

Greetings to you all! Again I'm able to say I hope you've all been as lucky with the weather for the past few weeks as we've been in Nova Scotia!

First of all, here are the "check-ins" I've received, again in order of receiving them, with just a small addition: for the website version, I've included a photo or map for each writer's location. Not as good as if you'd send in your own photos (**hint, hint**) but I hope they will add some sense of place. (Let me know if you like this.)

from Becky:

My husband Scott and I made it home successfully on September 16. Since then, we have been struggling to remain calm and avoid the habit of busy-ness that defined us before we left. It seems everyone in Ottawa is in a rush to get someplace or do something.

The reality of being home has not really sunk in yet. This isn't helped by us going away this weekend (Oct 1st) for my grandmother's 90th birthday and a chance to visit with Scott's parents. We are also planning to be away Thanksgiving weekend. We have a tradition with friends from Chicoutami Quebec whom we rent a cottage with for the long weekend and catch up on the events of the past year. It will be a little difficult for us this year - financially and mentally - but we are very much looking forward to the visit. We expect that by the end of October we will finally start to feel like we are at home.

Hope everyone is well and has a happy and calm Thanksgiving :)

*Cheers,
Becky*



And here are Scott and Becky outside their home in Ottawa the day they left it in July 2008! Amazing that since then they've been all the way around the world on their bikes!

From Elisabeth <bert.michnick@sympatico.ca>:



The big news at my congregation, Toronto 1st, is that we, last Sunday voted to be a 'Sanctuary Building'. We had been asked to shelter a refugee who was not accepted by the refugee board and was ordered to be deported. We felt that we were not ready for this step and fortunately a United Church was able to accommodate the refugee. It will be necessary for us to install a shower in our building, also a room being used by the Youth group will be used when a suitable refugee applies. We will work with a group called the Ann Frank group, who will assure that the refugee will be a genuine status refugee in danger of their safety and life if deported.

I visited a friend in the palliative care unit of Baycrest hospital today and found I was able to contribute to the entertainment of a group of patients through my singing and discussion. I may consider doing this regularly as one of my volunteer activities at Baycrest. I live in the retirement section of Baycrest which is called "The Terraces". I attended the Jewish High Holiday services recently and enjoyed some great family gatherings. My late husband was Jewish and I remain a "Junitarian."

Elisabeth Michnick

above: the tower of Toronto First at night

from Maureen < mmk@spiritquest.ws >:

It's still hot here in Florida – tho' they warn us it will get all the way down to 55 at night.....!

Spending year-round in Florida these past 14 months has been very interesting – not nearly as "bad" as I'd anticipated. Vero Beach is a beautiful place, and the congregation here is proving an extremely interesting place to work. So my husband Peter and I are paying attention to the really fun things here (including the ocean, as soon as the air cools off just a little more), realizing that come next summer we will be moving to somewhere else to take up a new interim ministry placement.



Maureen Killoran

Maureen (centre) with her colleagues at Vero Beach UU

from Noreen <smithfsj@gmail.com>:

Noreen from Fort St. John checking in.

Its snowing today...EEK! Had to run out and pick the last of my tomatoes this morning. In my last update I talked about my job situation. I have found what I hope to be a wonderful part time job. I will be driving the WOW bus, which is our Words on Wheels Literacy mobile library lending bus. It is a full size school bus, painted lime green with a big moose on the side of it. I have never driven anything like this before. I have had one lesson and really enjoyed it. I drove down the highway and through the city and it went very well. Backing up and parking it was not so good but I am hoping to get the hang of it. I hope the snow will stay off the roads and not pile up while I am still learning. I will be driving out of town mostly to the aboriginal reserves in the area. I will have an ECE worker with me who will be doing story times, and providing child care resources for parents. This is a chance to use my childcare skills and former library clerk skills, as well as work outside of an office (which suits me perfectly). New beginnings are always exciting!

Noreen



left: entering Fort St. John,
in Northern British Columbia

and from me <treadwell@ns.sympatico.ca> :

In September I was in England for the wedding of my nephew Jon (my sister's son) in Yorkshire, a part of the UK I'd never explored before. John and I stayed in nearby Lancashire, with a cousin who I'd seen only a few times since leaving England, and enjoyed getting reacquainted with him and his wife. They were wonderful to us, taking us to explore the Lake District (Cumbria) and other places, and giving us great hospitality in their 200 years+ home, "Steps Cottage," in Clitheroe. They run a cycle shop, Pedal Power, which is a thriving business. Here are some photos from our holiday.



Wordsworth's grave, Grasmere,
on the **only** rainy day!



English wedding



"Pedal Power" shop

Thank you to those who have shared, and once more: **"Whether our concerns have been expressed in these pages or remain in the quietness of our hearts, may our joys always be heightened, our sorrows lightened, and our lives enriched, by the connections we make here."**

When I'm in the Hamilton Unitarian Church to speak at the Thanksgiving service, I'll end with this responsive reading, adapted from words by Rev. Fred Cappuccino, which I leave as the Reflection for us to ponder this month:

The Span of Life

The span of life passes, and the time of our years is all too brief. Let us, therefore, make room among us for those who have need of our love.

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS, LET US MAKE ROOM FOR ALL IN NEED.

Make room for the uprooted ones who have rejected their past but cannot find a future. Make room for the withdrawn, who alone know their woes and have not yet found the courage to share them.

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS, MAKE ROOM FOR THE ROOTLESS AND THE WITHDRAWN.

Let them sense that ours is not a judging fellowship. Each of us is troubled by conduct we regret and stands in need of forgiveness.

Make room for the proud, who think they know all the answers, and for those who have no answers at all.

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS, MAKE ROOM FOR THE GUILTY, THE PROUD AND THE FEARFUL.

Make room for the sophisticates who think they know how to act, and for those who are too confused to act at all.

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS, MAKE ROOM FOR THE CONFIDENT AND THE CONFUSED.

Make room for the critical who disturb the status quo, and for the uncritical who accept it.

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS, MAKE ROOM FOR EACH OF US IN OUR HUMAN CONDITION.

Let us deal gently with each other, and let us make room for each other. For the span of life passes.

AND THE TIME OF OUR YEARS IS ALL TOO BRIEF.

Amen.

And, being an optimist, I'll end with the usual plea for feedback of any kind, photos, files, discussion starters, opinions -- whatever you want to share.

Happy Thanksgiving and ————— warmest wishes for the whole month,

Anne

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." *John F. Kennedy*