



# EOORC News

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

## A NEW YEAR'S LETTER FROM REV. TAKOUHI DEMIRDJIAN-PETRO, EOORC PRESIDENT

Dear EOORC Family,

Is it too late to send you blessings of Peace and Joy for this new year? It might be for some, but I believe that every single day is the beginning of a new year. I have been wanting to write to you since October 21, 2020, but, as we all know, time is a precious commodity that we all desire to have more of.

It is a year in which COVID-19 threw a curveball to the world and changed the way of life. The United Church folks thought that new way of doing church, as of January 1, 2019, was a difficult adjustment to embrace. COVID had other plans!

As we entered 2021, people kept on expressing, "So long 2020," maybe thinking that the change of the year makes troubles disappear. Personally, I do not think that the last digit change does anything, but arriving at a new year reminds us that this too shall pass. Nothing stays the same, except the Love of God.

2020 pushed us to be something many of us were dreading – a Church without walls. Technology is one of the scariest words for me. Seminary does not train us for such endeavours. But God's Wisdom is at work and it is near for us if we are willing to let go of the status quo and offer the best possible virtual worship celebrations and connect with people. Yes, I say the best possible, because at the end of the day we are not in any competition with anyone – there will be no Oscars distributed at the end of the day. What matters is who is comforted and challenged by the Love of God, through us.

No one has a crystal ball to know when will this will end, but we know that God's Love never ends and this gives us the strength to persevere. I heard someone say, "Live cautiously, as if you have the virus, so that you do not spread it." This sounds harsh and heavy, but I am reminded of my childhood in the Lebanese civil war, where we stayed away from streets and bridges that had snipers; sheltered in our apartments when shelling intensified; schools closed; and all the neighbours of the apartment building brought different food ingredients to our apartment, as it was regarded the "safest apartment" and made nourishing dinners by candlelight and fed the entire building.

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### QUICK LINKS

- **\*\*\* NEW\*\*\*** [Pastoral Relations Minutes](#)
- [Events](#)
- [United We Stand](#)
- [COVID-19 updates](#)

Beloved, COVID is the silent war that we are fighting, individually, communally and globally. 2020 has truly been a year to help us see clearer, the vulnerable, the voiceless and the victims in our world. We may think we cannot do much, but we know, as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we can make this world a better place by doing justice and resisting evil, even during a pandemic – as we work together United in Love.

On October 20, 2020, I had the opportunity to virtually meet with all the presidents and presidents-elect of this United Church of ours. We shared with the gathered, which included Nora Sanders, her last meeting with us before her retirement. The message was the same across the board: “We are trying our best.”

So, friends, all this to say, do not be dismayed, because the One who was hovering over the formless and empty earth, where darkness was over the surface of the deep (Genesis 1:2), is still hovering and moving, not only over us but also in us. Promising to make something beautiful out of the ashes that we submit to this Eternal, Unchanging Love. Something Beautiful is on the horizon.

Together, as we journey through 2021, more virtually than ever before, know that the region’s staff and executive team are doing the best that we can to take care of the work of the church at hand, but most of all, we are praying for you. Let us remember to meet the needs of others around us, near or far, because God calls us to live our lives in such a way that everyone’s lives depend on ours.

In closing, I offer you this concluding prayer that I had the privilege to share at the October meeting mentioned above. May it bless you as you read and share it with others.

***Holy One, in this season of letting go,***

***We come to you united for a new vision, a new beginning, a new opening.***

***May the bare trees around us help us remember to let go of what restrains us from living your liberating love. Calling us to allow our belief to be Life for ourselves and others...***

***We give you thanks for all who have answered your call to serve you as Presidents and Presidents-elect of each Regional Council, and we have answered your call with trust in you, that with the Call, you also equip us with your Grace and Wisdom.***

***Thank You for this time that we had together, to share where we are, and explore our possibilities through your Mercy, working together, United, and still uniting.***

***We especially Pray for Nora, as she begins her sabbath of retirement. May she be able to surrender all responsibilities in your love and just like the autumn leaves, may she be blessed with every letting go and be reminded that her years as General Secretary has created something beautiful in your name and paved the way for the future...***

***Bless Michael, as he takes office and may our vision for the Church be Your Vision becoming evident to us and through us. Creator God, Thank You for all that you have blessed us with and for the work that is ahead of us. We pray in the name of the Triune God, who calls us to Dream Further than the stars, Deeper than the sea and higher than the mountains... The Creator, The Son and the Holy Wisdom, Sophia always with us Now and Forever. Amen.***

Because of Grace,

**Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro**

Ordained Minister – Grace United Church, Gananoque, ON

President, EOORC

**PASTORAL RELATIONS MINUTES**

The latest set of Pastoral Relations meeting minutes have been published.

You can find them [here](#).

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**EOORC NOMINATIONS**

If you're wondering about how to nominate someone or yourself for the EOORC executive or for leadership teams, please go to the nominations [page](#) on the EOORC website. The page has been updated with important information about the nomination process.

**EOORC SUPPORT FOR VETERANS' HOUSE - AN UPDATE** by Sue Smarkala



Happy New Year! As we head into a year of challenges, life does go on according to plan – albeit – a modified plan. EOORC fundraising plans and results **for Veterans' House** is a case in point. All is going very well. Our combined efforts to support the work of Multifaith Housing and its newest build – **Veterans'**

**House** - show us that even in the worst of times, the best of ourselves shine through.

1. **Veterans' House** will welcome its first tenants on February 1<sup>st</sup>!
2. We have received over 100 lap, throw and twin sized quilts plus 86 knitted/ crocheted shawls, lap, throw and twin sized covers.
3. Our United We Stand Campaign has reached \$49,793 – 1/3 of its \$150,000 goal as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. Many thanks to all who have contributed.

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A number of churches have taken advantage of the Special Service provided to all congregations to learn more about Multifaith Housing Initiatives AND Veterans' House. Below is Rev. Carolyn Insley's description of using that service with her congregation. NOTE: This is from Carolyn Insley, minister at North Gower/ Carsonby United Church. It was Carolyn's suggestion to create such a service! We thank Carolyn and we hope more congregations will make use of this resource.

The United We Stand Special Service Experience of North Gower/Carsonby United Church:

*"Ah, it was a glorious end of the week one Sunday in the fall. I'd had loads of time to catch up on niggling work, to call people, and to take a day off. The service was top-notch and the only things I had to do were to add one or two hymns and keep the service flowing. The feedback was all positive, too. My communities of faith found the service informative, interesting, and it showed them something they could do to help others in need. Which I daresay can help when you're stuck in a stressful covid-19 world.*

*"What was my secret? The Veterans' House Service. Everything was there, even bagpipe music, which was a treat for many in my congregations. The service is in parts, so you can pick and choose what you want and tailor it to your specific situation. We found it really easy to use in our weekly zoom service. Yes, there is a hope that money will be donated to Veterans' House, but it's not 'pushy'. (As an added bonus: Commissionaires Ottawa will match any donation till the end of June. And in case you're wondering, individuals can make donations easily.)*

*"I'm thoroughly impressed with Veterans' House. 40 veterans will have a chance at life again! The value of their lives? Priceless!" Carolyn Insley*

Click [here](#) and look for **Sunday Service Package**. We intend that the service be used until the end of June 2021. If you have any questions, please reach out to [Dianne Cardin](#) or [Sue Smarkala](#) at We are happy to help. [Carolyn Insley](#) is also happy to help, phone her at 613-489-0796.



A new set of guidelines has recently been made available:  
The Ministry of Music in The United Church of Canada - Guidelines for Musicians,  
Communities of Faith, and Committees September 2020.  
Click [here](#).

#### LLWL LIST

An updated LLWL list is now available. Please send me an email if you wish to receive a copy.  
[ajansman@united-church.ca](mailto:ajansman@united-church.ca)



# THE ROCK

#### CAMP LAU-REN NEWSLETTER

The Winter 2021 issue of *The Rock* is now [available](#).



**CENTRE FOR  
CHRISTIAN STUDIES**  
*Imagine Church Differently*

#### CCS Fridays

A chance to join the Centre for Christian Studies virtually for an hour to explore timely topics of theology, life, and faith. It is open to laypeople and clergy.

On February 12 from 12:00 to 1:00 CST we will look at [Zoom Tips for Annual Meetings](#). We will review the basics of how to use Zoom, go over the nitty gritty

of hosting a virtual annual meeting, and have a chance to share tips and favourite features.

The workshop is free [but you must register in advance](#) by clicking on the workshop name and filling in the form. If you have questions, e-mail [info@ccsonline.ca](mailto:info@ccsonline.ca)

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**Certificate in Ministry of Supervision  
February 22<sup>nd</sup> – February 26 Intensive 2021  
Vancouver School of Theology**

Training for Ministry of Supervision is an intensive course being offered in February 2021 in order to equip people to be credentialed as supervisors for Supervised Ministry Experience students within the United Church of Canada and within other denominations. The Certificate in Ministry of Supervision provides participants with the information and skills to mentor individuals preparing for ministry by equipping them for supervision including pastoral practices, leadership, reflection, feedback and spiritual guidance. It is designed for clergy and lay individuals.

Instructors: Rev. Brenda Fawkes and Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson, Office of Vocation Ministers in Pacific and Atlantic Regions. This online course is available to participants from any region of Canada or beyond with an interest in credentialing for supervision.

Ministry of Supervision is offered in partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology and is an online (zoom) format using Canvas for student and instructor interaction and resources.

Course Fee: \$211.50

Class times: 9:00am-12:00pm (Pacific); 10:00am-1:00pm (Mountain); 11:00am-2:00pm (Central) 12:00pm-3:00pm (Eastern) 1:00pm-4:00pm (Atlantic) 1:30-4:30 (Newfoundland)

PREREQUISITES: A minimum of five years of experience in congregational ministry leadership. [Register](#)

## NEWS FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL OFFICE



### e-ssentials

The January 19, 2021 issue of [Essentials](#) is available. Read inspiring stories from Mission & Service.



Visit the United In Learning [website](#) for courses being offered over the next three months, including **Congregational Finances During the Pandemic**.

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*click on icons*



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