

Calvin's Corner:

Although I have served New Hope for over a year as Retired Supply, I believe we both sensed God's leading to a more official appointment. It was a long and slow process but I am pleased that it has come to fruition.

I suspect that over the past year we have gotten to know each other to some extent, and I look forward to getting even better acquainted, but I thought I would use the opportunity to share a bit of who I am and how I came to this place. My wife Eileen and I moved into the area almost 9 years ago to serve the Cold Springs Pastoral Charge after a 5 year ministry in Bermuda. I know – why didn't we stay? You only have to live on a small island for a short while to really appreciate the expansive beauty of Hamilton Township's hills and shores - despite the snow and cold! Besides we missed family. (We now have 10 grandsons!)



Then writing this the Lectionary text was on Jesus calling disciples and I marveled at their ability to leave all behind and follow. I don't know if I could have done that if I had a wife and career like Simon Peter. When I sensed the call of God in my life I was a care-free 20 year old and had nothing to hold me back. I had already spent a summer in South America as a missionary with the Baptist Church and was completing my credentials as a single engine pilot in preparation to be a missionary pilot, flying into exotic remote villages, but God had other ideas for my life.



As I prepared for what I wanted to do, 4 years in the Ontario Bible College (now Tyndale) and then 3 years in Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, God was actually preparing me to do what God wanted, and that was pastoral ministry. As many ministers, I began in a small rural congregation in Northern Ontario and for the next 3 years they loved me as I learned how to minister to them. A congregation called and I left the north for Stouffville Ontario. While in Stouffville I returned to school, Knox College in Toronto in order to complete the required courses to become a Presbyterian Minister. Upon graduation I pastored St. Timothy's in Ajax. The ministry was a success but my marriage suffered. It was while going through my divorce that Eileen and I began attending St. Paul's U.C. Wanting a fresh start I applied and was accepted to serve the United Church. I completed their mandatory courses at Emmanuel College while serving Scugog Island U.C. From there we would head off to Bermuda and then to Cold Springs. (That's a lot of life in a few lines!)

In 2023 I retired but knew Ministers don't really retire. Ours is a calling and not a job or a career. As Paul so eloquently said it: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel!" And so after coming along side New Hope to help out, Eileen and I sensed the genuine love and welcome you had for us and it drew us in.

Small church ministry may not be for everyone but we find it rewarding, allowing that intimate contact that builds an accountable fellowship. It also means they get to know us with all our faults and failing too! But we have learned over the years to not take ourselves too seriously, knowing we are all constantly growing and learning, sometimes, even from our mistakes! I believe the Christian life is not a goal but a journey, one intended to refine and bring out the best in us.

I know I speak for Eileen also when I say we are thankful that God has brought us together, and we look forward to what God will do. Blessings, Calvin