



# Happy New Year!

by Rev. Michelle Robinson

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*“...take a fresh breath...let God renew your attitude and spirit.  
Then you are ready to put on your new self, modeled after the very likeness of God:  
truthful, righteous, and holy.”  
Ephesians 4:23-24, The VOICE translation.*

Resolution comes from the Latin, *resolutio*, for loosen, release. With the arrival of a new year, we do release what has been as we look ahead to what is possible... putting off the old, and putting up the new.

There is something invitational about the new calendar. The blank pages invite our response: *what moments will fill these pages; what choices will I make, what priorities will I set? How will I fill my days and lead my life?*

And while magazine covers, blogs and TV shows have no shortage of advice, I suggest that part of the new start this year as Christians is to consider the blessings that are present in life, not least of which is God’s love for you. Make part of your new years’ resolution a firm decision to recognize these gifts and to rejoice, not as an admission that you can’t or won’t or don’t need to change, but rather as an admission of the wonder and love that is in your life this day, right now. If you cannot see the blessings already present in your life, you risk missing them when they come your way this new year. If you can see them in your life, they will lead you in the right direction....toward thankfulness, joy, and love.

When the author of Ephesians says to “clothe yourselves with the new self,” (Eph. 4:24) it is not advice to become someone we are not, but rather to live in the light of who (and whose) we are and to become it most fully. It is baptismal language, an invitation to be what in our baptism we acknowledged and have been pronounced to be: you are God’s beloved children. Wear *those* clothes in the world.

As you put up the new calendar consider all the potential and possibility that the days hold out for you, beginning with today. You are loved. You are a beloved child of God. May God be your new year, new start, new clothes, and your companion on the way, throughout 2019 and always.

**Bridge to a New Home** welcomed our third family!

November 14th, 2018 husband Modar, wife Rasha and their 8 year old daughter Fareenza were greeted at the airport and officially became a part of our community.

Modar's family is originally from Syria but escaped to Turkey because of the atrocities occurring in their homeland. Since their arrival, they have established themselves in an apartment in Oshawa. Fareenza was thrilled to attend school for the very first time, and Modar and Rasha have both started ESL (English as a Second Language) classes to improve their English skills.



Arrival in Canada has also given Fareenza access to Sick Children's Hospital for health issues she has had since birth.

***We welcome and need additional volunteers - particularly in the transportation area and assisting with school related needs. With regard to transportation, this applies to schools, medical, employment assistance and recreational as examples. On the school needs, our Committee is looking for a young person who would be interested in tutoring Fareenza for an hour or two each week with her homework. Specific to this need, Kaireen Adamson ([Kaireen34@gmail.com](mailto:Kaireen34@gmail.com)) can be contacted.***

All our volunteers have found time spent with our new families to be a very rewarding experience. The small things we each do to help our new families are ever so meaningful for successful integration of everyone we support. If you can lend a hand, please contact:

Joanne MacPherson  
Maureen Dingman  
Kaireen Adamson  
Larry Morrow



Arrival Day



First Day of School



On Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>  
there was a  
**Longest Night Service**  
offered by our Ministerial and Wellness teams.

Because not everyone finds the  
Christmas season to be a joyful time,  
this service was provided for those  
who needed a quiet place,  
away from the festivities that abound  
at this time of year.

This service provided a time for reflection and support  
through readings, prayer and music.

Loved ones were honoured  
by lighting candles of remembrance .

*Christ's light shines brightest in the darkness.*



### ***Bound for Bethlehem***

On December 24th,  
we gathered for three wonderful,  
talent-filled, multi-generational  
Christmas Pageants,  
as we prepared ourselves  
for the birth of the Christ child.

Many thanks are extended  
to all those who were involved  
in the telling of this amazing story,  
(both human and animal).

At 10:00pm on Christmas Eve,  
in a beautiful, candlelit Sanctuary,  
magically transformed  
by our amazing Sanctuary committee,  
we heard again the familiar story of  
Jesus' birth,  
of Mary and Joseph,  
of the Shepherds and Angels,  
of the Wise Men and their gifts...  
...and together we celebrated  
Holy Communion.



## **Christmas Hampers**

THANK YOU for all of the contributions towards the 2018 Christmas Hampers!

We helped to make Christmas happen for 75 families in our community or 274 individuals, which includes 143 children.

Also a huge THANKS to all the volunteers and drivers.

A special thank you...

...to the Outreach group who pulled this all together:

Ashley, Joanne, Katherine, Cathy and Margaret.

...to Beth, our awesome Office Administrator, for all her hard work.

...to our J.a.M Kids for making the beautiful Christmas cards that each family received.

Tin cans for 2019 will be available starting Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>

***We couldn't have done this without YOU!***



It's time to change our  
**Mitten Tree**  
into a  
**SOCK TREE**

The Westminster Outreach Committee invites everyone to help keep people warm and dry this winter.

Please be generous and contribute socks for the Sock tree.

All kinds are needed, for both Adults and Children

All items will be donated to local charities.



**Pray, Praise, Ponder**

Bless to me, my God,  
everything my eyes see.

Bless to me, my God,  
every sound I hear.

Bless to me, my God,  
every scent in my nostrils.

Bless to me, my God,  
everything I taste,  
every note I sing,  
every word I say.

Everything that guides me.

Each dream I pursue.

Amen

## AFFIRMING - THE NEED IS REAL

- ♦ Conservative estimates are that 4.5% of the population identify as LGBTQ.
- ♦ Over 50% of LGBTQ have contemplated suicide. This is due in large part to isolation, lack of support and/or rejection by parents, friends, institutions and many major religions.
  - ♦ 33% have attempted suicide (compared to 7% of the general population).
  - ♦ LGBTQ youth are 8 times more likely to attempt suicide than youth in general.
- ♦ 47% of trans youth have contemplated suicide and 19% attempted it **in the past year!**

As an Affirming Congregation,  
one of our key allies in this is **PFLAG**  
(**Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays**)



PFLAG Durham is a very active "Not for Profit" organization, almost entirely run by volunteers. Their numerous programs and activities include:

### **Annual Multi-Faith Pride Service, BBQ and Parade.**

PFLAG Durham is a prime founding supporter of this annual event. Held the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of June. Westminster United Church is a proud supporting participant in this event.

**Coffee/Sharing Night** is a social support night for everyone, including allies and families, held on the last Thursday of every month (excluding December).

**Peer to Peer Support** is a service for parents and allies in need of support and information. Meetings are held in coffee shop settings, offering a comfortable and individual approach.

**PFLAG T & T (Teens and Tweens)** is a program for LGBTQ youth 17 years of age and under. Activities are offered in social, safe and supportive settings.

**PFLAG YA (Young Adults)** is a social support program for LGBTQ youth 18 years of age and older. Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month (excluding December).

**PFLAG Transitions** is a social support service for people questioning their gender identities or who do not identify with their given birth gender. Meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month (excluding December).

**Parents of Gender Independent Kids** is a program offered in collaboration with Livingroom Community Arts Studio, offering safe space for parents with gender independent kids to bond over arts and crafts.

**Camp Rainbow Phoenix** is an annual residential LGBTQ youth leadership camp for youth 13 – 17. PFLAG Durham is in full partnership with PFLAG Lindsay and Aids Durham in this camp.

### **Partial List.**

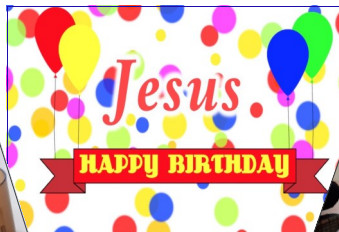
There are numerous other programs including on-line education, seminars, bursaries, recognition awards, etc. For a full list of programs, if you wish to donate or wish to volunteer, please see this month's Parish Mosaic Bulletin Board, go to [pflagdurhamregion.com](http://pflagdurhamregion.com), or call 1 (888) 530-6777 Ext. 533

**Parish Mosaic Committee**



Jesus' Birthday Party was a **BLAST!**

Games, Music, Dancing and Cupcakes...  
...all to celebrate our Guest of Honour!





## New Name, Same Great Program!

Our Seniors' Fellowship group is now called  
***"Faith and Fellowship"***

This monthly "come as you can" group brings adults of all ages together for a time of prayer, devotion, food and fellowship.

### Upcoming Dates and Times:

January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10 and May 8  
1:30pm – 3:00pm

The construction has commenced on a new "home" for St. Vincent Pallotti's Kitchen.

The new facility will be on one level so that everyone will have access to a low cost nutritious meal every day of the year!

Both patrons and volunteers will appreciate a bright new kitchen, no steep stairs to climb and on-site parking.

### HAVE YOUR HEARD ABOUT OUR NEW BUILDING?



**We are Fundraising to Continue the Build of our New Location**

It will be fully accessible and able to handle more patrons

Westminster has a team of 30 dedicated volunteers that serve meals and clean up on the first Wednesday of each month. We have been helping at the Kitchen since it opened 25 years ago!

If you would like to help support the construction of this new space, there is an opportunity to do so with the ***"Foundation Stones"*** Fundraising Pledge Program. All donations will be greatly received and a Foundation Stone will be purchased. A permanent Foundation Stone plaque will be placed to recognize Westminster's commitment to serving others.

***Donations will be accepted until Sunday, March 3, 2019.***

Please add your donation to the Offering plate during Sunday Worship or drop it into the Church Office during the week (Mon.-Fri: 9:00am – 3:00pm).

*Please make cheques payable to **Westminster United Church, with St. Vincent's Kitchen** noted on the memo line and/or on the envelope.*

**Thank you for supporting this wonderful and much needed facility!**

For more information, contact Gail Wild.



## You have to Eat ...

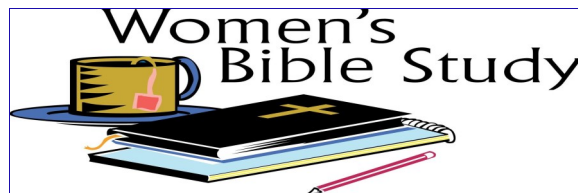
...so why not pay for your groceries with a gift card and help your church at the same time?

Grocery gift cards are available for purchase at face value during coffee time after service on Sunday or from the church office during the week.

They are available in different denominations, are valid at multiple stores, make great gifts (especially for students living away from home) and for every card sold, Westminster receives 5% of the value.



*...Just a little Food for Thought!*



Our next Wine, Women and the Word is on  
**Tuesday, January 15th**  
from  
**7:00pm 9:00pm**

Carol O'Neil is hosting this meeting in her home.  
Please contact the church office if you are in need of directions.

Topic:  
***Going into 2019 with Faith***

Bible reading:  
***Jeremiah 29 vs 11-13***

*Please bring your bible, if you have one.*

## HOLY HUMOUR

A new pastor was visiting the homes of her parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to her repeated knocks at the door. She took out a business card and wrote 'Revelation 3:20' on the back of it and stuck it in the door.

When the offering was processed the following Sunday, she found that her card had been returned. Added to it was this cryptic message, 'Genesis 3:10.'

Reaching for her Bible to check out the scripture passage, she broke up in gales of laughter.

Revelation 3:20 begins 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'

Genesis 3:10 reads, 'I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked.'

***'A cheerful heart is good medicine' (Prov. 17:22)***



Our next movie night for Adults will be on:

**Friday, January 18, 2019**

7:00pm

*...bring a date, bring a friend or step out solo,  
as we watch...*



Popcorn included!

### You Are Needed!

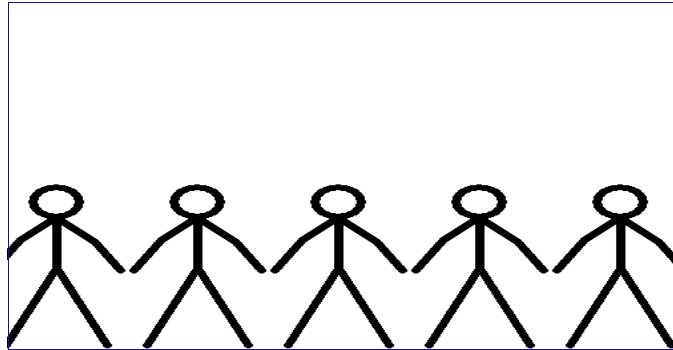
If we are to live out our motto -  
**Be Welcomed, Be Nourished, Belong**  
– we need your help.

Please sign up to greet and light the candles one Sunday  
(or more?). Having cheerful greeters at the door to welcome  
people to worship is an important aspect of our ministry.

There's also a personal benefit – it's a great way to  
meet people and build relationships!



### MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL (M&P) COMMITTEE



“The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee acts under the guidelines of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada. The committee functions around three roles which are the consultative and supportive role, the healthy relationships role and the supervisory role. We provide resources and support for the staff and the congregation with respect to any issue affecting staff of our church, including ministry personnel and lay employees. The committee works to build positive and trusting relationships between staff and members and adherents of the congregation.” (*Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees*, July 2017, p. 8)

The responsibilities of the M&P Committee include:

- being available for consultation and support for matters involving the church staff;
- overseeing the relationship of the church staff to each other and to the congregation;
- regularly reviewing the working conditions, responsibilities and compensation of all church staff, and making any recommendations needed as a result of these reviews to the Council;
- maintaining current position descriptions of staff, as appropriate and approved by the Council;
- conducting annual performance reviews of church staff;
- ensuring church staff make use of opportunities for continuing education that they have been given; and
- maintaining close contact with the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee.

**(Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policies, Procedures, Practices,**  
July 2017, pp 4-5)

The current members of the Westminster M&P Committee are:

**Teena M., Peter S., Joanne G., Maureen D. and Sandra H.**

Members of this committee are elected for a term of five years.

**Publisher’s Note:**

*Members of the M&P Committee may look slightly different in person.*



The next gathering of the Book Club is on

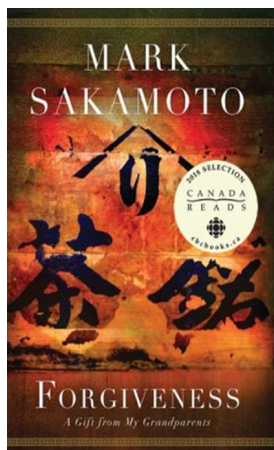
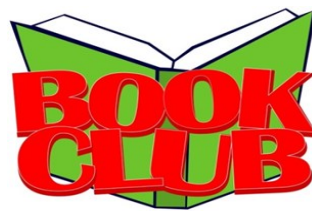
**Wednesday January 23, 2019**

**1:30pm**

at the church to discuss:

**Forgiveness - a Gift from my Grandparents**

*by Mark Sakamoto*



When the Second World War broke out, Ralph MacLean chose to escape his troubled life on the Magdalen Islands in eastern Canada and volunteer to serve his country overseas. Meanwhile, in Vancouver, Mitsue Sakamoto saw her family and her stable community torn apart after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

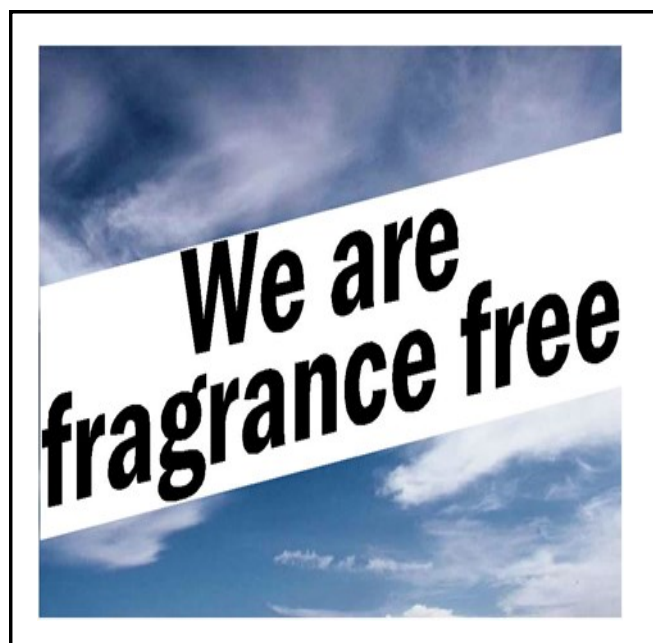
Like many young Canadian soldiers, Ralph was captured by the Japanese army. He would spend the war in prison camps, enduring pestilence, beatings and starvation, as well as a journey by hell ship to Japan to perform slave labour, while around him his friends and countrymen perished.

Back in Canada, Mitsue and her family were expelled from their home by the government and forced to spend years eking out an existence in rural Alberta, working other people's land for a dollar a day.

By the end of the war, Ralph emerged broken but a survivor. Mitsue, worn down by years of back-breaking labour, had to start all over again in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

A generation later, at a high school dance, Ralph's daughter and Mitsue's son fell in love. Although the war toyed with Ralph's and Mitsue's lives and threatened to erase their humanity, these two brave individuals somehow surmounted enormous transgressions and learned to forgive. Without this forgiveness, their grandson Mark Sakamoto would never have come to be.

All are welcome. To borrow the book or for more information, please call Susan at 905-493-3122.



*The  
Annual Congregational Meeting  
(ACM)  
is just around  
the corner!*

**Sunday, February 24, 2019**

## FRIDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUPS

### *Junior*



*Grade 6, 7 and 8*

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday  
of the month.

**7:00pm - 8:30pm**

### *Senior*



*Grade 9, 10, 11 and 12*

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday  
of the month.

**7:00pm - 9:00pm**

Games,  
Outreach,  
Hot Topic Discussions,  
Fun, Friends and Food...  
...there's something for everyone!

***Bring your friends and make these groups your own awesome place to hang out on Friday Night...Can't wait to see you!***

For information, contact Cathy Shaw, Minister of Faith Formation at [cshaw@westminster-uc.ca](mailto:cshaw@westminster-uc.ca)

## SCOUTING AND GUIDING SERVICE

Join the Scouts and Guides on **Sunday, February 3rd**, in a special service that will acknowledge the rich histories of both these iconic organizations.

This will be an intergenerational service, so bring the whole family...and if you or someone you know is a proud owner of a uniform, please feel free to wear it to this service.



Refreshments will be available in the gym following worship, as will historical displays presented by both of these groups.

We look forward to seeing you and hearing how the Scouting/Guiding programs have influenced and impacted your life.

### **BBBBRR...It's Cold out there!**

On SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd, join us for our FINAL WALK !

We're all registered and we're beginning to put our team together for this year's **Coldest Night of the Year Walk** in support of the Refuge in Oshawa...

The Refuge does such wonderful things for the homeless, hurting and hungry youth in our community...and we're going to do our best to help them again this year!

Jesus was an advocate for those who were hurting, alone, hungry, lost and dealing with tough circumstances in life...so that is what we are called to be as well...lending a hand to lift someone up and letting this world know that they are not alone and not forgotten...that God cares...and that we do too!

So, come join us! Walk with us! Donate to our team! Pray for those who use the Refuge and for those who offer support...and pray for our team! Any way you wish to help will be greatly appreciated!

To join our Team or to make an online donation, go to **[www.coldestnightoftheyear.org](http://www.coldestnightoftheyear.org)**, search for our team (**Westminster United Church**) and follow the prompts. If you have issues while trying to register, contact Cathy Shaw (Team Captain).

You can donate online or visit our display and our team members in the gym following worship on **February 10th and 17th**. They will be thrilled to share their experience with you and gratefully receive any and all donations for this worthy cause.

The Coldest Night of the Year is a fun, family-friendly walking event and you can choose how far you wish to walk...2km or 5km.

So, come for a walk, make a difference, make new friends and help the Refuge keep their doors open to those who need them the most! You'll be glad you did!

***Hope to see you on  
Saturday, February 23rd!***





# You're invited...

<b>Living Alone Lunch</b> 12:00pm  <b>Faith and Fellowship</b> 1:30pm - 3:00pm	Wednesday, January 9
<b>Junior Youth Group</b> 7:00pm - 8:30pm	Friday, January 11
<b>Worship Service</b> 10:30am	Sunday, January 13
<b>Wine, Women and the Word Bible Study</b> 7:00pm - 9:00pm <i>Offsite: Contact Office for Directions</i>	Tuesday, January 15
<b>Friday Flicks - "The Greatest Showman"</b> 7:00pm  <b>Senior Youth Group</b> 7:00pm - 9:00pm	Friday, January 18
<b>Worship Service</b> 10:30am	Sunday, January 20
<b>Book Club</b> 1:30pm	Wednesday, January 23
<b>Junior Youth Group</b> 7:00pm - 8:30pm	Friday, January 25
<b>Worship Service - Jazz Vespers</b> 10:30am	Sunday, January 27
<b>Worship Service - Scouting and Guiding Service</b> 10:30am - Intergenerational Service <i>Only Nursery Classes today</i>	Sunday, February 3
<b>Coldest Night of the Year Walk for The Refuge</b> 4:00pm	Saturday, February 23
<b>Worship Service</b> 10:30am  <b>Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM)</b> Following Worship	Sunday, February 24



**Diversity  
Embraced Here**