



Knox News

Fall 2017

From the Minister's Study - Rev. Craig

Losing My Religion: Christianity After Religion and the
Gretta Vosper Controversy
November Worship Series

*That's me in the corner
That's me in the spotlight
Losing my religion
Trying to keep up with you
And I don't know if I can do it
Oh no I've said too much
I haven't said enough
R.E.M. Losing My Religion*

*Jesus does not call [us] to a new religion, but to life. -
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison*

Rachel Cameron is thirty-four years old, single, living with her mother and teaching in the fictional prairie town of Manawaka. As the protagonist of Margaret Laurence's 1966 novel, A Jest of God, Rachel profoundly resists the unnamed Protestant faith community in which she was raised.¹

When asked by her mother why she doesn't want to go to church, Rachel muses, "I didn't say God hadn't died recently, within the last few years, but a long time ago, longer than I could recall, for I could not actually recall a time when He was alive. No use to say that. I only told her I didn't agree with everything."

Rachel and her struggles are emblematic of the world that emerged around the United Church in the 1960s and continue to this day, most recently highlighted by the controversy around self-proclaimed atheist minister, the Rev. Gretta Vosper.

Following 9/11 and the rise of religious fundamentalists, the sexual abuse scandals in the Roman Catholic Church, and revelations about the abuses suffered in residential schools, many people

¹ From Sandra Beardsall's chapter "And Whether Pigs have Wings" The United Church in the 1960s in A History: The United Church of Canada

want nothing to do with organized religion. It's normal to hear voices advocating for the end of Religion.

The Christian Church in North America is changing as a result.

In 2015 the Rev. Gretta Vosper wrote an open letter to our UCC Moderator, Gary Patterson, urging the church to no longer invoke the name of God in its prayers. This past spring the Toronto Conference interview committee found her to be "not suitable" for continued ministry. Many readers of *The Observer* sent angry letters to the magazine questioning why we would cast out one of our own.

Why the uproar about Gretta? Where are we now, fifty years after the "God is Dead" movement? Where do we go from here? Should we no longer use God language? Gretta emphasizes "right action" over "right belief." Can our actions be separated from our beliefs? Will the Christian Church in North America be extinct by the end of the century? Will something new emerge? What does it mean to be the church today? Join the conversation during the month of November at Knox.

Thank You everyone for once again including your committee news and upcoming events, your celebrations and achievements, and sharing information to be passed on to the Knox family. Thank you to our Organist, Jane Skinner, to all our Choir members, and Choir Director, Bernie Whetter, and all musicians who share their talents on Sunday mornings. Thanks to Rev. Craig who edits this newsletter, and also to our Office Manager Sharon McIntosh for her outstanding art and computer skills, as displayed in this Newsletter. This is the season for Thanksgiving; please take time to be thankful for everything and everyone around us. Our thoughts and prayers are with our neighbours in northern Manitoba communities who were evacuated due to forest fires; those affected by recent hurricanes; and everyone hurt or tragically killed in Las Vegas this past weekend.

"Lynn Cupples"

New to Knox? Newcomers Lunch on Sunday, October 29 – Newcomers to Knox are invited to join Rev. Craig and members of the Congregational Care Committee following worship on October 29 for a light lunch and an opportunity to learn more about Knox and the many different ways you can be involved. Please sign up by Sunday, October 22 on the sheet in the lobby.

Canned Food Sunday – On the fourth Sunday of the month we encourage participants to bring to worship, and Spirit Kids' Club, a canned good or non-perishable food item(s) for our local food bank. Thanks to Samaritan House Ministries for the very important work they do!

Friendly Visitors Volunteers Needed - The Congregational Care Committee is looking for a couple of volunteers to round out our Friendly Visitors team. These individuals agree to visit or check-in with church members in our care homes, senior residences, and our shut-ins on a monthly basis. Speak with David Barrows after October 3rd if you are interested or need more information.

Samaritan House - On Tuesday October 3, Thea Dennis, Executive Director of Samaritan House joined Knox members over the noon hour, to discuss the changes at Samaritan House since Thea has taken over. Knox has always been active in supporting the program, participating in the operation of the Homeless Shelter before it moved to Samaritan House permanently, donating food, and supporting fundraisers. Debby Dandy will report on this event in the near future.

Knox Fall Rummage Sale – will be held on Saturday, October 21. Please hold on to your treasures – watch for more details to follow.

Christmas Cheer Hampers – the Christmas Cheer Hamper Planning Committee will be meeting soon to plan this year's hampers and White Gift Sunday. We are looking for newcomers as we presently have a partial committee – this will be a short term commitment. If you are interested in joining the planning committee, please contact Shirley Armstrong or Lynn Cupples.

Knox Coffee/Tea Gathering Time – We encourage you to sign up to prepare coffee and tea, on Sunday morning. There is a new calendar for volunteers to sign-up at the coffee maker in the back of the Sanctuary. It is not a requirement that you bring snacks to share if you volunteer for this.

Also, we still require a Co-ordinator for this area. Please contact Sharon in the church office if you are interested.

Sobeys/Safeway Gift Cards will be available through Outreach members in October. Gift Cards can be purchased in denominations of \$25, \$50 & \$100. This will be the fourth year that we have done this fundraiser and have had great response. Money raised has enabled Knox to provide important support to programs such as the 7th Street Access Centre, the Safe & Warm Program, as well as maintain a small emergency fund at Knox. Cards will be available to order on the following Sundays: October 15, 22, and 29.

Wills Seminar

As a presentation of the Stewardship Committee, A Wills Seminar is being planned for Sunday, November 5, immediately following the Sunday Brunch. Lawrence Donald, a local lawyer, and a member of Knox U.C., has agreed to lead the presentation. If this is something you would be interested in, please mark your calendar for November 5.

UNDRIP and Bill C-262 – Add Your Voice: Knox Outreach Committee recently called on Knox Congregational members to add their voices in support of Bill C-262 by writing our local MP. In doing so we read the following statement from the United Church of Canada website as well as the Moderator's letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

A central theme of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is that reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in Canada requires rejecting our current colonial model of relationship and replacing it with one rooted in mutuality, equity, and respect. Key to this is the adoption and implementation of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

The federal government has recently issued a set of ten [principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples](#). These principles rely heavily on the UN Declaration and strongly signal an intent towards a new relationship. However, without a legislative framework, they remain words on paper.

[Bill C-262](#), a private member's bill that is expected to come up for second reading in October 2017, offers that legislative framework. The bill calls for a national implementation strategy to be developed in full partnership with Indigenous peoples, and a 20-year schedule of reporting to Parliament. The Bill thus establishes a binding framework for reconciliation beyond the life of the current government, and a method of transparency and accountability to Parliament and to Canada.

Moderator Jordan Cantwell [has written to Prime Minister Trudeau](#) acknowledging The United Church of Canada's appreciation of the principles, and asking his government to support Bill C-262 when it comes up for second reading.

Your voice is important. A big thank-you to those who have already sent letters in. For those of you who would still like to do so there are form letters at the back of the Church. Just add your name and address and send them in to make your voice heard. "Submitted by Wayne Digby – Knox Outreach Committee"

Presbytery Representative Report - I attended the presbytery meeting which was held in Minnedosa on September 23, 2017. There was a youth retreat held in conjunction with the presbytery meeting with 16 youth attending. The theme of the meeting was Creation and where we could find our relationship with God in creation. During the meeting, Maria Szabo Berces, minister at Killarney, was installed as chair of presbytery. There was a presentation by Kathryn Hoffley on Stewardship. One fact she gave was that 33% of church members in Assiniboine Presbytery who give to local also give to Mission & Service.

September 30, 2017 was "orange day" where people can wear an orange shirt in support of Reconciliation.

The remainder of the meeting was spent on presbytery business. The next meeting is at Trinity United Church in Brandon on November 17-18. "Submitted by Art Godfrey"

Congregational Care and Membership

Committee – presided by David Barrows, approx. three meetings have been held this year so far, and recently the following were discussed: Updated list of Care Facility Residents; Cards sent out to the congregation on significant birthdays, anniversaries, get well, graduations, etc; Sunday Coffee (Co-ordinator required) – sign-up sheet has been placed beside the coffee pot in the sanctuary; Rides to Church; Seniors' Service; Fall Newcomers Lunch; New Photo Directory (Co-ordinator required); Local Food Bank (please consider a tin for the bin).

Youth Events:

- ALF Youth Retreat in Selkirk, October 20-22, 2017
- Coming soon! We are working on a few things for the youth and figuring out dates for:
 - Escape Room
 - Face Painting with Kim
 - Intergeneration Games Night

If you would like more information, please contact Antoinette 204-573-0188 or antoinetteatknox@wcgwave.ca

Property - Summer projects have included:

Flower bed watering and maintenance (special thanks to Jane & Vern Gilbertson, Duncan Waddell, Norm Brown, Sylvia Roberts and others for this).

Replacement of stained ceiling tiles in Chapel, hall and Library area.

Replacement of light fixture in basement women's washroom.

Repair and painting of interior corner wall by 17th St Entrance.

Repainting of north-east fire-exit door.

New chairs approved at June Council meeting for Wigglin' Worship Room, Spirit Kids Club (Club Room) and kids table in Sanctuary received. Tables for those areas ordered and should be here shortly.

Kitchen Reno-Phase 2 – cabinets and counter-top for the island are now here, flooring has been ordered. Plan for removal of old island unit, and installation to occur right after Thanksgiving, with completion hopefully before the Rummage Sale and Fall Luncheon.

“Submitted by Roger Bright, Property Chair”

Refuge Brandon Fall 2017 - Our action has been mostly with the various Government Sponsored refugee families that are in our midst here in Brandon. Many from our group have been highly involved in everyday connections driving, getting groceries, visiting, solving on the spot problems, and making the families feel welcome. This also means coordinating with the staff at Westman Immigrant Services on Pacific. We are working through the painstaking process of trying to facilitate the arrival of Abraham Tekla who is a refugee from Eritrea and is now living in a camp in Netanya, Israel. Our hope is that this has a satisfying and happy outcome. The safe and smooth integration of these newcomers into our community is the hope of all of us and we trust you share this feeling and objective. Damran, Dad of the Ahlmoud family who arrived in Brandon in March of 2016, now has a good enough command of English to have acquired a full time job in construction here in the city. Yeah! As soon as some holidayers are back we will have a meeting and see what's next for us.

“Submitted by Gerry Whetter”



Fall Luncheon

Knox United Church
October 25 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Soup – Sandwiches – Desserts
Tea – Coffee – Juice
Gluten-Free Options Available All
Inclusive: \$8.00

Affirm Committee Report October 2, 2017

The Affirm Committee has arranged to visit the newly installed exhibit ***100 Years of Loss: The Residential School System in Canada***, which is on display in the Gathering Space on the first floor of the John E. Robbins Library at Brandon University. ***100 Years of Loss*** was developed by the Legacy of Hope Foundation as part of its education program. The Legacy of Hope Foundation is a national, charitable Aboriginal organization whose purpose is to educate and create awareness and understanding about the legacy of residential schools, including the effects and intergenerational impacts on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, and to continue to support the ongoing healing process of Residential School Survivors. Please join us on Monday, October 16 at 1:30 in the Library. We will spend about an hour looking through the exhibit then meet for coffee and conversation in a meeting room at the Library. See the Press Release on the bulletin Board in the Narthex for further information.

Back by popular demand - we are planning to host a “Diversity Lunch” one Sunday after church in November at a local ethnic restaurant. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex very soon. Watch for further details in the weekly announcements.

Knox will once again host the Trans Day of Remembrance Service in the sanctuary followed by lunch on November 21st. This is an event that we help to organize and host in conjunction with other community organizations. It is a very visible way to offer support to the trans community and their allies.

Our Committee is always open to any suggestions for educational or discussion topics. Please contact any of us: Lynne Manns, Kathleen Richards, Sharyn Hayter, Shawna Munroe or Laura Crookshanks.

-Angus Ball who graduated from high school in June and is now attending the University of Winnipeg

-Teagan Mauthe who graduated from high school in June and is now attending the University of Calgary

Art and Iona Godfrey who celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on October 7, 2017.

Roger and Norma Lowe who welcomed their second great-grandchild, Merrick Anthony Paul Lowe, on September 21, promoting Asher Gary Lower to big brother! They live in North Battleford, SK.

Congratulations to our Knox Family

Patti Harms – Associate Professor at Brandon University

Dr. Patricia Harms, an associate professor in both History and Gender & Women's Studies at Brandon University, has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Grant of \$124,749, which she shares with colleague Stephanie Mitchell of Carthage College. The pair will host a "Women's Suffrage in the Americas" institute from July 23 to August 3, 2018 at Carthage College, bringing together up to 30 participants, including guest lecturers from across the Americas.

Meg Carrington – Professor at Brandon University

Dr. Margaret Carrington received a \$200,000 Discovery Grant over five years to study new theoretical techniques that could allow scientists to better understand the interactions of sub-atomic particles.

- Nancy McPherson, RN, M.Sc.
- 150 Nurses for Canada Award

Nancy's expertise related to population health has positively influenced and impacted both her colleagues and communities. Her sense of humour and ability to engage her audience through storytelling helps her impart her key messages while leaving her students or community members informed and uplifted — rather than "lectured to."

Her strengths lie in her ability to share her understanding of the determinants of health and principles of primary health care, community development and harm reduction. She has contributed to the development and success of many partnerships that extend beyond the health sector. Nancy "walks the talk" by celebrating diversity and promoting community ownership of initiatives aimed to decrease the health inequities gap.

Coming Events at Knox

October

- 16 & 30 The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings, Session 1 & 2, Chapel 6:30-8:00pm
20-22 ALF Conference Youth Retreat, Selkirk, MB, Grades 7-12
21 Fall Rummage Sale
25 Fall Luncheon
29 Affirm United Anniversary; Brunch for Newcomers

November

- 5 All Saints' Observance – Communion; Brunch; Stewardship Workshop
13 & 27 The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings, Session 3 & 4, Chapel 6:30-8:00pm
19 Stewardship/Pledge Sunday
21 Transgender Day of Remembrance, 12:00 noon.

December

- 3 Taste of the Holidays Dinner
10 Christmas Choir Cantata
11 The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings, Session 5, Chapel 6:30-8:00pm

Faith Formation Opportunity, Mondays (listed below) from 6:30 pm - 8 pm The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings

Have you been enjoying our Bless to Me series? Join us for this book study and learn how Celtic spirituality and contemporary thinkers are influencing the emerging community of Christ.

Author John Philip Newell, formerly warden of Iona Abbey in the Western Isles of Scotland, calls for a rebirth of Christianity in response to the seismic shifts in the Church and contemporary Western cultures. He proposes eight ways that Christians and seekers can be attentive to the struggle for rebirth. Using the island of Iona as an imaginative setting for this spiritual undertaking, he mines the wisdom of those who have provided prophetic leadership in these ways. His book inspires hope that, through reconnection, faith can be renewed and enlivened personally and collectively. The book is highly accessible and has energized readers in our presbytery.

Sign-up for the class and order the book (\$22) on the sheet in the lobby.

- Oct 16 I - Introduction 6:30 - 8 pm Chapel
Oct 30 II - Reconnecting with the Earth and with Compassion (chapters 1 and 2)
Nov 13 III - Reconnecting with the Light and with the Journey (chapters 3 and 4)
Nov 27 IV - Reconnecting with Spiritual Practice and Nonviolence (chapters 5 and 6)
Dec 11 V - Reconnecting with the Unconscious and with Love (chapters 7 and 8)