



LENT 2022

CHURCH @ HOME

staying connected with God,
each other, and ourselves

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HUMOUR

hi friends,

I hope this finds you doing well, staying safe, holding onto hope, and knowing that you are loved and enough.

Can you believe it's almost been two full years since we shifted most of our ministry and mission online? I don't know if I can or not, to be honest. The last two years have both been a blur and a slog; both a time of excitement and a time of despair and pain (which is okay; we're allowed—supposed to even—feel different things at the same time); and a time of learning to be the church and connect with God in new ways.

What I do know is that I am so proud of how we have kept being the church throughout it. Cause the thing is, church isn't that thing we do Sunday mornings. Church is whenever people come together to listen to and move with the Spirit. And we have done that all throughout the pandemic, both online and in person.

red deer lake
united church

... continued

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We should be proud of that. Really proud. There's energy in that and we need all the energy we can get because we don't plan on stopping being the church anytime soon.

As I write this, the sun is coming up, Walter is sleeping by the window, and I am thinking about Lent. Lent is that time of reflection, realignment, and resetting; of leaving things that no longer serve us behind; of repenting from habits and mentalities that rob us of life; and of, as one writer of the Bible would say, "practicing death" because we know resurrection happens. If you ask me, we need some Lent these days because there's a lot going on in us and around us: despair, loneliness, fear, disappointment, frustration, loss, lament, self-soothing tendencies, division, and fear (it's worth naming twice). And while all of that is very real and legit, Lent invites us to ask some life-giving questions: 'What can I do to move through those things?' 'How do I not let them define my story and life?' 'What am I allowing to drive and motivate me?' 'What can I do to help rise up into something new?' 'How can I live out and better embody my faith?'

If Lent is anything, it's a season of hope. It's about a hope that proclaims the world doesn't need to be like this and that we don't have to live like this. It's a reminder that that choice is up to us and that God is here to help us transform ourselves and our world.

This year's Lenten devotional *Full to the Brim* will help us make that choice to continue to grow and learn and become, making the most of this season. I'm excited for it because it's full of voices we never get to hear and full of ways of practicing our faith that we don't do enough. My prayer is that this can be a form of church for you and that it'll feed your spirit and help you make Lent a time of reflection and renewal. As you go through it, know that I'm here to help you rumble with anything that may come up along the way. Just give the church a call!

So my friends, as we head into Lent together, may God be with you.

grace and peace,
n.



Lenten Blessings!

It's hard to believe we are just about to enter into our Lenten journey, isn't it! I hope you are all staying safe and well, keeping cosy in some of the cold snaps we have had so far this winter . . . and taking comfort in knowing that Mother Nature will soon usher in the season of Spring and new growth!

As I look back and reflect on where we find ourselves in this time of prolonged change, we can anticipate a season of freshness and renewal in our own spirits and souls after the uncertainty of another pandemic winter. This is a time to embrace the invitation of Lent, to enter into new ways of being on many levels, to become inspired to be better and do better in all ways, and to have faith and trust that God is alongside and has a hand in it all.

As usual, our deep gratitude goes to each of the many contributors towards this magazine and the care packages. Also to Jen Hung for the treats she has provided to celebrate Chinese New Year, the Year of the Lion, as well as sharing her love with you on Valentine's Day.

I know some of you have lost loved ones this winter or are facing ongoing transitions and challenges. We, your church family, will continue to hold you in our hearts and prayers.

May you each be deeply blessed on your Lenten journey,

Vi





LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, these meditations were written by Rev. Nick Coates

We begin Lent with Ash Wednesday, a day where we recognize our mortality by putting ashes on our foreheads and saying “dust to dust, ashes to ashes.” Seems a bit dark, doesn’t it? But here’s why we begin here: it reminds us we all will die and therefore asks us the question Mary Oliver asked, “What will you do with your one wild and precious life?”

As we begin our Lenten journey, we begin with this: we are but dust but can use this life for beautiful and wonderful things. Will you do the work of living fully or will you die before you even live?

~

One of the most liberating and powerful truths we can ever embrace is that we are made of dust and spirit. That while we are skin and bones and muscles and ligaments, we are also the breath of God within us. That while we are human, we are also divine. Sit with that today. Recognize it with each breath. There’s something within that truth we need to let go to work: while we will experience limitations, pain, and struggle, we can also experience so. much. more. Which side of your being will you lean into?

I sometimes forget
that I was created for Joy.
My mind is too busy.
My Heart is too heavy
for me to remember
that I have been
called to dance
the Sacred dance of life.
I was created to smile
To Love
To be lifted up
And to lift others up.
O' Sacred One
Untangle my feet
from all that ensnares.
Free my soul.
That we might
Dance
and that our dancing
might be contagious.

~ Hafiz





If Lent is about anything, it's about embracing the paradox that to get lost is to get found and to boldly step into a period of reflection, searching, and wandering in order to find answers to those spiritual questions of 'Who am I?' 'Who am I becoming?' and 'Where am I going?'

Lent is this time of putting down and picking up, of getting lost and found, of reorienting and realignment, and of dying and rising, all of it rooted in grace and bent towards new life.

And if you think about it, it's actually quite beautiful and liberating that we have a faith that encourages this.

It reminds us that this faith and spirituality of ours isn't about being perfect or believing in the right things, but rather about the never-ending and grace-filled journey to becoming more and more human and alive in the world, more and more like the kind of people Jesus calls us to be:

people connected with God, each other, and with ourselves,
people caught up in Extravagant and Indiscriminate Love.



The work of transformation needs four things to happen: It needs patience because it will take awhile. It needs vulnerability because it requires the help of people who know more than you. It needs courage because it is scary and hard. And it requires celebration because in the work of transformation and growth, every bit of movement, even the smallest tiny bit, must be met with joy.

~

Sometimes—usually all the time—one of the things we have to reckon with in order to grow is forgiveness. Maybe for you it's forgiveness of yourself. Or maybe for you it's forgiving someone else. Whatever it is, as legit and powerful as it may be, you can't move forward and still hold on to that. How do you need to practice forgiveness this Lent?



"What Is Success" by Ralph Waldo Emerson

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty;

To find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;

This is to have succeeded.

Do you need to redefine your goal and standard this Lent?



Not too long ago there was a woman. She was a woman who, depending on who was looking at her, could be either 25 or 55. Sometimes maybe even 75.

It wasn't only that no one knew, and not really because she looked all three ages at once, but because she was simply moving so fast that nobody could get a good look at her or the chance to get to know her. She was always doing something, thinking something, or saying something. She was very, very busy; and that's putting it lightly.

One day she walked past a mirror and noticed that she was starting to look a bit thinner than usual. So in between work, parenting, doing yoga, and volunteering at the local community centre, she slipped in a few extra protein bars. But the next day she noticed she was even thinner than before! So, once again, in between paying bills, visiting a friend in the hospital, and cooking dinner for her family she slipped in two extra meals and even went to the gym for an extra weight lifting class.

You wouldn't think it but the next day the woman was even thinner. It got to the point where she'd be talking to someone and turn to the side and she'd practically disappear. She was that thin!

No matter how much she ate or what she did to stop it she got thinner and thinner and thinner until one day, in between laundry, doing her taxes and catching up on her emails, she felt this strange feeling within her, almost as if it was coming from the deepest part of her body, and POOF! she vanished completely.



If you are ever curious about who you are, pay attention to where your energy is going.

~

Whenever you do something hard, don't forget to breathe. This is one of those things that is profoundly simple for the profound impact it makes. Air is not only needed for our body and brain to actually function, but it's also how we spiritually function too. In our tradition *breath* is associated with God—with that Divine Spirit who isn't only *with us*, but who *strengthens, empowers, and inspires us*.

Remembering to breathe is one of the most basic but important spiritual practices you can do, especially when you head into something difficult and hard. As we head into Lent, we invite you to start with a breath. As you practice this, remember what you are breathing in.

Inhale ... 1 ... 2 ... 3

Hold ... 1 ... 2 ... 3

Exhale ... 1 ... 2 ... 3



FOR A NEW BEGINNING

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

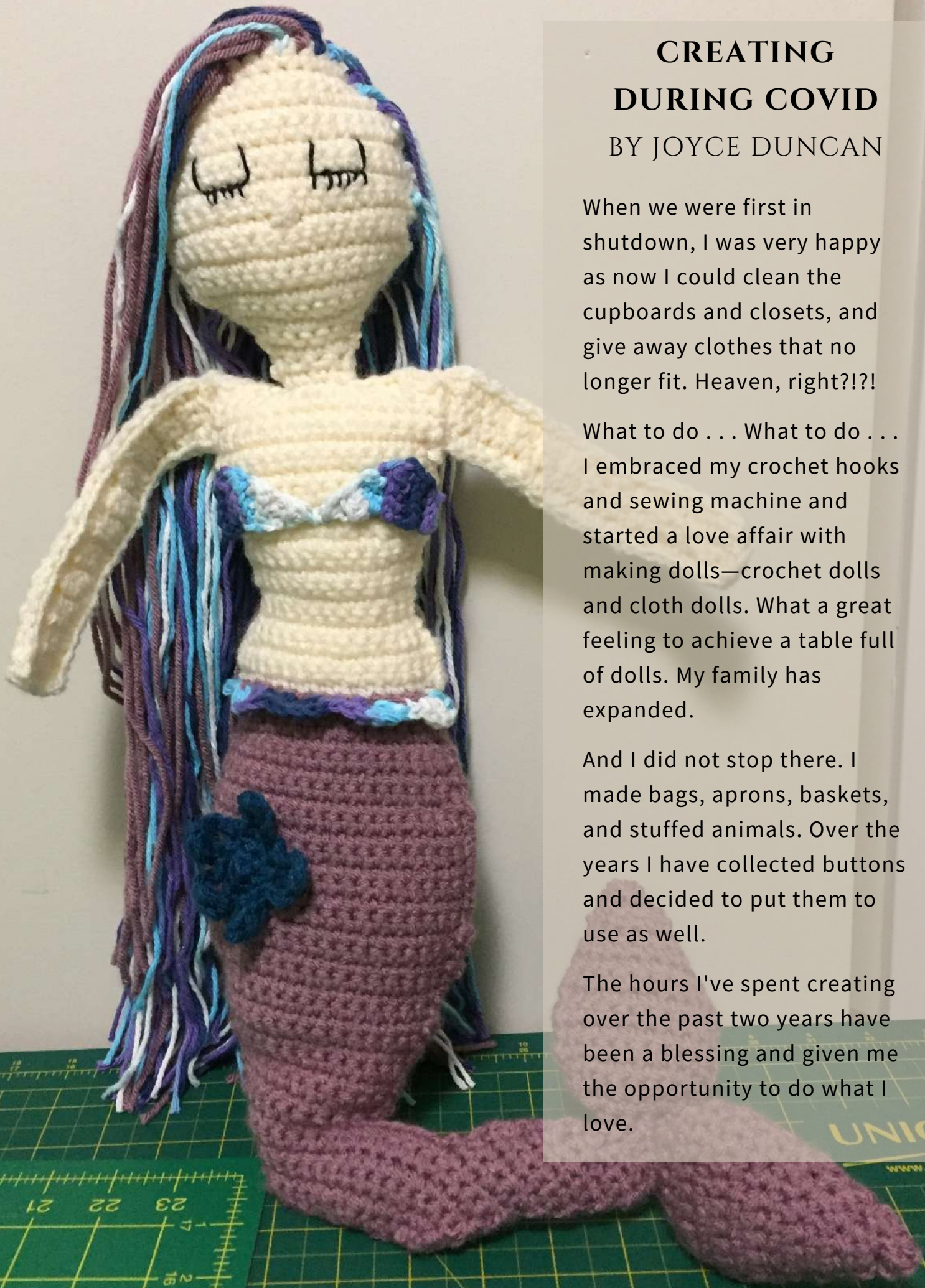
It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

- John O'Donohue



CREATING DURING COVID

BY JOYCE DUNCAN

When we were first in shutdown, I was very happy as now I could clean the cupboards and closets, and give away clothes that no longer fit. Heaven, right?!?!

What to do . . . What to do . . . I embraced my crochet hooks and sewing machine and started a love affair with making dolls—crochet dolls and cloth dolls. What a great feeling to achieve a table full of dolls. My family has expanded.

And I did not stop there. I made bags, aprons, baskets, and stuffed animals. Over the years I have collected buttons and decided to put them to use as well.

The hours I've spent creating over the past two years have been a blessing and given me the opportunity to do what I love.



TRY NOT TO TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY

*"The actions of others says everything about them,
and how you react and respond is what says everything about you."*

- Michelle Maros

One of the biggest lessons that life seems to present to us, quite often, is the power of not taking things personally. As much as we put in the effort to heal and to shift perspectives, sometimes old habits and difficult thought patterns creep back in, especially during challenging times. It's sometimes difficult to remember not to take the words, actions, and energy of other people personally. For whatever reason, it's our nature to immediately internalize it and make it our own, which can leave us feeling shaken, unclear, and disappointed.

We have all experienced great difficulty over these past couple of years . . . of life feeling upside down and of tensions running high, so it's easy to internalize the state of the world. It feels timely to remind us all that nothing that anyone else says or does is a reflection of who you are and your ability to be loved and respected. The actions of others says everything about them, and how you react and respond is what says everything about you.

This is definitely an easier-said-than-done sort of deal, but below are some steps you can take to start to find some relief in your relationships with others and with yourself.

1. Cultivate awareness. Awareness is always the most important step towards any sort of growth or change; however, in this practice it's paramount. Without awareness, the mind will always go into the habitual practice of taking the actions of others personally. It's just how it will work. However, in recognizing that we would like to change this behavior, and reminding ourselves regularly of this intention, we can start to make that positive shift, and ultimately begin to break the habit.

2. Remember that we are all living life through our own unique filter. This one is a big one! So often we assume that other people are seeing situations or experiences exactly as we each do, which, of course, is never the case. We are all unique with different paths, beliefs, views, and experiences. It's likely that we will never see a situation or circumstance 100% the same as someone else, so just remember this when starting to take someone else's opinions, actions, or views personally. Others have their own perception of what's happening and so do you.

3. Strengthen your discernment muscle. It is so beneficial to our own mental health and to our relationships to be able to discern what situations require action and attention and which ones simply do not. I'd like to think of this step as a "pick your battles" suggestion, because as human beings, we could take everything personally and go to battle about every single one of those things. And we would be fighting about it all until the end of time. This is a step in learning about yourself, what matters to you, and what you wish to go to bat for. So start to take notice of what things you can let go, and what things you need to stand up for.

4. Speak your truth when necessary. From our own discernment, we can determine if a situation requires further action. Grounded in your own sense of self and confidence, you can speak up and speak out if a circumstance truly requires a conversation. Know that just because you're not taking something personally, you can still speak up if it doesn't feel aligned or appropriate for you.

5. Forgive, release, move forward. Usually when we've taken something too much to heart we hold a feeling of resentment or anger towards the other person. For example, if a friend cancels dinner plans abruptly, we may immediately take it personally, thinking maybe we did something wrong for her/him to cancel. I might think, "Wow! That's rude for her to cancel last minute." In reality, maybe she was just having a really bad day and needed some space. The point here is that the mind immediately begins writing stories about what's happening and we really have absolutely no idea. It's important to recognize this, so that you can forgive and release those attachments to a situation that never had anything to do with you in the first place.

I hope these simple, powerful, and not always easy steps are helpful for you in your journey to avoid taking the actions of others personally!

- Michelle Maros (adapted by Vi Sharpe)

Our thanks to Jackie Walters for this submission.

WALKING WITH GRIEF

GIFTS OF GRACE

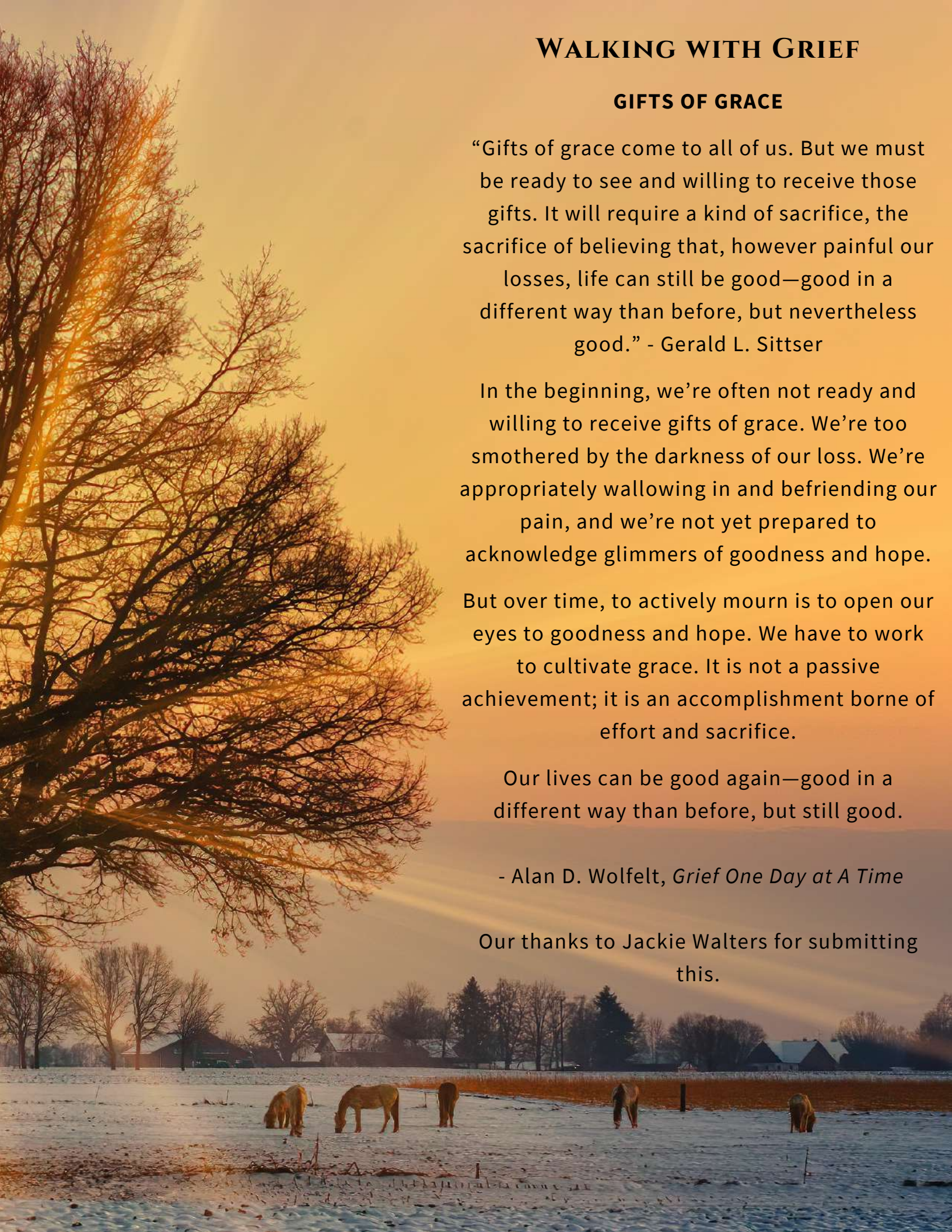
“Gifts of grace come to all of us. But we must be ready to see and willing to receive those gifts. It will require a kind of sacrifice, the sacrifice of believing that, however painful our losses, life can still be good—good in a different way than before, but nevertheless good.” - Gerald L. Sittser

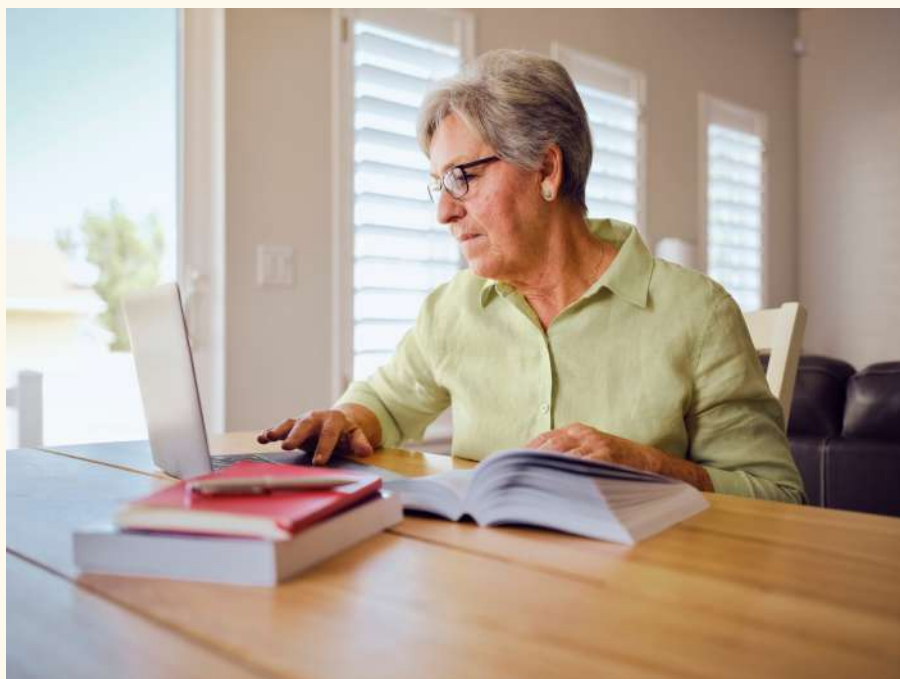
In the beginning, we're often not ready and willing to receive gifts of grace. We're too smothered by the darkness of our loss. We're appropriately wallowing in and befriending our pain, and we're not yet prepared to acknowledge glimmers of goodness and hope. But over time, to actively mourn is to open our eyes to goodness and hope. We have to work to cultivate grace. It is not a passive achievement; it is an accomplishment borne of effort and sacrifice.

Our lives can be good again—good in a different way than before, but still good.

- Alan D. Wolfelt, *Grief One Day at A Time*

Our thanks to Jackie Walters for submitting this.





RESOURCES FOR SENIORS

TELUS now offers its 'Internet for Good' program to seniors in Alberta and B.C.

The program, first launched in 2016, provides low-income families and people with disabilities access to the internet at a reduced rate.

The seniors program gives those receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement two options for unlimited data: Internet 25 with speeds up to 25Mbps for \$10 a month or Internet 50 with speeds up to 50Mbps for \$20 a month.

The program focuses on helping seniors access resources, staying connected with loved ones, and other aspects that can assist with their mental health, which has become increasingly difficult throughout the pandemic. Data from Statistics Canada shows 33 percent of seniors reported a decline in their mental health since the pandemic began.

Those eligible can apply for the program on **[telus.com/InternetForGoodSeniors](https://www.telus.com/InternetForGoodSeniors)**. A copy of your Old Age Security must be provided to confirm eligibility. Qualifying customers already with TELUS can also partake in the program.

“Our country’s seniors have contributed significantly to the fabric of this nation, having built and supported the infrastructure, economy and social services that we enjoy today,” president and CEO, Darren Entwistle, said in a statement.

Customers partaking in this program can also access to the LivingWell Companion Home for \$5 a month. This service offers 24/7 support to seniors at the push of a button.



SAD NEWS: BEATRICE MARCHAND
1933 – 2021

Bea Marchand passed away peacefully on December 26, 2021, at the age of 88 years. She is survived by her wonderful husband of 68 years, Guy, son Jim (Melissa), daughter Debbie (Vic), grandchildren Sara (Jean), Daniel (Elizabeth), Katie (Sam), and Sam and Alexis and two great grandchildren, Audrey & Zav. Bea was predeceased by her oldest son Bobby and all of her siblings.

Bea and Guy traveled a lot and moved over 30 times together, in large part due to Guy's military career. Bea also had a great career in nursing having earned her registered nursing degree in 1970.

Bea was very loved by her husband, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and everyone that knew her.

She loved to sew, crochet, knit and did many of these to give to others. She was a large part of a prayer shawl ministry, was known as the pie lady, and one year alone sewed and donated over 120 little girls' dresses to an organization in Mexico.

Bea and Guy were avid golfers and spent a lot of time on the courses, especially in Highlands Ridge Florida where they spent six months every year for almost 30 years. They had wonderful friends in Canada, the States and many other parts of the world. Bea and Guy also spent a lot of their summers water-skiing, windsurfing, and golfing at their beloved Lake Waterloo in Quebec.

Bea truly was an amazing wife, mom, grandma and great grandma who will be missed greatly! We ask for prayer for Bea's family and her husband Guy. Messages of remembrance may be left for the family at www.southcalgaryfuneralcentre.ca



SAD NEWS: BERYL MAE MAGUIRE
NOVEMBER 23, 1950 – FLIN FLON, MANITOBA
DECEMBER 30, 2021 – CALGARY, ALBERTA

Beryl Mae Maguire of Calgary passed away on Thursday, December 30, 2021, at the age of 71 years, due to complications from open-heart surgery.

Beryl was born in Flin Flon, Manitoba to Gertrude and Harvey Berry on November 23, 1950. She graduated high school in Flin Flon at the age of 16 (because she skipped an elementary school grade). Beryl then attended the University of Manitoba where she received a physiotherapy diploma at the age of 19 and began working as a physiotherapist. Beryl married Larry Maguire in 1971 at which time she began co-managing their farm near Elgin, Manitoba. She continued working as a community physiotherapist until 1976. Beryl and Larry's children, Tim and Laura, were born in 1975 and 1978 respectively.

Beryl was active in the surrounding communities including being a member of the Souris Valley School Board where she became the first female chair of the school board. She successfully fought Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 1987. In 1991, after raising her children into their teenage years, Beryl returned to work as a physiotherapist. Beryl continued working and volunteering after she and Larry retired from the farm and moved to Virden in 2003. She was an especially active volunteer for cancer causes, including being a volunteer for several years for both Relay for Life and Cancer Care in Winnipeg, which included driving people for cancer treatments.

In 2015 Beryl moved to Calgary to be close to her children and family. In addition to volunteering, Beryl was always an avid gardener and active in sports such as curling and

golf. In preparation to move to Calgary, Beryl purchased a condo unit in the Sanderson Ridge complex in Southwest Calgary. Here, she was able to continue her busy lifestyle and became a valued member of the fantastic community at Sanderson Ridge, making many new friends while adding to her curling, golf and gardening repertoire with regular aquatics, billiards, handbells, pickleball and generally anything she could sign up for. There are rumors that she favored a particular flower bed and adopted it as her own for special treatment. Beryl became a part of the Red Deer Lake United Church near Calgary. She faithfully attended the activities of her grandchildren and great nieces. She toured Newfoundland and more recently, New Zealand. In retirement, she lived life to the fullest.

Beryl was often described as a “lifelong learner”; participating in organized group discussions with experts in areas of interest to her, signing up for financial courses, and she would often have little stacks of printouts delving into the technicalities of medical conditions afflicting her loved ones. She loved knowledge. All who knew Beryl were aware that she wore her moral compass on her sleeve; she was a passionate advocate for many social causes such as gender equality, the rights of people with disabilities, Indigenous rights, and the right for people to die with dignity on their own terms. She will be greatly missed by family and the many lives that she touched. Beryl is survived by her son Tim Maguire (Barbie); grandchildren, Colton, Ashton, Emily, and Shamus; daughter Laura Harrington (Devin); grandchildren, Oscar, Henry, and Ivy. She is also survived by her former spouse Larry Maguire; sisters, Noreen Maguire (David), and Bonnie Berry (Randy); as well as nieces and nephews, Wade Bo-Maguire (Dinh), Shane Maguire (Gayle), Paul Marchinko (Lily), and Elan Marchinko (Jeff); and great-nieces and great-nephews.

A memorial Service will be held at Red Deer Lake United Church in spring or summer of 2022 at a date and time to be determined.

Condolences, memories, and photos may be shared and viewed at www.McInnisandHolloway.com. If friends so desire, memorial tributes may be made directly to two of Beryl's favorite charities, the Terry Fox Foundation, 16A, 6120 – 2nd Street S.E., Calgary, AB T2H 2L8 Telephone: (403) 212-1336, terryfox.org/donate or to the Rick Hansen Foundation, <https://www.rickhansen.com/get-involved/donate>.

FOOTHILLS EXCURSION FIVE: AN OLD YEAR ADVENTURE

BY KATHERINE MATIKO

The year is waning and these post-solstice mornings are cold. My car tells me it is minus 36 degrees Celsius as I venture out to the Millarville General Store before sunrise.

It seems counter-intuitive to leave a warm bed—and few others are foolhardy enough to be driving in the Foothills this morning—but the skies are clear, the air is pure, and I must seek out the light.

A few kilometres north of the Millarville turnoff, I suddenly know why I got up early this morning. Before even peeking over the horizon, the sun was throwing blankets of brilliance onto the eastern face of the Rocky Mountains.



I believe there is nothing more beautiful than snow on trees, so perhaps it's fitting that I live in a cold climate. Are palm trees on the beach more spectacular? I hardly think so.



After grabbing a coffee at the store, I travel north on Highway 22 and then east on Township Road 214 toward the Leighton Art Centre. The farmsteads are just beginning to wake up as the sun imperceptibly warms the landscape.



Animals have their own ways of coping with the cold. Finding a sunny spot—even at minus 36 degrees—seems to help.



I watch carefully for the turnoff to the Leighton Art Centre—a slippery but scenic roadway revealing many panoramic views. One can only imagine AC and Barbara Leighton sitting by the fireplace in their home back the 1950s, enjoying views such as these.





In fact, the views from AC and Barbara's property are even more spectacular, but the Leighton Art Centre, a museum and art gallery located in the couple's historic home, is closed at this hour. Visit this Millarville-area attraction in any season and you will understand what draws artists to the Alberta foothills.



Snow adds a sculptural beauty to almost anything. I stop to capture images of several more works of winter art as I head back to the store.



One more shot of the mountains and I rush my frozen fingers and toes back to Millarville General Store, where the welcome is always warm.



Until next time,
Katherine

*read all Katherine's Foothills Excursions at
<https://www.millarvillegeneralstore.com/blog-1>*

YOUR SMILE FOR THE DAY



- I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.
 - I'm getting tired of being part of a 'global' major historical event.
 - My goal for 2021 was to lose 10 pounds. I only have 14 to go.
 - Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk nine feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.
 - I may not be that funny, or athletic, or good looking, or smart or talented. Hmm . . . I forgot where I was going with this.
- A thief broke into my house last night. He started searching for money, so I got up and searched with him.
 - Just remember, once you're over the hill, you begin to pick up speed.
 - Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.
 - It's weird being the same age as old people.
 - It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.
 - You don't realize how old you are until you sit on the floor and then try to get back up.
 - We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads.

Do you have a story to share? A memory? A poem? A photograph?

We would love to publish it in the next issue of this magazine.

Please send your submission to info@reddeerlakeuc.com or call us at (403) 256-3181.

The next submission deadline is March 14, 2022.

This will be our Easter issue.

WE ARE RED DEER LAKE UNITED CHURCH




We are an inclusive and affirming community of faith – people of all ages, perspectives, and stories, who gather to connect with God, each other, and ourselves, and find in Jesus a new way of being human and alive in the world.


**you're welcome, wanted,
and accepted. join us on
the journey.**

Red Deer Lake United Church
96187 Spruce Meadows Green SW
Foothills, AB T1S 2R9

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 red deer lake united church

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