

## EVER WONDER WHY?

Sometimes I wonder why. Why give so much time and energy for the church? Why work so hard to share talents to enrich the church? Why bother spending money to support the church when there are so many other appealing places to do so? Why am I so invested in Kincardine United Church?



On the first Sunday of this month – world-wide communion Sunday – our custodian, Dave Walker, during his rounds making sure the church building was properly ready for worship, paused to check in if there was anything else that needed attention. Not long after, David Hamilton came into the church office to make his morning cup of coffee as we chatted about those niggly details that need to be discussed for worship to unfold well, particularly since the choir anthem was inserted into the middle of the communion liturgy because it sang about the powerful place of communion within our lives. Sarah MacKenzie had the bulletins and announcements ready and labelled for me to take upstairs along with the flash drive for the Tech Crew. We, as part of the staff team, showed our dedication to the mission and the ministry of Kincardine United Church.

As I passed through the kitchen, I was warmly greeted warmly by Liz Dillman as she bustled about preparing coffee to be served at the back of the worship space before



worship. I stopped to check in with the Nursery volunteer and the Sunday School teacher to let them know that a greeter would be sent downstairs to invite the children upstairs for communion so they would be included without taking too much time away from the lesson plan. I met with the volunteer servers for communion, talking through the routine and making sure that everyone who wanted to partake in communion was included. I slipped into the Choir Room to share a prayer with the choir, giggling at some of the bad (good!) puns being shared by some. After worship, I apologized to the Tech Crew when I realised that I forgotten to warn them that

the slide show had two slides with the lyrics of the choir anthem which needed to be displayed. They graciously forgave me, sharing a few stories of when things went south on other Sundays. So much time and talent came together to ensure that worship flowed – gifts of self and of time that helped us all to praise God.

The handshakes at the end of worship were matched in warmth and in welcome by the direct, friendly gaze of each person. Many people joined in groups in the Fellowship Hall to share conversation at table, a wonderful practice mirroring the communion shared in worship. Blessed by an abundance of refreshments prepared by that month's house group, conversation flowed with laughter, with caring and with grace. Companionship was shared as another gift of time and of space to one another.



In this small snapshot of the life of Kincardine United Church, I was blessed. I am blessed not because I am the minister, but because of the cycle of blessings which were shared in this community of faith that morning – and continue to be shared freely among us all.

I am blessed by relationships fostered within this congregation and into the community. Such relationships provide a sense of belonging for those of us long part of the church and for those of us who yearn for something more but first need to feel they belong.<sup>1</sup>

I am blessed by the truth we strive to share in our ministry when we wrestle with the stories of faith – in worship, in study, in mission and in debate – which eschews closed, restrictive ways of being, opening us to a more holistic, affirming, non-judgemental embrace of ambiguity. When we listen to diverse experiences and perspectives within the community “we strengthen our relationships with the diverse populations and build bridges across the different groups and individuals in the community.”<sup>2</sup>



I am blessed by wellness which creates “opportunities for people to rest, play, celebrate, give thanks and encounter each other across class, workplace roles, societal roles, family roles, political differences”<sup>3</sup> (Loaves and Fishes potluck, anyone, or the Dory Lunch, or Sundaes on Sunday?).

<sup>1</sup> Law, Eric H. F. “Holy Currencies: 6 Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries.” (Chalice Press: St. Louis; 2013). p. 31. “Therefore, connecting with this generation by building relationships first is the key to reaching the un-churched. Through these relationships, we discover their needs and concerns.”

<sup>2</sup> Law. “Holy Currencies.” p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Law. “Holy Currencies.” p. 79.

I am blessed by gracious leadership in every aspect of this congregation's life and mission. Talented people who utilize their gifts for the greater good, person to person, comprising the body of Christ alive and evolving. "Gracious leaders do not ask who has the power, but instead empower the community to ask, 'Whom should we empower to do what is the right thing for us?'"<sup>4</sup>

I am blessed by time and place. So many in this congregation not only give of their time and talent to the church, but to the wider community. Indeed, the wider community is generously invited to make use of our place – and that helps to build relationships beyond our church walls.<sup>5</sup>

I am blessed by the monetary support for Kincardine United Church. After all, without that I would not have a job nor would I receive a pay cheque.... However, this is not just a "cash exchange." "People do not give money for us to make our buildings bigger and prettier; they want to know what ministries of relationship and wellness will be carried out in those places."<sup>6</sup> Kincardine United Church is a thriving and lively congregation which makes a difference because of that generosity.



I am, indeed, blessed by this congregation. All the attributes named above need to continue to circulate, to flow into the empty spaces and to bring meaning and breadth to our collective ministry. By living into those blessings, our family of faith

becomes ever more a blessing to the world, to the community and to each of us. This is not a one and done challenge. It is a continuing, evolving reality for our mission to be healthy and sustainable. When you ponder in what ways you will contribute to Kincardine United Church, consider what brings you life and what makes best use of your time, your talents and your treasure. Let us be disciples in our self-giving as we begin our annual stewardship programme this Sunday.

How is God calling you to share from your bounty of time, of talent and of treasure? How is God calling you to give of your currencies of gracious leadership, of truth, of wellness, of relationship, of money and of time and space? May your intimate prayer with God reveal that call and may you follow that call faithfully.

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<sup>4</sup> Law. "Holy Currencies." p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Law. "Holy Currencies." p. 119. "How can we be good stewards of the places to which we have access? We can begin by maximizing the use of church spaces to develop our currencies of relationship."

<sup>6</sup> Law. "Holy Currencies." p. 137.