

The Fish Net

Boston Presbyterian Church

Fall 2015

Rev. Shawn Croll

Dear Friends

What is happening in Europe now is the largest migration of people since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homelands, principally Syria, in a desperate search for peace and security. This has placed Europe in a very difficult situation and the response has ranged from the incredible generosity of Germany, prepared to admit hundreds of thousands, to Hungary, prepared to admit as few as possible. Indeed Hungary's response has been the most extreme building a razor wire fence on one of its borders in order to keep the refugees out. In justification for his government's decision, the Hungarian Prime Minister said that the refugees had to be kept out in order to protect Europe's Christian values and roots.

I must confess that I understand what he was saying; admitting a large number of primarily Muslim refugees might well have an impact on European society and values. At the same time though I must also admit that I found a certain irony in his logic. In the name of protecting "Christian values", those same values are seemingly being betrayed.

In the Great Commandment which cuts to the very heart of Christian ethical behaviour, Christ has called upon His disciples to love God and their neighbours. Jesus however never restricted our neighbours to people like us; rather our neighbours are anyone and everyone who needs our help. This is the point of the famous parable Jesus told after teaching the Great Commandment; the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus broadened the boundaries of who we should care for and he didn't just teach this either. We can think of His own ministry where He healed non-Jews such as the centurion's servant and the daughter of the Syrophenician woman.

It is perhaps too easy for us to sit in judgement on this humanitarian crisis saying what ought to be done, separated as we are from it by the Atlantic Ocean. The crisis does however challenge us, both as individuals and as a society. If we are Christian and if we want to say that our society is Christian or primarily shaped by Christian values, then how should we respond to a crisis such as this? Indeed if the experts are right then in the decades ahead there will be even more crises such as this due to such things as climate change, violence and political instability. Perhaps the one thing that all of this does is remind us of how truly blessed we are, to live where we do as we do. As we approach Thanksgiving we truly do have so much to give thanks for.

Blessings,

Calendar of Events

We will be celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on October 4th, which is also Worldwide Communion Sunday. If you or someone you know is not able to attend Sunday worship and would like to receive communion, please let either Shawn or a member of the Session know.

Thanksgiving Sunday falls on October 11th this year and as a part of our giving thanks there will be a food drive in support of the Milton Food Bank. If you are able to help, you can bring non-perishable food items to church that Sunday, or if you prefer, you may make a financial donation to the food bank in your regular offering envelope (writing "food bank" on the line for "other") which will be used by the Food Bank to purchase those items which they most need.

Shawn will be taking the last week of his holidays from Monday, October 12th to Tuesday, October 20th. The worship service on October 18th will be led by the Rev. Wayne Baswick. In the event of a pastoral emergency the Rev. Howard Sullivan of Knox Milton will be available. The church's phone number is 905-878-6066.

The Ladies Fellowship Group will be holding their annual Country Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 14th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. More details on the bazaar will be announced closer to the date, but please mark this major fundraising event on your calendar and plan to support it however you are able. It is through fundraisers such as this that the group is able to support various charities both locally and abroad.

The Milton Area Christian Churches Working Together will be presenting "On the Way to Bethlehem" for the 14th consecutive year. The pageant will be held at Country Heritage Park from Friday, November 27th to Sunday, November 29th, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and is free to children.

We will be celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on Sunday, December 6th.

Stewardship

As of the end of September we have raised \$6143 of the \$8500 we committed ourselves to giving to Presbyterian Sharing. At this time last year we had raised \$6852.

Food for Thought