

COPING WITH COVID-19

Masks and Gowns being made

GRACE CHURCH MEMBERS LEAD LOCAL GOWN PROJECT

Julie Schwartzentruber and her daughter, Emily, 20, are sewing hospital gowns for the peopleCare Communities project. The initiative is being coordinated locally by Rev. Mary Boland of Grace United Church after she put out a call to members of her congregation to help with the project. "There are about 150 volunteers involved right now," Rev. Boland said. Gowns come pre-cut in a kit and the volunteers are asked to sew them

together. "I did write some thank you notes in the inside of the gowns we made," Julie said; "as we really do appreciate everyone looking after the residents in these homes." Her mother, Audrey Pitts, is a resident at peopleCare, Tavistock. Emily is an environmental student at the University of Guelph who came home in mid-March when the schools were closed due to the start of COVID-19. "When the email came through looking for

seamstresses, we pulled out the sewing machine and Emily was able to make five gowns in just two days," Julie said.

"We are just trying to help the best way we can," Julie continued. "We have family that are working in the hospitals in Windsor and Stratford."

Rev. Boland said that this is a huge project. "We are making 3,000 gowns for all of their homes."

"This is a wonderful community initiative with an army of volunteer sewers," said Sheena Campbell, Director, Strategic Communications for peopleCare Communities Inc. "It is truly a great response thanks to Rev. Mary galvanizing everyone's help."

"Like other frontline healthcare workers, peopleCare's staff are putting themselves on the line to flatten the curve, and to care for those who become ill with COVID," says Ms. Campbell. "These gowns will help keep them safe and healthy so they can continue to do the important work of caring for our vulnerable residents."

The request for

volunteers for the gown project has gone well beyond Grace Church. "The Western Ontario Region of the United Church sent the information to the region," Rev. Boland continued.

"There are volunteer clusters in Meaford, Carlisle, Orangeville, Listowel, Embro, St. Thomas, Ayr and a very strong representation in Tavistock-Woodstock-Stratford area, and extending into Ingersoll, Tillsonburg and Courtland area as well." Other local churches have stepped forward and formed groups as well. "There is a lot of sewing going on," she said.

Currently there are 865 kits of materials in the hands of volunteers now with over 200 gowns completed. They expect over 2,000 kits to be delivered soon, and they are ready for the challenge. "That is when the nucleus of volunteers will really kick in," Rev. Mary said. "There are folks who will be delivering kits and picking up completed projects. There are group leaders who will organize the smaller clusters and there are the

individual sewers. It is a great project for moms and daughters (who live together) to do together."

"People want to help

in whatever way they can. What an incredible outpouring of support for our healthcare workers," Rev. Mary concluded.

MASKS MADE

Unrelated to the gown project is the making of protective masks, something Rev. Mary Boland of Grace United Church initiated several weeks ago. They are cloth masks, not suitable for healthcare workers, but 60 of them have already been given to folks in the Tavistock community who feel safer wearing a mask. "There was not a great demand for them, but that may increase in the future," Rev. Boland said.



PHOTO / CONTRIBUTED



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Emily Schwartzentruber works in her home outside Tavistock on sewing a gown for the gown project coordinated by Grace United Church.

IMPORTANT MUNICIPAL UPDATES



We are still at a very critical point in the fight against COVID-19 in our community. Social distancing, hand washing and staying at home have been proven as the best way to lessen the impacts of this virus. The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock reminds everyone if you have tested positive for COVID-19, if you are experiencing any of the symptoms or if you have recently returned from travelling then you must self-isolate and not be out in public.

The Municipal office in Hickson remains open but at reduced staffing levels. We encourage all residents to go to our website at ezt.ca to access online services and contact information for each department.

Due to the provincial order of gatherings of no more than 5 people, the Township will now be conducting Council meetings by electronic means. Our first video recording of the April 8, 2020 Special Council Meeting has been posted to

YouTube at <https://youtu.be/2MNzUdB9sQc>

The link is also available on our website and social media. During this period of holding its meetings electronically, the Township continues to work towards providing a livestream of its Council meetings. As well, the Township is working through how it might consider public meetings or required public delegations. The Township asks for your patience during this time as it works with this new technology. Should you have any questions, please contact Township Clerk Will Jaques at wjaques@ezt.ca

When social distancing restrictions are relaxed, Council will return as soon as possible to the standard in person format for its meetings. To help protect the health and safety of people across the province, the Ontario government has extended all emergency orders that have been put in place to-date under s.7.0.2 (4) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act until **May 12, 2020**. This includes the closure of outdoor amenities in parks and recreational areas, non-essential workplaces, public places and bars and restaurants, along with restrictions on social gatherings and the prohibition of price gouging. There are many programs now available through the Federal government to help Canadians with

financial assistance for lost income with wages, assistance with childcare, wage subsidies for employers and financial help for small business. There are programs directed to seniors, students, agri business and other industries...we urge you to seek these out, if you have not already. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan>

The Fire Department reminds everyone that all controlled burns are suspended until further notice, however, campfires are still permitted at this time. Please remember that campfires are for households only, and not for groups of more than five (5).

Southwestern Public Health is now doing Facebook live chats at 1 pm on Fridays, we encourage the public to access their website at www.swpublichealth.ca to be part of these discussions.

If you think you have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, use the **COVID-19 self-assessment** to help determine how to seek further care. Please go to <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment>