

March 1, 2020



To my dear Westwood members and friends,

Every time I look at our new accessible washroom I am filled with delight - we made this happen! And the experience was filled with magic moments when the power of community shone forth. First, we had a thoughtful congregational discussion and decided to move ahead. Then, to make room for the new washroom, a whirlwind of volunteers cleared a decade of valuables and clutter from the storeroom in a couple of hours! A keen fundraising committee set about creative ways to raise \$25,000 and funds poured in from our own members and also from friends and acquaintances. Celtara (and Harmonia) enthralled a crowd with a benefit concert. And the Canadian Unitarian Council contributed to the project with a grant from the West Trust Fund. The washroom project was a great example of the magic of people working together toward a goal, so "Grow the Magic" is a fitting stewardship theme for the coming year! The washroom magic was built on hard work and thoughtful planning but the enthusiasm, camaraderie and the glow of satisfaction that emerged were truly energising.

Throughout the year we have had plentiful examples of Westwoodian compassion "magic" with people helping each other through difficult times, offering tangible help or an understanding ear, sharing joyful moments, providing meaningful connections, dispelling loneliness and learning how to provide safe, respectful environments for all people.

Every Second Sunday Potluck lunch is a remarkable, renewable feast. Not just because of the food but because of everyone pitching in to help and the connections that are created with all ages eating together. This commitment to our community also shows up in the many volunteers contributing their time and expertise (and muscle) to Sunday services, committees, programs, special events and work bees. Our regrading of the lot was necessary but has resulted in an improved back yard and more accessible access. I am excited to see it when our gardeners return in spring. When you realize that all our volunteer contributions come from the heart and are freely given it goes beyond the mundane into something spiritual and deeply meaningful.

Last year we set in motion plans to explore where we wanted to go in the future. Some actions are underway and are in development to be ready to come back to the congregation, others have been slower due to the energy we put into our new washroom, but rest assured they have not been forgotten. Westwood is doing some wonderful things and we want to be able to do even more – to become more fully the inclusive, compassionate community we envision. We rely on your generous financial and volunteer contributions for the coming year. Help us "Grow the Magic"!

With affection,
Lorian Kennedy
President, your Board of Trustees