

The Massie Messenger

A Biannual Newsletter

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Grace in Zimbabwe



Angella and Grace

Grace Dunn, a beloved adherent of the Massie United Church congregation, spent a “heart-altering” two weeks in a 22-acre Christian “Village of Hope” in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe this spring.

In a “God-chosen” meeting with an old friend, Grace, a registered nurse, was asked last November if she would like to join the May 2013 team... and her first thought was: “But I’m 80 years old.” Then she realized that this was the message she had been waiting for and willingly embraced the op-

portunity to serve God. In Zimbabwe, she found a wonderful sense of God’s presence as she assisted 11 other team members to build relationships primarily with the Shona people.

Grace worked alongside a 26-year-old Zimbabwean woman named Angella, a gifted nurse whose Shona parents had died in her youth. She had been newly hired to staff the medical centre. When the team from Canada arrived and opened the many suitcases of generously donated supplies from home, it was a heart-stopping moment – she was so grateful! Her shelves were being stocked at last! (Angella had one thermometer when she first opened the village clinic.) Many diseases that have been largely subdued in the west, such as cholera, tuberculosis and measles, are still prevalent in Africa. Angella told me that her greatest concern was maintaining clean water.

Angella had started to make house calls to inspect household water supplies and toilet facilities. We brought Public Health posters from Canada that were intended to help her. Sadly, though they were artfully done, they missed the mark: they stated empathetically that everyone should use liquid soap and hot water but the public toilets there simply don’t supply those

precious commodities!

The 7-year-old clinic was the inspiration of an 11-year-old girl from Perth, Ontario whose father was a pastor at the Village of Hope. The girl sold bracelets to raise almost \$50,000 dollars for this ambitious endeavour. The walled, gated community provides free education, meals, uniforms, housing, medical care and most importantly, spiritual guidance!

Life is nonetheless challenging, especially for the Shona women who are expected by their society to do all the work to maintain the household. This ages them rapidly. (The life expectancy for an African woman is 47 years.)

The Shona people have “a generous, sweet spirit”. Grace noted that “they extended God’s love to me in a wonderful, gracious way”, responding with *nasha*, their word for grace. She tells a story about her first day in the compound when a little black hand took hers. “Jesus is my superhero,” the tiny orphan told her. Another little girl, no more than 3 or 4 years old, would raise her arms gloriously towards the heavens and sing out, “Jesus loves me, this I know.”

The young and adults alike started calling her Mama GG when Grace told them that her own great grandchildren



Shona nurse Angella, Grace and the Zimbabwe '13 mission team from Hanover Pentecostal Church delivering medical supplies donated from Canada.

affectionately named her GG because it was easier to say than Grace (it's short for "God is good"). The Shona people are naturally gracious towards the elderly and this is made all the more poignant by the fact that there are no old people in the village; most have died of AIDS or other diseases.

Grace and other volunteers from Canada not only ministered to the Shona people's basic needs but also brought lightness and laughter. One woman introduced face painting to the kids on the day of their arrival (after an 18-hour flight). The team leader told them: "Hit the floor running as we have 80 orphans to entertain". The volunteers loved and were loved in return. Curtis from Kincardine and the three teens in their group played soccer with the boys.

During the two-week period, part of the team finished tiling the new computer room. Thirty computers had been installed by another miracle of funding at the Village! Another group replaced the aging water tower with a new one. Yet another group provided English as a Second Language classes and stocked the library. These were all examples of the blessings God continues to provide.

The Shona women make fires early in the morning and cook meals outside. Breakfast is a type of porridge, called

sudz, a thick, white gruel, supposedly nutritious when mixed with peanut butter. When visiting outside the compound, that is often the only meal of the day for the orphans.

Lunch for volunteers was barbecued chicken and rice every day and sandwiches for dinner – although one time they had pizza. Grace also visited a Shona household for dinner once and she was served a delicacy of creamed spinach and peanut butter rolled into little balls.

Although the Shona attempt to garden, the earth is so dry and hard, the crops are pitiful. The month of May marks the beginning of the winter season; what few crops they had were on the decline. Luckily, oranges are plentiful; they are the dessert at most meals.

On Mother's Day, Grace was asked to speak at the Sunday church service. Some 450 Shona people were in attendance. Most speak English but an interpreter was translating for those who don't. Grace spoke about Mary (Matthew 1:18) and her understanding that she would birth the Christ child. In spite of the culture of her day where an honourable woman must be married to have children, Mary obeyed, willingly accepting this incredible role that God had assigned to her. As Grace spoke she saw grown men cry. They knew that orphans that came from appalling

situations were shown love here, the love of caring people and of God.

In closing, Grace recited a hymn that is sung every service at Massie United Church. She refers to it as the Massie anthem: "Go now in peace, never be afraid, God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day. Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know he will guide you in all you do. Go now in love and show you believe. Reach out to others that all the world may see. God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith and in love!"

When she returned to Canada, Grace was cautioned to prepare for a culture shock. "You'll never be the same again," she was told. And it turned out to be true. As she makes one presentation after another here in Ontario, Grace finds that she is indisputably changed.

As Gilbert Howey said to her, "Your pores are full of Africa." Her response? "God willing, I will be back there next spring. I can't wait to see those people again. I am now praying for yet another opportunity to be used by God. Mwari Komberera (God Bless)."

Postscript

During the team's stay at the Village of Hope, the team leader asked his volunteers to "prayer-walk" through the village with the Shona. Groups of people traversed the 22 acres, covering each area in prayer: the buildings, the fields, the walkways, the homes, every inch of land.

After her return to Canada, in view of snatches of information Grace was getting about the situation around the latest elections, she reached out to the Massie congregation asking them to do a personal prayer walk. She asked them to cover the village in prayer. "I felt that they graciously caught my message," says Grace. "Ongoing prayer is essential for God's healing of this wonderful land."

Massie Hall Presents 2013 Coffeehouse Series

Pete Miller and Massie Hall are pleased to introduce our 2013 Live @ Massie Hall Coffeehouse Concert Series. This year marks the seventh season of intimate concerts featuring the finest Canadian musicians across a spectrum of musical genres in the charming hamlet of Massie.

Rick Fines

Saturday September 7th, 8 pm

Doors open at 7:30 pm

\$16 (all ages) includes coffee/tea/goodies



Bluesman extraordinaire Rick Fines has spent the summer playing on both Canadian coasts and many parts in between, so it is only fitting he wraps up summer with a show somewhere in the middle: the charming hamlet of Massie!

Rick is one of the very best finger-picking bluesmen in the land and you'll warm instantly to his infectious personality and whiskey smooth voice. Not only has Rick written a catalogue of songs, but he can reach way back and play old blues classics as well.

For tickets contact Peter Miller at petemkit@xplornet.com or call 519-794-3652

Niek Wit 1941-2013



Niek Wit was a familiar sight on Massie roads, striding along, a bright smile on his face whenever he met one of his neighbours. Connie Neelands would wave to him as he sailed past her window. One time Niek knocked on her door to tell her a funny story from the Netherlands, his birth country. In the cities, older folk would sit inside their homes with a spyglass attached to the window frame. Sometimes a couple would sit on either side of the window with spyglasses pointing up and down the street. They wouldn't wave or in any way acknowledge a passersby, on foot or on a bicycle, but as soon as the person had moved on, they would watch the receding backside. Their entertain-

ment before television came along.

John Miecznikowski marvelled at Niek's intuitive appreciation of music. He was always whistling Franz Schubert – no small feat. Laura Martin echoes the sentiment when she writes: "I always loved it when Niek whistled the songs at church. Recently, I would wait, hoping he was going to whistle. With the exception of a few songs that he remembered the words to, he had that great whistle going."

Late one winter towards the end of his life, Marie and Rich Palmer took Niek and his wife Johanna to Niagara-on-the-Lake to celebrate his birthday. As always, Niek delighted in everything he saw displaying "a childlike wonder",

Kenneth Brian Tribble 1950-2013

as Marie reminisces, at the forward tilt and the painted-on balconies of some of the buildings and the Butterfly Museum.

As a Christmas celebration, Niek and Johanna brought the Shepherd's Play to Massie which Laura and Glen Martin and their boys recall with fondness: "We will always remember the special Shepherd's Play. That brought a lot of people together and it was such a great, meaningful play."

In celebration of their father's life, Vivienne, Jorrit and Laurens told stories to the gathering of mourners about Niek as a child growing up during the Second World War, a young man and later a father, grandfather and proud Canadian resident. Laurens built a simple wooden coffin for Niek's body. Grandchildren Matthew, Juliette, Jackson, Nelle, Milena and Joseph (as well as their parents and other family members) recorded their cherished memories of their grandfather in images and writings on his casket. "Always game for new things," as Johanna says, Niek was a fun dad and granddad.

Niek is remembered with great fondness by the Massie community.



Al Tribble, Ken Tribble, Mary Lawrence

Although a resident of North Battleford, Saskatchewan for many years now, Ken Tribble was a fondly remembered true son of Massie. Ken attended S.S. No. 11 in Massie, the famous one-room schoolhouse which is now a community centre (Massie Hall!) and later West Hill Secondary School in Owen Sound. Growing up on the dairy farm on Perdue Road, Ken worked alongside his parents and helped his grandfather Harvey Taylor on his farm in the hamlet of Massie, now the Downey place. Ken also participated in the Massie Hi C Group, the Chatsworth Youth Group and the 4-H Calf Club. Ken joined the Massie United Church in 1967 along with his Massie School friends: Bruce Hamill, Edward Neelands, Linda Nuttall, Edna Ramage and Willard Sutherland.

After high school, he learned the flooring trade and began his career in home renovation. Ken worked with his friend Gary Erwin for a time doing flooring. Then Ken travelled to

Skatchewan and worked while visiting his aunt and uncle, the Lakings, who later retired to Massie in the McLeod house (where Reenie Fedun and David Wells now live). Ken lived and worked in Lloydminster and then moved to Lashburn, Saskatchewan where he renovated the large church into a home. He married Sandy Foster and settled in North Battleford. Ken loved the big sky country of the west but returned regularly to Massie with his daughter Charlotte for visits.

In recent years, Ken went back to school and obtained his boiler license. He became an accomplished carpenter and tradesman and was never too busy to lend a hand or fix something for someone. Childhood friend Gregg Nuttall says about him: "Everyone knew if you needed something, whether it was help in the fields, mechanical work on your car or a drive somewhere, Ken was there for you." Ken's aunt, Marg Taylor, echoes that sentiment calling him "a helpful young lad".

He enjoyed sharing his interest in John Wayne movies and Star Trek re-runs, telling jokes and stories and playing with his grandchildren, Brian, Taylor Irene and baby Ross. Keeping to his agricultural roots, Ken kept a vegetable garden and grew his favourite flowers, gladioli and dahlias, adding two cherry trees in recent years.

The elder son of the late Jim and Irene Tribble, Ken leaves his daughter Charlotte (Tom) McHattie of North Battleford, brother Al (Cherie) Tribble of Peers, Alberta, sister Mary (John) Lawrence of Waterloo and their families with many happy and cherished memories.



Protecting Birds From Window Collisions



Photo by Connie Miller

Have you ever had a bird hit a window in your house or workplace? It's likely that all of us have had this experience at some point in our lives. It seems obvious: reflective, transparent windows are everywhere and migratory birds that make their homes in woodlands or wetlands (generally far from human habitation) could easily be fooled by the reflection of a tree or shrub in the mirrored glass. Or they see the large potted plant inside the building and think they can land there. Why wouldn't they? Or worse still, windows on either side of a building give birds the illusion that they can sail right through to the trees on the other side. Migratory birds simply don't know about the existence of glass.

Humans don't walk into glass doors because we know they are there. But sometimes even we can be fooled. Have you ever seen a YouTube video that shows people walking into glass walls or doors in commercial buildings? What a shock!

For birds it can be more than a shock

– it can mean death or severe injury, especially if the bird is flying at 40 kilometres an hour which is normal travelling speed for most songbirds.

There are simple things we can do to protect birds. Affixing anything opaque to the outside of a window, such as hawk silhouettes, will alert the birds to the presence of an obstruction they must avoid. However, the markers must be no more than 4 inches apart on the vertical and 2 inches on the horizontal. In other words, to be truly bird-friendly a window or expanse of glass must have no reflective openings larger than 2 inches by 4 inches. Otherwise, small birds such as warblers and kinglets are still in danger. But arranging opaque markers that close together makes it challenging to see out a window.



Luckily, more ideas and solutions are popping up all the time. Acopian BirdSavers or Zen Wind Chimes are 1/8-inch diameter nylon parachute cords hung 4 1/4 inches apart outside the glass. Take some quick measurements of your windows (instructions on www.birdsavers.com), then put in your order

(with proceeds going to wildlife preservation). Or follow the directions on the website and make your own. Elegant and effective.

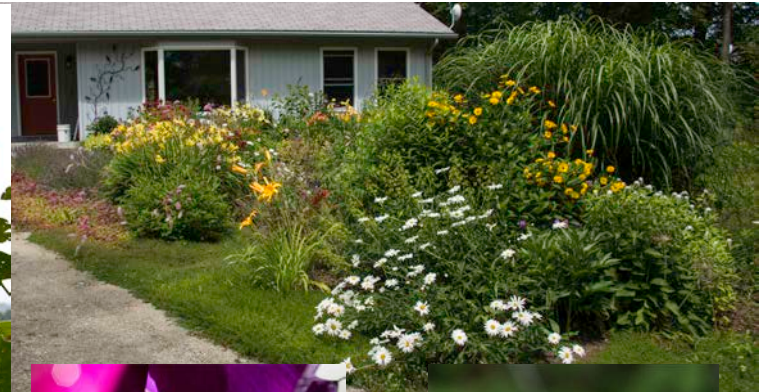
Another do-it-yourself kit comes from Feather Friendly® Technologies. The film uses a marker-only application to the exterior surface of the glass developed in consultation with an ornithologist who has studied the issue of bird strikes with windows for over three decades. The kit is made up of 100-foot rolls of marker tape, two measuring strips and installation instructions. (Approximately six feet of tape is required for every square foot of glass so one roll of 100 feet would cover a 30-inch by 80-inch patio door.) Convenience Group (the parent company) has generously offered to donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale of this product to the Fatal Light Awareness Program, a non-profit organization whose mission is to safeguard migratory birds in the urban environment (www.flap.org).

The tape comes in 3-inch and 3/4-inch widths. The advantage is that homeowners can create their own aesthetics as long as the tape is applied two inches apart horizontally or four inches apart vertically. The wider tape can be used to create squares or diamonds. A roll can cover 15 24-inch by 32-inch windows. Visit www.featherfriendly.org/feather-friendly-other-technologies.php for online instructions and pricing.

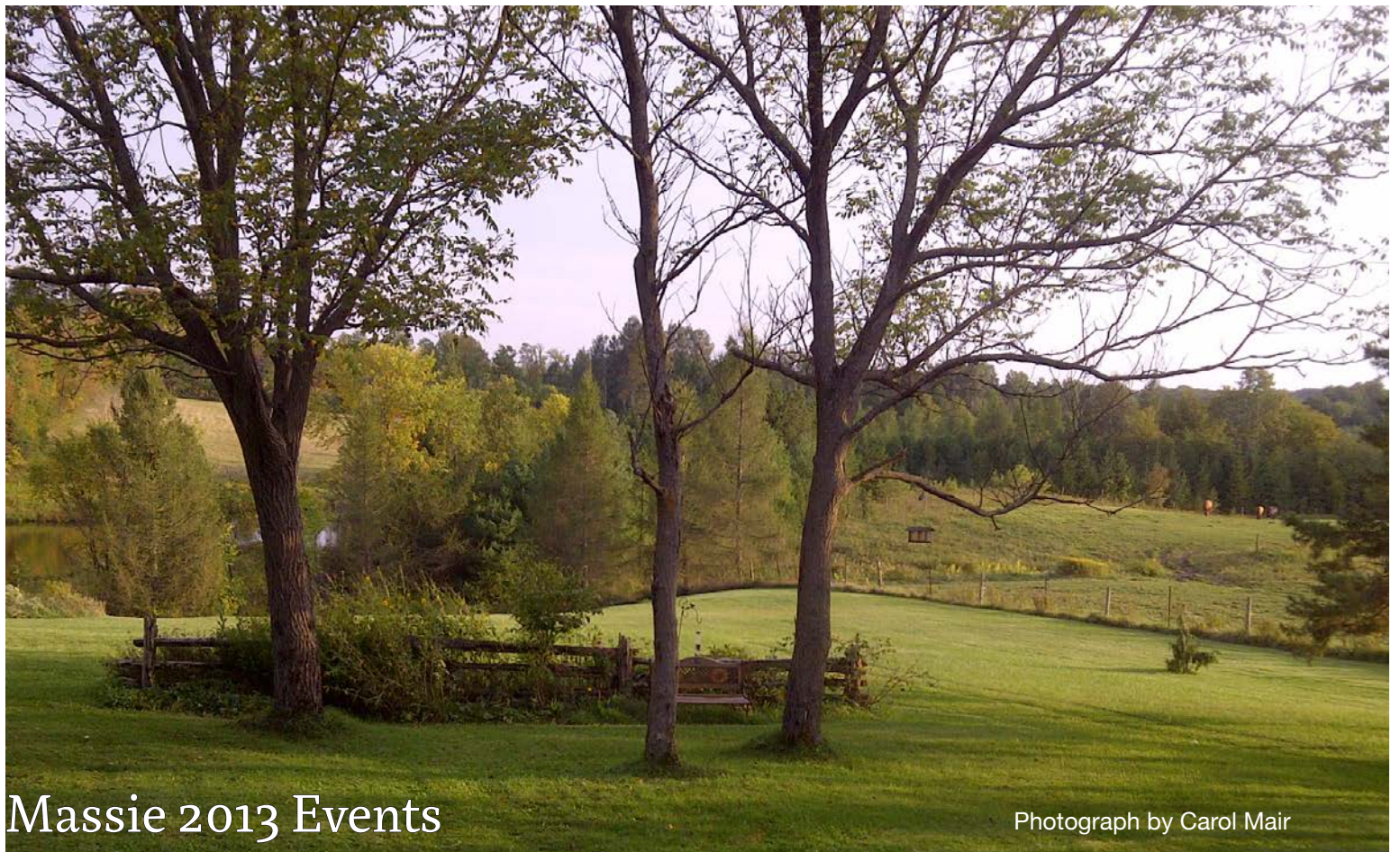
Anything visible hung on the outside of windows or attached to them – old CDs, weighted ribbons, your children's artwork – that demonstrates to birds that there is an obstacle to flight will save you and the birds potential grief. For more ideas on how to protect our feathered friends, please visit www.flap.org or call 416-366-3527 (FLAP).

Gardens of Massie

Photographs by Ralph Bergman,
Connie Miller







Massie 2013 Events

Photograph by Carol Mair

- September 7 **Massie Hall Coffeehouse #3 - Rick Fines** - 8:00 p.m
- September 13, 14, 15 **Chatsworth Fall Fair**
- October 13 **Massie United Church 118th Anniversary Service -11:00 a.m.**
 157th Anniversary of Earliest Recorded Worship Service in 1856
 118th Anniversary of our "new" brick church built in 1895
- November 2 **Massie United Church – Snowflake Tea & Bazaar**
- November 8 **Massie United Church – Shoreline Chorus in Concert**

RV for sale

A trusty 1988, 24-foot C class Ford Econoline RV, with only 144,000 km and no rust. New air conditioning, well-maintained, selling as is for \$7,000 or best offer. Easily made the trip to Cape Cod last year. Family has simply outgrown it. Contact Paul Perrone at 794-4064.

The Massie Messenger is a community newsletter. What would you like to see in it? Stories from people who have lived here a long time or stories from newcomers? Articles about the houses, churches, barns or other buildings? Recipes? Health tips? Conservation tips? Articles about the natural world in and around Massie? Stories about the artists and craftsmen in our midst? Photographs of people or places or both? Would you like to write an article or a poem or submit your photos or paintings or cartoons? Do you have events you'd like to advertise or stuff you want to sell or rent or lend out? Tell us how you would like The Messenger to unfold and we'll do our best to make it happen. Please don't hesitate to make your ideas known. Call Renie at 794-0865 or Ralph at 794-4109 or e-mail editor@massiemessenger.ca.

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