

AROUND THE BONFIRE



Lifted

BY SUNJAY HENRY

On Friday March 28, 2025, the Youth Working Group hosted its second event of the year 'Lifted' The event took place at St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church. This event was the brain child of different people coming together creatively to create an event that was interactive, cooperative, creative and most importantly, an opportunity for teenagers in the Ottawa and Seaway Glengarry Presbyteries to gather and meeting other like minded teens. As teens entered the fellowship hall, they were met with balloons and a graffiti wall. They were invited to write who lifts them up on bubbles.

They they had to find the owner of the bubbles and mingle with one another. They were also invited to sit in groups and color together.

The first game they played was a balloon stomping free for all. The winner, a young man from Parkwood church, received a Tim Horton's gift card for his triumph.

The second game required groups to work together and lower a broomstick while defying the laws of gravity. The wonderful congregation of St. Tim's graciously provided snacks for all who were in attendance. Everyone took the photo above before heading into the sanctuary for worship and a talk led by Rev. Heather Paton. Those parents were invited to write notes of encouragement to Carleton University students preparing for exams.

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Messy Church

BY REV. ELIZABETH CHAN

At Osgoode Presbyterian in Vernon, Messy church is a shared ministry with the Baptist United Church. Once a month about 15-18 kids, and 6-8 adults gather in the church basement to learn about how to follow Jesus at home, school and in our neighborhoods. St. Andrew's, Kars Messy church is an ecumenical ministry with the Anglican church. One Wednesday night in the month about 7-8 kids and 7-8 adults meet for a fun and creative time to worship Jesus.

Bible times have included creating boats out of chairs, tables, blankets and ropes and acting out Jonah's story. Or imagining being in the desert with God's people praying for food and running over to a large sheet filled with cheerios and fish crackers and gathering up in their hands enough to eat for the day (or more!) There has been acting out the story of Zaccheus, with one of the older kids taking on the role of Zaccheus by climbing up a ladder in the 'tree' and jumping down to go and welcome Jesus.

One of the kids' favorite prayer times happens when everyone lays down on their stomachs in a circle and places one hand in the circle. Everyone places their hands on top of others and when your hand is the one on the bottom, you pray your prayer in the group. There are many thanksgiving prayers for food, family and friends. There are prayers for grandmothers with cancer, school tests and a neighbor whose dog has died.

One kid who has challenges with being accepted by peers yelled out the window as his mom drove him away, "That wasn't messy church; that was fun church!"

One mom said her 3 yr old starts saying "messy church, messy church, messy church" every time they drive by the church.

One very shy 6 year old who was afraid of doing after school activities because it meant new people, met a kid in his class at messy church and they became friends and joined the same soccer team in the summer.

One Gr 1 girl came back to Messy Church with a story about a boy in her class saying there is no God and the girl telling him : "You should come to Messy Church!"



A girl in Gr 2 brought one of her neighbor friends and the next day at the bus stop the mom said her daughter was talking about it and wanting to bring her sister the next time.

Our most popular worship times are Messy Church Bowling in the Christmas Holidays and Messy Church March Break.

Messy Church is a great way for intergenerational worship and serving each other. At one church, someone donates and drops off pizza for dinner and at the other church, a mom makes delicious meals to eat. Church folks donate juice boxes, cookies and fruit. Someone in their 90's blesses the food and someone in their 80's plays songs on the piano. A 20-something tells the Bible story one month and a middle age parent does the next month. Sometimes teens help out along the way.

The premise of Messy Church as stated on the Messy Church Canada website is as follows:

Messy Church Canada equips churches to minister to families for whom traditional Sunday worship is no longer a viable option.

On the Presbyterian Church in Canada website [Messy Church - The Presbyterian Church in Canada](#) it says this, "Messy Church is designed to reach families who are not "churched" as well as those who are looking to explore faith and Christian community in a new way."

This is a ministry that seeks to honor Jesus' call to "go and make disciples" offering a safe space to explore, ask questions and grow in faith in God with others who may or may not yet have an experience of God's love for them or know anything about the Bible.

For more info or if you have questions, feel free to contact Rev. Liz Chan. Lizchan.2014@gmail.com

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

1 JOHN 1:1-4

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Office Hours - For Digital Content and Online Consultations.

Monday - Friday

9:00 - 5:00

1 John Bible Study

Mondays at 12pm on Zoom

Instagram

@prezzyyouthonfire

Youtube

@prezminimator

Tiktok:

prezminimator

Email:

prezminimator@gmail.com

Podast: The

Imprezionable Youth

Podcast

Embracing Technology

BY: SUNJAY HENRY

Have you ever taken a moment to look at the doors of your church? How many of them are there? What do they look like? Are they heavy or easily pushed? How about the windows of your church? Are they short? Tall? Dusty? Filled with Cobwebs? Stain glass? Can people walk about to your church and look in the door or window and see what's happening on the inside? On a Sunday morning, can you hear the worship taking place from outside the church?

Now what If I told you that the gateway, the entrance to your churches, had nothing to do with doors or windows but rather, at the click of a button.

Church websites are becoming more of a necessity and less of a nuisance. People looking for a church are more likely to search online under common titles like 'local Presbyterian churches' or 'local Baptist churches' in this day and age instead of walking up to church doors on a Sunday morning.

Your church website is the first representation of what is going on inside of your church. When people visit your church website, they should be able to have access to sermons, announcements, Bible studies, children and youth events, capabilities to donate online and other vital church information. The information needs to be up to date, which means recruiting volunteers who will be committed to keeping the website in tip top shape. And, if possible, the capacity to sustain a live-stream of the morning services, not to mention other services as deemed appropriate, such as weddings and funerals.

At the same time, they cannot be a distraction. The wrong color scheme, videos that belong in an archive section, events that are years old, those things could suggest that nothing is going on at the church and they may move on or go back to the next option in the list.

Covid-19 may have been a blessing in disguise despite everything that happened, because it gave us a reason to re-think ministry and embrace technology and church website as the new doors and windows to the church.



Church websites were just one of these things that were discussed during the 'Embracing Technology' worship I led on March 18th at the Seaway-Glengarry Presbytery Meeting. The use of technology has become a core piece of making Sunday mornings happen, both for those who attend in person, and also for those who are joining in online.

Online church.. something we never could have seen as a necessity, suddenly became a necessity during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, churches have expanded their understanding of church to include their known and unknown audience online.

When we consider technology and how it translates to the work of the church, there are several areas of which technology has enhance our Sunday morning services. There is an audio visual component, where technology allows churches to project worship lyrics through CCLI or Powerpoint, Scripture passages, and other creative outlets available over the Web. It is also important for churches to consider what sound system to implement depending on what their worship format is as well as paying attention to audio quality in the sanctuary and online. In connection with good audio is a reliable camera with a reliable internet source to support the bandwidth of a live-stream service.

In addition to audio-visual capabilities, technology can be used in administration. Churches can use technology to coordinate their volunteers for the different ministries in the church, plan events, register church members, or manage online donations and other finances. There are softwares to assist with some of these tasks.

Churches can also use technology to engage with their community. Interactive apps such as Tithe.ly or church center are just some of the tools that are available to use. However, these are just tools. They should compliment and not replace in-person worship.

Another use of technology can be in the area of communication. Churches can notify their members about events, sermons, and other significant announcements using websites, email newsletters and social media.

There are, however, some disadvantages to technology that church should keep in mind as they discern use and effectiveness. Technology can be distracting during church services and cause attendees to be sidetracked. There could also be disconnect from the physical community if one becomes too reliant on technology. Other disadvantages include security issues, added costs, dependency on volunteers, digital divide, conflict and disagreement, spiritual shallowness, depersonalization, and accessibility problems.

For more information, email Sunjay Henry.

Upcoming Events
Prezzy Youth
Party (ages 11-18)
Saturday June 21,
2025

1pm - 4pm
Location:
Parkwood
Presbyterian
Church - 10
Chesterton Drive

**Summer Day Camps in
the Presbytery**

**Knox Manotick:
Monday July 7th - Friday
July 11th**

**Theme: Scuba: Diving
Into Friendship with
God**

**St. Paul's Church
Monday July 21st -
Friday July 25th
Theme: True North**

Prezzy Profile

BY: SUNJAY HENRY

The ‘Prezzy Profile’ highlights a leader in the Ottawa and Seaway Glengarry Presbyteries. This issue, we will be introduced to Victoria Henry, youth leader, administrator, avid baker, expert florist, and wife of the Ministry Animator.

S: Could you begin by introducing yourself and explain your roles in the Presbytery of Ottawa.

V: Of course! My name is Victoria Henry. I currently work at three Presbyterian Churches in Ottawa - St. Paul's (1 year, Administrative), Knox Manotick (6 years, Administrative) and Parkwood (almost 8 years, Youth Ministry/Christian Education)

S: Can you tell us a bit about your journey and how you came to faith?

V: I grew up attending church with my mom and sister, at St. Paul's where I now work. My mom, grandparents and St. Paul's all played a huge role in shaping my faith and helping me to grow as a Christian. In 1998, Billy Graham came to Ottawa, and there was a children's component to this huge event where our kids choir from St. Paul's went to sing with other kids choirs from around the city and with *Psalty the Singing Songbook*. This is where I decided to make the commitment to give my life to Jesus and make my faith my own. It has been a journey since then and I'm sure I could ramble on for pages, but long story short, God is good and has provided so many people over the years (and even to this day) who have guided and mentored me, helping me to be who I am today.

S: You mentioned the different roles that you hold within the Presbytery. You have a unique perspective in that you're both on the front lines but also behind the scenes. How are those perspectives similar? How are they different?

- V: I think some similarities with being both front and center but also behind the scenes would
- Understanding what goes into the different areas of making the church keep running
 - Having grace and patience to dealing with others from both positions because I know what it's like to be on the other side
 - Understanding where certain questions come from in regards to each position

Some differences would be the approach to getting things accomplished (for example, I've been on both sides of booking rooms - the trying to coordinate rooms for people in the background, but also needing to book rooms for a youth event and having to work with the coordinator to figure out a plan). I've been the person pestering people for announcements before submitting bulletin drafts, but have also been the slow CE worker holding up the administrator because I haven't gotten my next youth group announcement in.

As the administrator, you see a bigger picture of what's going on in the church. You see all the events coming up. You know a majority of the people, as you have likely worked with them at some point or another. You are also doing a lot of the behind the scenes work to keep the nitty, gritty details sorted out, communicating between various people and trying to keep on top of any issues that arise and getting them sorted out even as quickly as possible. As the youth worker, your attention goes to the teens - what is the next youth event, what do the teens want to do for youth events, how are the teens doing outside of church, how can I connect with the teens beyond Sunday morning and Friday night. With the rest of the congregation, it's mostly either casual fellowship or seeing how we can connect the teens with the rest of the church.

S: You've been at Parkwood for quite a long time and a volunteer in other ministries. What does youth ministry mean to you? Why is it important?

V: Being an extremely shy and introverted teenager, I attended youth group quite infrequently. The nights I did attend (which at times, took a bit of coaxing on the part of the youth leaders), I always had a blast, loved every minute and told myself I would go back soon. The importance of youth ministry was shown through the leaders who took the time to encourage me to come to youth group, took an interest in me and supported me in what was going on in my life. The importance of youth ministry to me is to show these teens that they are loved (by God and by others), they are important and they matter. Youth ministry is so important because high school and middle school (the teen and pre-teen years) and not easy ones. There is so much going on, so many pressures, stresses and things being thrown at kids this age, even more so now than when I was a teenager. It is so important for them to know they are loved, not just by the church, their youth leaders, their parents, friends, etc, but most importantly, by God. To know His unending, unconditional love for them is so crucial. It is also important so that they know that they are not alone, that someone has their back and is there for them in the good and the bad times. They need to know that someone is there for them if they need someone to listen to them, to take them for coffee or bubble tea, or to help them with homework questions.

S: Now, Vicky, you and I are married. Can you talk to our readers about our relationship and how we came together?

V: Absolutely! That could be a long story, haha, but I'll try to keep it short and sweet! We met in the fall of 2013 at Tyndale Seminary, became friends, served on Student Council together for 2 years, and even had a class or two together. Our feelings for each other never quite lined up, and in February 2020, Sunjay moved back to New York, where he had grown up. As the world navigated the unknown of COVID and the pandemic, Sunjay and I were both navigating how to run a youth ministry online - Sunjay with his new ministry and still getting to know people, me with a ministry I had been in for about two and a half years. Sunjay was very experienced with youth ministry, having studied it in his undergrad and working in the field for many years, so when I had questions that arose from the youth I was working with and didn't have answers, he was the first person to come to mind to go to for advice and guidance. As we began talking more and more, I realized that I did, in fact, have feelings for him. In June 2020, with a closed Canada-US border between us, we began our long-distance relationship. Fast forward four and a half months later, after many, many video calls, a missed connection flight in Detroit and two weeks of quarantining in Toronto for Sunjay, we finally saw each other in person. We had about 5 days together, and then he had to go back, but not without two more weeks of quarantine upon his return to New York. Our long distance relationship continued all the way to March 2023, when Sunjay moved back to Canada. From that first visit in October 2020 until March 2023, a number of visits happened, we got engaged, I took my first flight to go see him in New York, we planned our wedding celebrations, and got married in New York in October 2022. Needless to say, life was never boring (and it still isn't haha). We have gone through a number of ups and downs, both before we started dating and after, but God definitely had a plan in bringing us together.

S: You mentioned that you went to a secular University but went to Seminary afterwards. Can you tell us how you decided to pursue seminary and what the differences were between the two formats of education?

V: I did. I went to the University of Ottawa for my undergrad, and then to Tyndale Seminary. When I was nearing the end of my undergrad, I was trying to decide what to do next. After changing my mind half a dozen times, I finally decided I wanted to work towards pursuing a masters in music therapy. After submitting applications and preparing for auditions, I was declined from the two schools I applied to. I decided to take a few more classes and reapply to the programs, but in the meantime, it was suggested that I should attend Urbana, a missions conference for young adults that was taking place in St. Louis at the end of that year. I thought about it, and finally decided to go. Everyone said it was a life-changing week, and were they ever right. Getting to be surrounded by other Christians and to dig deeper into my faith in that one week was incredible! I came back and, while waiting to hear back from the music therapy applications, started looking into Bible schools. I looked at Tyndale, liked what I saw in regards to programs and courses, and eventually applied. Within two months of submitting that application, I was accepted to Tyndale and was moving to Toronto. There were definitely a number of differences between the two schools. When studying at Ottawa U, I met a few Christians, but being in a secular school, there were a lot of people who didn't have a religious background. There were many different views, ways of living, and understandings of topics. I lived in residence for one year, and for 18 year old Vicky, it was a very new experience being in an environment with people drinking and partying loudly late into the night. This made me nervous when I moved to Toronto and, with very quickly having to find a place to live in a short amount of time, ended up in residence again - turned out, residence at Tyndale was a very different environment from at a secular school. When I started at Tyndale, I was surrounded by people with similar views - many different denominations, but with the ultimate focus of God at the center of our lives. In my first class at Tyndale, the professor ended that class with singing the first verse of 'O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing'. I thought this was absolutely incredible - singing a hymn in school - something that was completely foreign to having grown up in secular schools.

One other example of a difference between the two education formats was when I took a class at Ottawa U on women in the Bible. Having grown up in church, I came to the class with a Christian perspective. When arriving in class, one of the first things the prof said was that she was not a Christian. There were also people from non-Christian backgrounds taking the class. When they would ask a question, it was interesting to me to hear a perspective beyond what I was used to hearing in church. At this point in life, I didn't often get into faith-based conversations with friends. I had friends who were Christian and non-Christian, but it wasn't something that was often discussed. Hearing these views from different backgrounds was very interesting and quite eye-opening to me.

S: You're involved in a lot, in addition to your jobs, you're also a support to me in my different roles. What is it like to be the spouse of someone who is also in ministry?

V: Being married to someone in ministry is never boring. There is always something going on, an event to plan or to go to, or someone to connect with. With Sunjay and I working three jobs each, it definitely keeps us on our toes with coordinating our schedules, church events and supporting each other in whatever arises from the various ministries. I love being able to do ministry with Sunjay, as it is something we are both so passionate about and is something that has shaped who we grew up to be. I grew up in a home where only one parent was a Christian, and I've experienced how this can so deeply impact daily life and has taught me the importance of being equally yoked and sharing that same belief. This makes getting to support Sunjay through his ministries even more of a blessing and reiterates to me how important it is for him to have support from me as he does his ministry. I love getting to see Sunjay in action as he plans out his events, sermons, podcasts and more, and to get to talk through his ideas with him. During our years in seminary, we used to work on student council together. He always had great ideas that I loved to hear about and work through with him, and 10 years later, I still love getting to support him with his creative ideas and plans that he comes up with.

S: What do you do in your free time?

V: There isn't a lot of free time lately, but I do enjoy pulling out the guitar and just playing through some songs, usually worship songs. I like to kick back and watch a movie here and there, and I do enjoy baking.

S: Vicky you have been so gracious with your time. I have a few more questions for you. If you could sit down with youth and youth people and give them advice, what would you say?

V: Hang in there - life is busy, trying and full of surprises, but God's got this. Thinking back to when I was a teenager, then looking at the youth of today, they have so much coming at them every day. Social media, school, peers, and more, all coming at them. Whatever you're going through, God's got it, and He's got you. You are not facing it alone. He loves you beyond measure, and He wants you to come to Him with your worries, stresses, praises and more! Talk to your parents, talk to your youth leaders, your teachers, your pastor - they are there to support you and help you through anything you are going through. And most importantly, talk to God. Spend time in prayer. Take your worries and stresses to Him.

S: My next question is similar: if some of those young people came to you and said they were thinking about going into the ministry, what sort of advice would you give them?

V: If some young people came to me who were thinking about going into ministry, I would tell them to follow their heart and go for it, but to keep their eyes fixed on God through it all. Ministry is full of challenges, but also so many blessings. It's not easy, but it is so worth it. It is a blessing to be able to be able to walk along others in their faith journey, through their ups and downs, encouraging them to see God in the good and the bad times.

S: You recently led a youth service at Parkwood Presbyterian Church. What was that experience like for you, your youth group and the church?

V: It was a great experience! It was a busy time getting everything put together, but watching the youth work together, deciding on a theme together, and participating in the different aspects of a worship service was amazing to see. They all worked so hard, planning out and practicing their parts, and then doing their different parts in the service. While nerves surfaced a bit in the planning process, they overcame that on the day of and flourished! We were all very proud of them!

S: Finally, do you have a favorite Bible verse or passage?

V: I do. While there are a lot of passages that I love, I think I would have to say my all time favourite passage would be Psalm 46:10. "Be still and know that I am God". This verse showed up multiple times within a day or two when I was going through a bit of a rough patch in high school. Since then, it always seems to show up at the right time, right when I need that reminder to stop, pause and be still, and to give whatever is going on over to God.

S: Vicky, thank you for your time!

V: Thank you!

If you would like to be featured in the 'Prezzy Profile', please email the Ministry Animator at prezminimator@gmail.com



"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

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