200th Anniversary Kick-off Service - Feb.11 2018

Good morning!

In case you haven’t heard, the Aurora United Church turns 200 years old in 2018.

In a deed dated February 21st, 1818, William Tyler conveyed, for the nominal sum of 5 shillings - which was about 1 dollar, one acre at the corner of Tyler and Yonge Streets to 4 trustees, “for the erection of a house of public worship, for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Province of Upper Canada.” Later that same month, David Culp preached the first sermon in the log cabin church.

Early in 2017, in anticipation of this 200th anniversary year, a committee was formed to consider what a year of celebration might look like, keeping in mind our circumstances of not having our own home. It was felt that a year of celebration would be just the thing to encourage us forward. So, some shoulders were tapped. The committee members are Revs. Lorraine & Andy, Bill Newman, Mary Jeanne & Leslie Oliver, Helen Roberts, Mary Smith, and myself.

As Chair of the committee, Rev. Lorraine asked me to speak to you this morning for 3 to 5 minutes. I panicked about the length. Instead, I prepared a 20 minute powerpoint lesson on the uses and abuses of trigonometry. However, the hard-working committee advised me against such.

So instead, I’d like to encourage you to take some time during this next year to consider what it means to be associated with a church like AUC. When Rev. Lorraine suggested that to me, at first I had no idea. I’ve been attending Aurora United Church for over 60 years and there must be some reason. Certainly, for me, singing in the choir has been a positive outlet and “inlet” for many years. I enjoy singing “church” music, along with all the bonuses that it brings - like faith and fellowship. After a few days of thinking more about being associated with AUC, I thought of “family”. From my vantage point in the choir for over 5 decades, I have seen many families in attendance at our church. Whether it’s a family of one person or of several generations filling a pew, to me, it’s the families that make the church what it is, in the time period that it is in. Many families have filled the pews in the log cabin church, then the wood-framed church, and the 1878 church that we lost 4 years ago. When I think back to the choir loft in that church building, I can still see the many families and the spots in which they would sit week after week. The church is the headquarters, the foundation, the anchor; and the families, i.e. the people, provide the faith, fellowship, and community.

We look forward with great anticipation to the rebuilding of our church - to what it could be and will be for us and for others.

In the meanwhile, we’re going to celebrate what our church has been and is to us. I’d like to highlight some of the bicentennial birthday events that are in place for all of you to enjoy. You can follow along on the handbill inserted in this morning’s bulletin.

* Sunday April 22 - **Old-Fashioned Family Fun Night** - hosted by the teens of AUC - stay tuned for future details
* Sunday May 27 at 7:30 p.m. - **Concert by the Choirs** of the church
* June 27 to September 30 - **Exhibit at the Aurora Museum** across the road featuring our church and some of its history
* Sunday October 28 - This will be our official 200th anniversary service. Today is just a warm-up. We have invited **Nora Sanders**, Secretary of the General Council of the United Church of Canada to speak to us. Lunch will be provided. That will be a big one - not the lunch, the service!
* Saturday November 17 - **Turkey Dinner** at the Legion Hall to accommodate up to 250 hungry AUC folks

As you can see on the list, a full year of special events and activities is being planned to commemorate AUC’s two centuries of ministry and service to the community of Aurora, and beyond.

So, enjoy the festivities, go to the exhibit, and bring along some “family” and friends!