



Open Hearts • Open Minds • Open Arms

*Gower Street United Church  
Spring Newsletter*

*2020*

**Minister:** The Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald  
**Pastoral Care Minister:** The Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray  
**Youth & Family Ministry:** Rebecca Pike  
**Minister Emerita:** The Very Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy

**Music Ministry:** Dr. D. Dunsmore   **Organist:** R. Carl Goulding  
**Band Director:** Ron Collins  
**Band Director Emeritus:** Dr. Edsel Bonnell  
**Office Manager:** Linda Hogan   **Custodian:** David Noseworthy  
**Board Chair:** Patrick Griffin

99 Queen's Road – A1C 6M6 Tel: 753-7286 – Fax: 383-0145  
E-Mail: [office@gowerunited.com](mailto:office@gowerunited.com) Website: <https://gowerunited.com>  
Check out our Facebook "fan" page at [www.facebook.com/pages/gower-street-united-church/158638549178](http://www.facebook.com/pages/gower-street-united-church/158638549178)

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## PAR: PRE-AUTHORIZED CONTRIBUTIONS

Just because we're not physically together in church doesn't mean your offering can't be received. Have you considered signing up for pre-authorized contributions? If you already have, thank YOU! If you have not, why not? It's terrifically easy and it means **you** know every month how much you're giving and the church can count on the **regular** income, even if you're not able to be at the service.

Step 1: Decide how much you would like to contribute each month.

Step 2: Call (709-753-7286) or email ([gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)) the church office to set up your contribution.

Now, more than ever, Gower needs to count on our steady and reliable contributions. We're in this together!



## MESSAGE FROM REV. PAMELA

***“A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.” – George Augustus Moore***

Hello Gower Friends,

How is your “stay at home” going?

I have been thinking about you so much.

I got up early this morning and was grateful for a new day, the warm sun, stars still visible in the early light.



It is a crazy world we are living in, and it is easy to feel fearful, uncertain, and out of control.

But in some ways, it is really not that different than other generations that went through crazy, hard times.

We were made for this, we will get through this, and when it is over, we may find a “new normal” that is way more appealing and life giving than anything we have ever known.

And we never really have control of anything but ourselves – what we choose to think and how we choose to show up.

Now, more than ever, let us take every thought captive.

Let us remember that nothing is a surprise to God and God’s love and care for us.

As we move into the season of Easter in the Christian church, we are reminded it is a time filled with stories of hope, new life and new beginnings.

One of the things I am most hopeful about this season of Easter is the opportunity to learn about ourselves. This time of isolation has enabled me to recognize that sometimes you have to lose perfectly good things to make room in your heart for the best things.

I want to share with you one of my favorite quotes from one of my favorite authors, by CS LEWIS. It was written when the world was scared and waiting for an atomic bomb to destroy everything. He said,

*“The first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb, when it comes, find us doing sensible and human things – praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts -- not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs.”*

Yes, that.

Let us still in this unusual time trust in God, serve our neighbor, and enjoy ALL THE AMAZING things that we still have.

Sometimes, I walk into my kitchen and am in awe. There is a stove there that makes it possible to cook things fast. There is a refrigerator that keeps things cold. There is food there and the people I love.

There are puzzles, games, word finds, knitting, movies for snuggle time and books galore. There is a television and other technology which connects me to the world and my family and friends. When I walk outside I am reminded of this beautiful land in which we live, the smell and feel of the fresh, salty air and smiles and waves from neighbors and the beauty of spring peaking through the mountains of snow. I am listening to classical music which I would never have entertained before this time. I am listening to Andrew Lloyd Webber playing live music in his living room every night. How simply awesome is that?

I feel blessed and filled with care and love.

When we focus on loving what we still have, our love for everything grows and it chokes out fear and worry and negativity.

You may have lost something you thought you needed but what if it is making room for you to finally become the person you were meant to be?

I am thinking of all of you during this difficult time. Trust in Jesus. His guidance and unconditional love found in the hope and resurrection of Easter will help you to get on with all those sensible and human things, like reading and walking and cooking and listening to music ... whatever gives you those warm fuzzies ... whatever helps you to find peace in this time of uncertainty!

I wish you many blessings, peace, love and warm and happy thoughts and especially in these moments, the Hope of Easter!



## **MESSAGE FROM REV. ETTIE & THE PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE**

Since the onset of COVID-19 and all the restrictions that came with it, we have seen a greater need to maintain a pastoral presence with our Gower community. We are especially committed to serving through telephone, electronic means, and old-fashioned mail during this time of social distancing.



Members of the Pastoral Care Committee continues to be in contact with persons in retirement homes and long-term care through family members, telephone, and “Thinking of You” cards. We are also welcoming back Gower members from international travel to determine their wellbeing and safety.

One activity that provided an even greater sense of connectedness within our faith community was providing for an “at-home” Maundy Thursday ritual. At 4:30pm we came together in spirit to share in a simple meal on this Holy Thursday. We reached out to many Gower members through the [Ministers' blog](#) and email. We have not devised a way to contact persons without email in a timely manner.

Another planned activity is an invitation to prayer: “a moment for prayer together while apart” at 4:30pm on Thursday 23 April 2020. The prayer to be used for this communal spiritual time is published in What’s up at Gower?

While we all hope the pandemic will not last long, in listening to news reports, it seems our efforts to provide pastoral care need to be sustainable for the foreseeable future. With this in mind, the Pastoral Care Committee is seeking to develop a “Gower Contact” ministry to enhance contact with the Gower faith family.

Please [contact me](#) with connection requests or to provide any feedback on our efforts.



## **MESSAGE FROM REBECCA – MINISTER OF CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG FAMILIES**

Being a minister is my calling; doing this work from a room in my home is not something I ever expected to be doing. Yes, of course, we all do a little work at home but to work all my hours at home!? I did not picture spending part of my first year with Gower like this.



This time of physical distancing has called me back to scripture and, in particular, a verse from Romans. Romans 1:12 reads, “When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours.” I have found strength in this verse as I have worked from home over these past weeks. While we cannot be physically together, our community is still strong, it is vibrant, and it is connected.

I feel this connection in the emails I have received in response to our new style of worship, the youth group gathering and meetings. I am encouraged over these weeks by the coming together that has happened between everyone at Gower. We have a strong team that is

working together to offer you worship! I am working hard to provide ideas for family, lessons for children, and gathering time for youth.

Coming together does not always have to be in the physical body. Paul did his ministry with letters, and presently we are doing our ministry with technology! Nonetheless we are together! I hope your family is feeling this connection with Gower the same way I have been.

We have a **youth group** happening with Zoom; the next meeting is April 28<sup>th</sup>. If you can join us, please [contact me](#) so that I can provide you with the meeting details and links. **Junior Congregation** activities are sent out weekly with **What's Up at Gower?** I love receiving the photos of families enjoying the services and doing the activities supplied. We also have our weekly **family activity videos and trivia**. Both can be found on the Gower website, on the [Children, Youth and Young Families](#) page.

If you have ideas or would just like to chat, please [connect with me](#). I love hearing from you all. Strive to do one little thing a day that calms your mind and encourages your heart in faith. I light a candle daily in my makeshift office; it allows space for me to center myself in work with the community of Gower.

Blessings to you all as you stay safe, and remember that we can still grow in faith together while we are apart.

## TRANSITION TO NEW BOARD



Gower Street United Church is in the process of transitioning to a new Board structure in 2020. The existing Board, in consultation with the Nominations Committee, has decided to move ahead with an interim organization until we are able to schedule our Annual Congregational meeting (ACM). We need to conduct the regular business of the Church as well as respond to and manage the impacts of the challenges COVID-19 presents. There are a few changes we need to share:

- Lorne LeDrew has stepped down as Chair of the Board and will take on the role of leading a team to respond to COVID-19.
- Patrick Griffin, as recommended by the Nominations Committee, is the new Board Chair until the next ACM.
- The Nominations Committee made the following recommendations, which have been accepted by the Board: "That the following persons be appointed to the designated positions until such time as the 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting is held when the full Nominations Committee Report will be presented for decision-making by the congregation:
  - Chair Worship and Sacraments Committee – Angeline Anstey
  - Chair Children/Family – Lincoln Addison
  - Chair Outreach – Judi Somers
  - Chair Property – Ed Moores

- Chair Pastoral Care – Tony Chadwick
- Chair Communications Committee – Lorne LeDrew
- Non-Board positions: (a) Chair Affirm Advisory Committee – Gail Wideman (b) Representative to General Protestant Cemetery Committee – Carl Wright

In naming the above, we recommend that all present Board members and Committee Chairs (unless there was a resignation) remain in place until the next ACM.

The Nominations Committee further recommends that Lorne LeDrew and Tracy Sullivan be appointed to the Board of Trustees.”



## **GOWER GOES LIVE!**

We are very excited about “live-streaming” our Sunday Services. Here’s why!

Live-streaming enables anyone, anywhere, who cannot be at our services to attend “virtually”. So if you are on vacation, or unable to get to church on a given Sunday, especially in this time of physical distancing, you can now “attend” Gower. Even people who have moved away can now return to Gower. We welcome your feedback as we move into this new world! Go to [www.gowerunited.com](http://www.gowerunited.com) and select the **WATCH – LISTEN** option in the top menu.

### **Additional Benefits**

- We can save our live streamed services for you to access at your convenience. This is especially important for special services such as Easter, Christmas, pageants, band concerts etc.
- We can attract new members to Gower who view our live streamed services to see what they can expect in advance of a visit.
- We can share weekly worship services, regardless of weather through live streaming. We can also include prayer sessions, readings, sermons, or event updates.

How did we set up live streaming? We now have **dedicated broadcasting hardware** that allows us to share live streaming over various online services, including YouTube and Facebook. Only one person is needed to control the camera and the audio and starting and stopping each live stream only takes the push of a button! We had less than \$1000 to establish this vital link with the local and global community. Hopefully we will find a need to expand our capabilities and we are growing our experience to help us make cost effective decisions.

If you’re wondering about **privacy**, only those persons playing a direct role in our services will be in the camera’s view. Close-ups will be limited. Children who participate in a service will need special parental permission to authorize a close-up view.



## CHURCH RELATED EVENTS AND RESOURCES DURING COVID-19 PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Live streamed services from many churches:

- [Gower Street United Church](#)
- [St. James United Church](#)
- [Cochrane Street United](#): Worship Wednesdays
- [Anglican Cathedral of St. John the Baptist](#) (YouTube channel)
- [United Church of Canada](#): Moderator Richard Bott's online worship
- [United Church of Canada](#): Map of online services in Canada
  - [Orchard Valley United Church](#) (NS)
  - [Oak Bay United Church](#) (BC)



Community resources:

- [Government of Newfoundland and Labrador website for COVID-19 Information](#)
- [Bridge the gApp – Government of Newfoundland Labrador online resource to support Mental Health](#)
- [How to Support Children in Times of Crisis - Mindfulness activities](#) (K-6)



### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE GOWER BOARD AND STAFF – 2020

POSITION:	NAME:	EMAIL ADDRESS:
<b>CLERGY</b>		
Minister	Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald	<a href="mailto:minister@gowerunited.com">minister@gowerunited.com</a>
Pastoral Care Minister	Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray	<a href="mailto:pastoralcare@gowerunited.com">pastoralcare@gowerunited.com</a>
Youth & Family Ministry	Rebecca Pike	<a href="mailto:youthminister@gowerunited.com">youthminister@gowerunited.com</a>
<b>BOARD</b>		
Board Chair	Patrick Griffin	<a href="mailto:boardchair@gowerunited.com">boardchair@gowerunited.com</a>
Vice Chair	Carolyn Anstey-Moore	<a href="mailto:boardvc@gowerunited.com">boardvc@gowerunited.com</a>
Past Chair	Lorne LeDrew	<a href="mailto:pastchair@gowerunited.com">pastchair@gowerunited.com</a>
Secretary	Ruth Francis	<a href="mailto:secretary@gowerunited.com">secretary@gowerunited.com</a>
Treasurer	Fred Earle	<a href="mailto:treasurer@gowerunited.com">treasurer@gowerunited.com</a>
Ministry & Personnel	Daryl Pullman	<a href="mailto:personnel@gowerunited.com">personnel@gowerunited.com</a>
Finance	Ken Peters	<a href="mailto:finance@gowerunited.com">finance@gowerunited.com</a>
Property	Ed Moores	<a href="mailto:property@gowerunited.com">property@gowerunited.com</a>



Worship & Sacraments	Angeline Anstey	<a href="mailto:worship@gowerunited.com">worship@gowerunited.com</a>
Pastoral Care	Tony Chadwick	<a href="mailto:pcchair@gowerunited.com">pcchair@gowerunited.com</a>
Children, Family & Education	Lincoln Addison	<a href="mailto:education@gowerunited.com">education@gowerunited.com</a>
Outreach	Judi Somers	<a href="mailto:outreach@gowerunited.com">outreach@gowerunited.com</a>
Men's Club	Peter Nell	<a href="mailto:mensclub@gowerunited.com">mensclub@gowerunited.com</a>
UCW	Helene Drodge	<a href="mailto:ucw@gowerunited.com">ucw@gowerunited.com</a>
Member at Large	David Robbins	<a href="mailto:memberatlarge@gowerunited.com">memberatlarge@gowerunited.com</a>
Communications	Lorne LeDrew	<a href="mailto:comm@gowerunited.com">comm@gowerunited.com</a>
<b>GROUPS &amp; COMMITTEES</b>		
Affirm Advisory C'ttee	Gail Wideman	<a href="mailto:affirm@gowerunited.com">affirm@gowerunited.com</a>
Heritage & Archives	James Hiller	<a href="mailto:heritage@gowerunited.com">heritage@gowerunited.com</a>
Stewardship	JoAnna Bennett	<a href="mailto:stewardship@gowerunited.com">stewardship@gowerunited.com</a>
Nominations	Gail Wideman	<a href="mailto:nominations@gowerunited.com">nominations@gowerunited.com</a>
Financial Review C'ttee	Fred Colbourne	<a href="mailto:financereview@gowerunited.com">financereview@gowerunited.com</a>
Trustees	Edward Roberts	<a href="mailto:trustees@gowerunited.com">trustees@gowerunited.com</a>
Region Delegates 1	Roy West	<a href="mailto:regionrep1@gowerunited.com">regionrep1@gowerunited.com</a>
Region Delegates 2	Pat West	<a href="mailto:regionrep2@gowerunited.com">regionrep2@gowerunited.com</a>
<b>OTHER</b>		
Rentals	Ken Peters	<a href="mailto:rentals@gowerunited.com">rentals@gowerunited.com</a>
Senior Choir	Roberta Gill	<a href="mailto:choir@gowerunited.com">choir@gowerunited.com</a>
Senior's Club	Tony Chadwick	<a href="mailto:seniors@gowerunited.com">seniors@gowerunited.com</a>
Cemetery Board Rep	Carl Wright	<a href="mailto:cemeteryrep@gowerunited.com">cemeteryrep@gowerunited.com</a>
Sound System – Sanctuary	Ken Butt	<a href="mailto:soundsystem@gowerunited.com">soundsystem@gowerunited.com</a>
Website Manager	Ken Butt	<a href="mailto:webhost@gowerunited.com">webhost@gowerunited.com</a>
Facebook Manager	Lynette Hillier	<a href="mailto:facebook@gowerunited.com">facebook@gowerunited.com</a>
Bridges To Hope - Board	Doug Moody	<a href="mailto:bth@gowerunited.com">bth@gowerunited.com</a>
Prayer Shawl Ministry	Marina Osborne	<a href="mailto:prayershawl@gowerunited.com">prayershawl@gowerunited.com</a>
<b>STAFF</b>		
Office Manager	Linda Hogan	<a href="mailto:office@gowerunited.com">office@gowerunited.com</a>
Custodian	David Noseworthy	<a href="mailto:custodian@gowerunited.com">custodian@gowerunited.com</a>
Choral Director	Douglas Dunsmore	<a href="mailto:choirdirector@gowerunited.com">choirdirector@gowerunited.com</a>
Organist	R. Carl Goulding	<a href="mailto:organist@gowerunited.com">organist@gowerunited.com</a>
Gower Community Band	Ron Collins	<a href="mailto:gcb@gowerunited.com">gcb@gowerunited.com</a>
Youth Choir	Dana Collins	<a href="mailto:youthchoir@gowerunited.com">youthchoir@gowerunited.com</a>
Sound System Operator	Brady Lawrence	<a href="mailto:sound_operator@gowerunited.com">sound_operator@gowerunited.com</a>

