Rev. Peter’s Bio:

Who is this new minister in our midst? This is a very abbreviated sketch of my background.

Well, I am a PK (preacher’s kid); so life in the United Church is not some new phenomenon for me. Even as a youngster, I could envision myself up in the pulpit like my Dad. However, I had several learning disabilities, so school was more than a challenge, it was an obstacle I could not overcome. I dropped out of high school, and work at several jobs. The longest being at Pearson Airport, with corporate jets. While none of the jobs were great career enhancers, each job did teach me skills that would help through life.

These challenges have given me an insight into the struggles others face, especially when most people can’t fully understand their circumstances. The old adage, don’t criticize others, until you have walked a mile in their shoes, has a particular resonance for me. I also learned that, when we try, others will step forward and help us. This caring and compassion is fundamental to my understanding of the Christian faith.

When I was in my forties, I injured my back and was told that I could no longer do any physical work. Without really knowing what I was going to do, I enrolled at York University to do an under graduate degree. It had to be one of the scariest times in my life – but I made through completing my four years of a double major, in an honours program.

After a year of floundering around as to my future, I asked my wife, Donnalyn, what she thought of me entering Emmanuel College (seminary at U of T) for my Master of Divinity, and then going into ministry. To my surprise she said she wondered how long it would take for me to reach that conclusion. Again, this was not a simple decision. The Master of Divinity program was a four-year curriculum. This would mean cashing in all of our RRSP’s, and literally starting all over, at a time when most people would be starting to think of their retirement.

After graduation and ordination, I was settled in Englehart / Charlton Pastoral Charge in northern Ontario. Then after three and half years there, we moved to Carleton Place, were I served for about nine and half years. It was time to move, and some how the small pastoral charge of Enniskillen / Tyrone just north of Bowmanville/Oshawa asked if I would be interested in coming down for an interview. Perhaps their request had to do with the fact that, I had done a lot of work with labour relations before I entered ministry, and then while I was at Carleton Place, I became involved with the Intentional Interim Ministry with the Bay of Quinte Conference. Enniskillen / Tyrone ended up hiring me for three years, as they successfully closed the smaller of the two churches. With that completed, Dunbarton-Fairport United Church in Pickering asked if I would come for a year as they searched for a new minister, which I did.

I really wanted to come back to the Ottawa area, and to smaller congregations, so I applied and the pastoral charges of Russell and Metcalfe, and here I am. I like the Ottawa area, and I am truly drawn to smaller communities of faith. There seems to be a closeness that is hard to find in larger churches. I am extremely glad to be serving both of these pastoral charges, as together we walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

At each stage in my life, there have been people who encouraged, strengthened, enlightened and comforted me. As I said before, for me this is a true sign of Christian love, although I will admit that some may not have expressed it that way; it echoes Jesus’ call in Matthew 25: 35-40. Each phase of my life-experiences, has also broadened my understanding of individuals and life, while broadening my Christian identity.

Those who know me, understand that I think of life as a series of transitions that we go through; and often those transitions are difficult and painful in the short-term. This is what we see in the Bible time and time again. We make it through those difficult times with the love of God, and the support of those around us.

I hope this brief bio will give you some insight into my past, and who I am as a person.

Rev. Peter