefs, in the words of Reformed theologians past and present (Calvin, Luther, Barth, et al.), are shaped by the words we sing. Therefore, it is of critical importance that we at Knox embrace words and music that reflect the experiences of Christians throughout the Body of Christ on Earth, and not just those close to home, or in languages and cultures with which we are already familiar. This is the only way that we will truly be changed: from the inside out.

Accordingly, I will be giving a “rest” to what had been a core staple of my music ministry: the fall series of free noon recitals in our Sanctuary. (Don't worry... They'll be back: just not this year!) Instead, I'll be planning a new initiative, coming soon, involving global song and the ecumenical Christian community in Guelph, beyond the walls of Knox. Similar projects, such as Inshallah at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary (which has grown from 20 to more than 150 regular weekly participants in 10 years!), are proving to be excellent at bringing people into a deeper engagement with peace and justice issues in our world. Combining singing with readings, meditations and silent reflection, these communities are raising awareness, fostering spiritual growth, and bringing people into communion with the Holy Spirit in new and exciting ways! Stay tuned for more in the coming months.

On Sunday mornings, our Sanctuary Choir will be leading us as we explore this expanding territory of congregational song. Let's journey together, embracing (as our Value Statements put it) “the possibilities of Biblically-based change,” “passionate about God's future for Knox.”

The last words I leave to Gordon Light:

“Let the dreams we dream be larger than we've ever dreamed before; let the dream of Christ be in us, open every door.”

## *Congregational Life*

### **Sunday, November 5, 2017 – 173<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Luncheon**



Our anniversary luncheon will be held after worship in Metcalf Hall on Sunday, November 5 at 12 noon. Tickets will go on sale in October.

Our guest speaker for this Sunday service will be Greg Smith. As our guests of honour, joining our anniversary luncheon, will be our Syrian family with parents Ghazi and Fatima along with their six children, Fidaa (13), Hasan (12), Mohamed (10), Abdelnoor (7), Mohmoud (3) and Youssef (1).

We will have a hot buffet lunch of ¼ chicken, vegetables, potato salad and fresh buns and anniversary cake for dessert. We will also be including Syrian food side dishes of falafel, rice, pita bread and hummus that will be available for you to sample.

Come and celebrate our 173<sup>rd</sup> anniversary and enjoy good food and fellowship with your Knox Church family.

Contact Wendy at [congregationallife@knoxguelph.ca](mailto:congregationallife@knoxguelph.ca) regarding any inquiries you may have about the above event or the church office at 519-821-0141 between 9 am - 1 pm Monday to Friday.

### *Financing Knox's Ministry – An Update*

As of the end of August, regular givings through offering envelopes and PAR **increased by 6.5%** over last year. This figure does not include the additional gifts and pledges over and above regular givings for the new Youth Ministry Worker position, which is now fully funded for the three-year contract. Thank you to everyone who has stepped forward with additional generosity in 2017 to fund Knox's life and mission.

While it is certainly good news that givings have grown by 6.5% year over year here at Knox, we need to remember that we set a goal of a 17-20% increase in regular givings in 2017 in order to fund the many areas of our life and ministry. Consequently, we face a **\$42,000 shortfall** in revenue compared to our expenses going forward, and without an increase in givings we will likely end the year in a significant deficit position. Understanding the importance of having a strong financial base in order to fulfill our ongoing mission as a congregation, the session has approved the establishment of an ad hoc committee under the leadership of Herb Gale, Minister of Generosity and Stewardship, with the following mandate: *to develop a three-year strategic plan for ensuring Knox Church's long-term financial sustainability in service of its vision of ministry and core values.* The committee will be consulting with the congregation and reporting its recommendations to the 2018 Annual Meeting. In the meantime, we ask you to keep Knox Church's life and mission in your prayers and as you are able to consider increasing your regular donations to the church and its ministry.



## ***The 2017 Thanksgiving Offering***

by Herb Gale, Minister of Generosity and Stewardship

Over the last couple of years, Knox Church has encouraged our members to take time to reflect on what we are thankful for; and, as a tangible expression of our thanks, to offer one day's pay or pension as our Thanksgiving Offering to God. As I was discussing this year's offering with my advisory team, I asked if there was a member of the team who would like to share some of what they are thankful for with the congregation during the offering on Thanksgiving Sunday. Lois Stockton volunteered, but later discovered she won't be able to be in worship on Thanksgiving Sunday. "I lay in bed unable to sleep after our advisory team meeting," Lois told me. "My head and heart were full of all the many things I am thankful for. Now I won't be able to share them."

"Why don't you write them down?" I suggested. "We can include them in the next newsletter. It will be going out before Thanksgiving." A couple of days later, Lois sent me the following reflections:

### ***A Few of My Thoughts as I Prepare for Thanksgiving*** by Lois Stockton

*I am so thankful for...*

***My own family:*** *I have a loving, caring family who have always been there to help whenever needed.*

***My original home church:*** *When I was growing up, our family was part of a very small, but vibrant church. Sunday was "church day" in our household. I attended Sunday School in the morning and the church service in the evening. My mom was the leader of the women's group and my dad was one of the two deacons. Grandpa was the church pianist. I was also a church member and cut the grass for the church. We had a small but strong youth group. A great Sunday School teacher taught me so much about the Bible, and I fondly remember our young minister who always started the worship services with wonderful, joyous choruses. I am so grateful for the strong foundation my little church laid for me to start me on my life journey.*

***Churches along my way:*** *As a family we moved around, but we always searched and found a wonderful new church family to join where our entire family was welcomed and I was offered opportunities to participate in choir, CGIT, Brownies, Guides, etc.*

***My Knox Church family:*** *It hardly seems possible that Knox Church has been my church home for the past 25 years. I have been inspired by some great women like Hilda Peterson, Marion Baier and Marjorie Scott. It was a privilege to work and worship with them and all the wonderful family with whom I "Pass the Peace" each Sunday. I also appreciate that even with my quirky personality I have been accepted and able to mingle with the younger members of my church family in LOGOS and Vacation Bible School where I have learned so much and encouraged to grow in faith with my GREAT church family!*

*Thank you, God, for my immediate family and my many church families through my lifetime!*

What are you thankful for as you prepare for Thanksgiving? Why don't you take a few minutes and jot down your thoughts and present them along with your "Give a Day of Pay" offering on Thanksgiving Sunday? Special offering envelopes are available in the sanctuary and (for those who use offering envelopes) in your boxes of offering envelopes. There is room on the back of the envelopes to write down what you are thankful for. Our collective financial goal for our 2017 Thanksgiving Offering is \$15,000, but the real goal of the offering is, like Lois Stockton, to have hearts and minds full to overflowing with thanksgiving to God for God's many blessings.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Herb Gale

P.S. If you are unable to give a full day of pay or pension as your Thanksgiving Offering, please give whatever you are able. We would like **everyone** to participate **as they are able** in this offering of Thanksgiving to God.

## *Fall Festival*

Fall Festival is a One day Vendor/Artisan sale here at Knox and we know you WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!! Join us on Saturday, October 21, 2017 from 9:30 until 3:00 in Metcalf Hall where you will have a chance to do some early Christmas shopping or indulge yourself in something new Just For You!

We hope you have taken a poster and put it up in your building, favourite gym, restaurant, office lunch room (wherever you are able to). If you still need one or more come and speak with Lindsay Redpath during Coffee Hour.

Plan to attend – we want to have a successful day.

Sincerely,  
Knox Retreat Ladies

We are very pleased that all of our tables have been booked.

Here is a list of our Artisans, Crafters & Vendors (in alphabetical order) are:

Clearwater Designs (jewelry)  
Epicure - Spices etc.  
Fourchette Culinary Academy – Ready made crock pot meals  
Guelph Custom Costumes – Hand crafted & designed costumes  
Hand made scarves and Hats  
International Animal Rescue Orangutan Project -  
Hand knit hats and scarves  
Jamberry Nails - Stick on decorative nail polish  
Jay Marett Photography – Cards & Photos  
Natural Endeavours (home made soaps)  
Norwex Products – Cleaning essentials & more  
Origami Owl - Locketts, chars & more  
Pampered Chef – Cooking & bakeware  
Pebbles and More (hand made stone and pebble signs)  
Potted Plants  
Sew Diva (Hand Crafted Baby Quilts, bibs etc.)  
Sharon's Sweets - Baked Goods  
Smocked dresses, scarves, bags and more  
Stella and Dot - jewelry  
The Glass Guild of Guelph – stained glass creations  
The Wool Witch, handmade fibre art  
Thirty-One Gifts - bags  
Tupperware – Storage containers  
Wood Items  
Younique – Mascara & makeup

*Knox Presbyterian Church*  
*Presents*  
**FALL FESTIVAL**

**Local Vendor Sale**  
**Saturday, October 21, 2017**  
**9:30am to 3:00pm**  
**20 Quebec Street**  
Enter off Chapel Lane  
**Guelph, ON**  
ARTISANS, CRAFTERS &  
LOCAL VENDORS  
**Raffle Table**  
For further information contact  
fallfestival@knoxguelph.ca

## ***Church School Chatter***

### ***"BEHOLD, CHILDREN ARE A HERITAGE FROM THE LORD" Psalm 127:3***

Our classes are up and running for the first few weeks!

However, there is still a need for leaders to help us out. If you can give 6 weeks to the children of our church, please let me know. We can work around your schedule, and the curriculum is easy to use with lots of great ideas!

Please note the following dates of importance...

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 8**, Thanksgiving Sunday there will be NO classes. We encourage our kids to worship with their families. There will be activity sheets that the children may help themselves to in the intergenerational area.

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 29** is a LOGOS Sunday during worship. While this might not affect many of the families in church school directly, please note that our oldest class, grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 will remain in the sanctuary. We have a guest speaker that day and I think these young people will enjoy hearing her message! After worship that day, we will enjoy cake in Metcalfe Hall!

**INFORMATION FORMS:** Thank you to those families who have already filled in an updated information form for their child/children. If you haven't done so as yet, please grab a form from the C.E bulletin board and fill it in and give it to me during coffee hour. Why do we need one each year? Because sometimes things change.... email addresses, newly discovered food allergies or sensitivities, mailing address etc. Please help me keep the church school records up to date and intact!

As always, feel free to speak with me if you have questions about our church school program.

Blessings

Karen Bellamy

Church School coordinator

## ***Parlour Furniture***

As the Parlour is being renovated and converted to a Multi-generational Meeting Place some of the furniture was not going to be used. The three loves seats formerly in the parlour are now happily gracing the living room at Dove House, Crieff Hills. This is the house used for our Ladies Retreats. It was wonderful to see the furniture in its new setting.

