

Knox News & Notes



December 2023/January 2024

Getting to know our Interim Minister

Here is a chance to get to know our Interim Minister, through an interview by a Knox reporter.



Q: Where did you grow up?

A: I was born in Orillia, but our family moved to Winnipeg when I was 5, so I came to love the wide-open prairie sky.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: I have 3 grown children, living in New Jersey, Waterloo, and Hamilton (a theologian, a professional cellist, and a philosopher). 4 grandchildren, ages 11, 9, 7 and 4 bring me great joy. My mother, age 94, still lives independently and is delighted to be able to watch the Knox livestream from out west!

Q: When did you start to play the violin?

A: When I was 10 my school began to offer group lessons. I have always tried to find a group to play with, to motivate me to PRACTISE (I don't relish practising). I play in a trio most Friday mornings (my day off) with a piano and cello.

Q: We hear you also play a drum.

A: I have a tambourine, and a hand-held frame drum called a tar (no jingles). I haven't practised much recently but I will aim to practice enough so I can play at church once in a while. If my teacher visits some day, you will see what a really good frame-drum player can do.

Q: What is your favorite place in the world?

A: An island in Lake of the Woods (trees, rocks, water) where I spent my summers from age 5-21. My dad directed a children's camp, so I learned to swim, canoe and do canoe trips. Also: a tiny village in S France where I lived for 2 years.

Q: What have you been reading lately?

A: *Fire Weather: the making of a Beast* by John Vaillant, about the Fort McMurray fire, and everything that contributed to that disaster. I could hardly put it down.

Q: What is your more valued possession?

A: It is a hard choice between my collection of pottery and my violin, but I would say my violin because it brings joy to both me and many others, and is portable!

Q: What do you do to relax?

A: I watch British mystery murders; read, garden (I have a certified pollinator-friendly yard!); knit; hang out with my grandkids, cook, hike the Bruce Trail.

CATHY'S CORNER

I hope to include a “Cathy’s corner” in each newsletter. This issues’ theme is: **What is an “Interim” Minister?**

Some of you have been asking what the “Interim” means. It is not “a minister who fills in until we can call a regular Minister.” That would be Stated Supply.

Interim Ministers are “special” 😊. We are invited into a congregation in times of significant transition, to guide a congregation through it.

Knox is in transition after the retirement of Johan, but there is a larger transition we are undergoing, along with many other congregations in Canada! We are in transition because the world has changed significantly, even in the last 15 years, and that means changes for congregations.

The world has changed in the last 15 years: the invention of the smart phone has sped things up, changes our brains, and distracts us. People can “attend worship” anywhere in the world. Large cultural trends (like secularism, globalism) impact younger generations, so the numbers of non-churched grows.

The world, and the church, has changed because of Covid. Covid broke habits of church attendance, even for people who were long-time and faithful members. Covid led to some switching to livestream, which changes a congregation. Knox has an “online” community of 80-90 people/week!

Knox has changed: The average age of the congregation has increased; that means there is more wisdom, but less energy for the tasks required to keep a congregation working. The small core of people who volunteer is stretched to capacity. Doing livestream every week is great for those who can’t attend in person, but it takes a great deal of technical skill to make that happen. That situation is not sustainable in the long term.

All this means that Knox needs to take a hard look at the realities to gain a fresh sense of purpose and identity. Now is the time to pool our wisdom and prayerfully discern together how the Spirit is leading. “Interim Ministry” brings some stability in this in-between time, but more so Interim Ministry is a *different* time, a time perhaps like no other previous time in Knox’ lifespan, when we open to how God leads in a new way. I bring no preconceived notion about what direction Knox will choose. That is something we will discover *together (as in, it will ask all of us to engage in prayer and conversation together)*. Opening ourselves to change is a spiritual work, done with care, patience, gentleness and courage. Let us pray for courage to receive God’s “Behold, I am about to do a new thing!” (Isaiah 43:19). Let us remember that the people of God, throughout history, have walked through many wilderness experiences, through which God provides a way.

Please feel free to talk with me about any questions or concerns you have. I want to hear from you.

Cathy's Corner
Cathy Stewart
Interim Minister

A Message for our Interim Moderator

As we come to the end of the church calendar and move into the new year beginning with Advent, we are reminded that the church operates on a different timetable than the world; our calendar is the one that follows the story of God in Jesus Christ. Telling time in the church this way puts us slightly out of rhythm with the broader culture, and while we can't escape the dominant culture's markers - we can subvert them (!) by honouring this ancient rhythm of God's people.

I'm grateful for having Rev. Cathy on board now, and we are working together, along with the Session, to set a process into place by which all the folk at Knox will work together to discern our options for the future. We are currently exploring a process that has been used by other congregations in our denomination and throughout North America called New Beginnings. We are excited about its possibilities and will provide more information in the new year.

I also want to reiterate that conversations with St. Andrew's around amalgamation remain exploratory and will be subject to the New Beginnings process. In other words, it may emerge as one of the ways forward, but it may not. We will need God's guidance and wisdom to discern the options that lie ahead, so, we welcome your patience as we all wait to see what's in store. In the meantime, we believe that partnering with St. Andrew's in some joint events and ministry will always be a good thing, especially where two are better than one.

May you have a blessed Advent and Christmas, and I will see you at the late Christmas Eve service!

Yours in Christ,

Glen

Dates to Note

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Dec.2 nd – | The Spirit of the Season Santa Clause Parade passing by Knox – we will have treats and wave a welcome to Santa from the church's front steps |
| Dec.3 rd – | Children's Sunday School Pageant followed by a Coffee Break and Birthday Cake for Jesus |
| Dec.3 rd – | Combined Advent Carol Sing/Pizza Lunch at St. Andrews Church 12pm-2pm |
| Dec.10 th – | Communion |
| Dec.17 th – | Give to Guelph Sunday |
| Dec.19 th – | Lunch Bunch at Montana's |
| Dec.24 th – | Christmas Eve Services at 6pm and 10pm |
| Jan. 7 th - | Remembering Jesus' baptism and our own |

A Fond Farewell to the LOGOS Ministry

After 17 successful years, the LOGOS Ministry at Knox Guelph will conclude with its final session on Wednesday November 29th. We will end with a catered dinner and Advent craft for all the current families and volunteers.

I wish to thank all the past and present LOGOS Board members, volunteers and families for their commitment to this ministry. LOGOS is a joyous ministry and it has been a privilege to serve with you.

LOGOS Board: Karen Bellamy (Family Time Coordinator and Treasurer), Katie Goldsmith (Rec/Play Coordinator), Kyla Poirier (Kitchen Coordinator), Mel McGurrian (Member at large) and Nancy Stepien (Director and Bible Study Coordinator).

Current LOGOS Volunteers: Arnold Bethune, Yvonne Cleary, Wendy Darroch, Nancy Dickieson, Ray Funnell, Herb Gale, Carrie Gordon, Phil Gordon, Diane Harvey, Alex Lank, Lisa Lindsay, Deb Nash-Chambers, Lindsay Redpath, Keith Reid, Donna Sheard, Bonna Simpson, Ann Wilson.

Current Members: Audrey Deyell, Lucas Follings, Belle Harris, Leo Braganza, Magnum Burns-Webster, Kenzie Gordon, Alisa Perez, Ethan Harris, Araiana Deyell, Mason Gordon, Luke Deyell, Maddy Gordon, Kola Lukianova, Dominic Deyell.

As we move on from LOGOS, I hope you carry many happy memories with you. I especially hope that you will always remember the one rule of LOGOS: You are a Child of God and you will be treated that way. No one will treat another person as though they do not matter.”

Submitted with Gratitude,

Nancy Stepien.



Knox Hospital Visiting Team

Being in hospital is not something most people enjoy. Illness and hospitalization may spark feelings of uncertainty, fear, pain, loneliness, boredom. But....being in hospital is not something you have to experience alone. Knox has a team of dedicated volunteers who will visit at the Guelph General to provide comfort, friendship, conversation, prayer. These volunteers will relay any special requests e.g. for communion, to the ministerial team.

We can't visit if we don't know you're in hospital. All it takes is a phone call to the church office, or you can call Nancy Dickieson, coordinator of the visiting team, directly. It's helpful if you can let us know your, or your family member's, floor and room number.



The members of the team are: Sharon Harrison, Karl McDougall, Gladys Robson, Jane Van Dam, Bonna Simpson, Howard Simpson, Nancy Dickieson

Your Knox family cares about you. You are not alone. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

Congregational Life Committee

179th Anniversary Luncheon – November 12, 2023

A buffet style hot meal of meat lasagna, salad, rolls and anniversary cake was enjoyed by 45 attendees in Metcalf Hall after worship service on November 12. We thank our guest preacher and Interim Moderator Glen Soderholm and Interim Minister Cathy Stewart who both participated in the ceremonial cake cutting in celebration of our 179th anniversary.

At time of reflection and fellowship was had by all.



Church School Chatter

"For in Christ Jesus we are all children of God, through faith"
Galatians 3:26

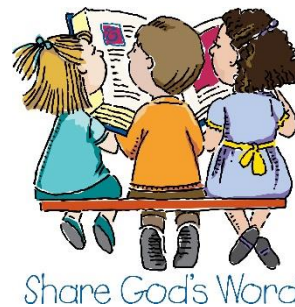
We continue to offer one all ages church school class every Sunday, and LOVE having the kids join us!

We are truly blessed at Knox to have an amazing core group of teachers who willingly give of their time and talents to share God's love with our kids. A huge thanks to Nancy Stepien, Mel McGurrin, Christina Johnston and Rachel Fishback for all they do! Thanks also to our amazing teens who join us when they can to offer an extra pair of hands when needed!

There will NOT be any classes offered on December 24 or December 31. We will resume our classes in January. Wishing all of the Knox Family and very Joy filled Christmas... one filled with much love and happiness for you and your family.

Blessings

Karen Bellamy
Church School Coordinator



Celebration

At the recent Ontario Association of Paramedics Chiefs Conference, held in Blue Mountain, the Governor General's EMS Exemplary Service Medals were awarded.

This award recognizes professionals in the provision of pre-hospital emergency medical services to the public.

Medals were given to those professionals who have performed their duties in an exemplary manner, characterized by good conduct, industry and efficiency.

The medal is awarded to Paramedics with over 20 years of service, of which at least 10 of those years have been street level duty involving potential risk to the individual.



Congratulations to our own Carrie Gordon who received this prestigious award in September.

Moments from Mission & Outreach

Refugee Fund:

As explained in a congregational email earlier this month, Knox, St. Andrew's, and Two Rivers maintain a joint refugee fund that is currently supporting 3 families who have fled the war in Ukraine for the peace of our community in Guelph. As of September, the shared refugee fund was very near depletion. Your financial support is crucial to our efforts to help support these families while they take refuge in our community. All donations in any amount are greatly appreciated. You may contribute directly through the church office, by e-transfer to acct@knoxguelph.ca or via a credit card on our website, www.knoxguelph.ca (click on "donate" then "on-line gifts"). **Please make sure all donations are clearly marked "Refugee Fund"**. Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration and your contribution.

Giving Tree:

'Tis the season for our Knox Giving Tree! As we celebrate God's great gift of love during Advent, we also share our gifts with others. The Gifts of Change catalogue spreads these gifts around our nation and globe, truly bringing hope and change to many. There are copies of the catalogue available at the sanctuary entrances, or at [Gifts of Change 2023-2024 \(presbyterian.ca\)](http://Gifts of Change 2023-2024 (presbyterian.ca)). You can choose to donate directly to [Giving Tree – Knox Presbyterian Church, Guelph - The Presbyterian Church in Canada](#) or using a specially marked envelope available at the church via cash or a cheque made payable to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Please indicate this appeal code on your cheque: GivTree – WW120. Full details are available on the church website or in the congregational email sent earlier this month.

Santa's Coming!

On Saturday, December 2nd, the Knox family will work together to celebrate Guelph's downtown "Spirit of the Season" event and join our downtown neighbours the evening of the Santa Claus parade. Volunteers are preparing candy canes to be handed out with a message of the true meaning of the season in advance of the evening. Volunteers will be preparing and putting up decorations, lights and a tent outside during the afternoon while still others prepare hot chocolate and popcorn that will be for sale (proceeds to support the joint refugee fund) during the parade. Our doors will be open for people who may need to use the washroom, warm up for a few moments or tend to babies. Thank you in advance to all those who are helping support this fun evening as we work to be part of our downtown community! If you would like to volunteer, we'd love to have your help: please contact Rachel Fishback or Mel McGurrin. One and all are welcome to come and join us to watch the parade and wave a welcome from Knox to Santa as he passes by our front steps!

Give to Guelph:

In April this year, our committee undertook the initiative to rejuvenate Knox's commitment to Chalmers through our monthly Give to Guelph Sundays. Our Logos and Sunday school became actively involved to decorate colourful bins for us all to use. Since that time, many people have contributed every month to support and bring much needed food to the vulnerable in our community. We are excited to share that as of the end of our October Give to Guelph day, Knox had donated **919.7lbs** of food in 2023! That is amazing!! Chalmers shares that "*We are so grateful for your ongoing support. Your generosity directly helps Chalmers to continue our mission of creating a more equitable, food secure community.*" As of the writing this note, we still are waiting to hear our November total and we have our December Give to Guelph Sunday still left December 17th. How many more pounds can we add to that total everyone?? Our items of focus for December are canned vegetables and peanut butter. Skim milk and toilet paper are also always in need. We will share our items of focus for the new year as they are shared with us.

Moments from Mission & Outreach - continued

Thank YOU:

As we approach the end of the calendar year, the Mission and Outreach committee sincerely wants to thank each of you for *all* of your support of our initiatives over the year, including our fall initiatives. We could not have affected the change that we are making with out all of you! The Run for the Cure together with St. Andrew's raised \$5121.50!

The Knox congregation and our Logos youth truly rocked our socks off in "Socktober" with 319 pairs of socks donated for the vulnerable in the downtown area this winter! Kate of Our Downtown Guelph Friends asked us to share their gratitude to all involved; they are so grateful to have an abundance of socks for the upcoming cold months to distribute to support others. Thank you, Knox family! We look forward to continuing to work with you as work to support our local, national and global populations through our mission and outreach work, sharing God's love, grace and hope with others. Merry Christmas to you and your families!

Knox Lunch Bunch



Come and join in the fun when **the Knox Lunch Bunch meets at 11:45 am at Montana's 201 Stone Road West, Guelph on Tuesday December 19th, 2023**. Our first three bookings for 2024 have been made. All these reservations have also been made for 11:45 am. On **January 16th, 2024**, we will gather at Stacked Pancake and Breakfast House, 20 Woodlawn Road East, Guelph. On **February 20th**, we will meet at East Side Mario's, 370 Stone Road W., Guelph and we have a reservation for the Bread Bar, 105 Gordon St, Guelph for Tuesday **March 19th**. Contact Deb through lunchbunch@knoxguelph.ca to make a reservation to join us by the Friday before each outing and include your name, phone number as well as your email address. **Numbers need to be confirmed in advance with the restaurant the weekend before our booking.** Reservations are necessary to ensure that there is room for everyone. Friends welcome.

Knox Prayer Chain

Knox takes confidential prayer requests to comfort and lift up members of the Knox family, their relatives, and friends in times of concern or crisis. Requests are forwarded to our dedicated Prayer Chain members. The Prayer Chain is coordinated by Deb Nash-Chambers through the following link: prayerchain@knoxguelph.ca



Fall Festival

Thanks to the Knox congregation for all the help provided to make our Fall Festival a great success. With the same number of table rentals as in 2022, our profits were just over \$650.00 higher than last year. Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped with set-up, take-down, working shifts the day of the event and especially to everyone who donated crafts, baking, preserves and prizes for our raffle table. The addition of chili to our kitchen menu was also well received. Special thanks to Heather of DENMAR Displays & Exhibits Corp. for designing and donating the banner and posters. To date we have donated \$1500.00 to the joint St. Andrew's, 2 Rivers, Knox Refugee fund. Other funds will be dispersed as agreed.

Ladies Day Away

Fourteen ladies, young and old, enjoyed a day of fellowship, crafts, laughter and of course food. Thanks to Shannon for teaching us the art of making ribbon wreaths. The result was a variety of beautiful wreaths, with some very creative people adding battery operated lights as a finishing touch. If you have ideas for future get togethers AND PERHAPS WOULD LOVE TO SHARE YOUR TALENTS WITH all at a get together please let us know! We are always searching for new ideas and leaders!

Blessings
Karen & Lindsay



Decorating the Church

Wow! Many hands do make light work! This year we decorated in record time. We are grateful to all volunteers who stayed to help! Dave, Lisa, Meagan, Carrie, Phil, Maddy, Mason, Kenzie, Brian, Alison, Cameron, Brian, Kyla, Eva, Forrest, Heather, Tom, Werner, Deb, Midge, George, Michelle, Alex, Leah, Mel! If I missed anybody in the hustle, please accept my apologies and sincerest gratitude! The Church decorated for Christmas has always been my favourite and I greatly appreciate all of you!

Shannon



Just a simple story you will love.

A message sent to my email.

Two Choices,

What would you do? - you make the choice. Don't look for a punchline, there isn't one. Read it anyway. My question is: Would you have made the same choice?

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question:

'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?'

The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.'

Then he told the following story:

Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?' I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning. '

Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.

However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact. The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The game would now be over. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game.

Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all teammates.

Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first!'

Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled.

Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!'

Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base. By time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball. The smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team.

He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the Way Shay'

Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third!'

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!'

Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team.

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'.

Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!

A wise man once said every society is judged by how it treats its least fortunate amongst them.

May your day be a Shay Day.

*In Memoriam****Church Register of Clergy Records Received****Lois Andrews**Died October 5, 2023**94 Years**Hugh Vasey -**Died November 20, 2023**89 Years****A Good Time Was Had by All***

Just under 60 children teens and adults enjoyed a wonderful catered dinner followed by LOGOS activities for our last night together.

Nancy and I would like to thank all of the people who supported LOGOS, not only this year but for the past 17 years. Thank you also for the amazing book and flowers presented to the two of us! A huge thank you to this years' LOGOS board, Kyla Poitier, Katie Goldsmith and Mel McGurrian for their amazing help and inspiration. Blessings to all

Karen

Peace,*Joy and
Love*