THE ECUMENICAL CHAPLAINCY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ECUT

CALLING OUR FRIENDS

Spring 2022 Volume 16

From the Chaplains

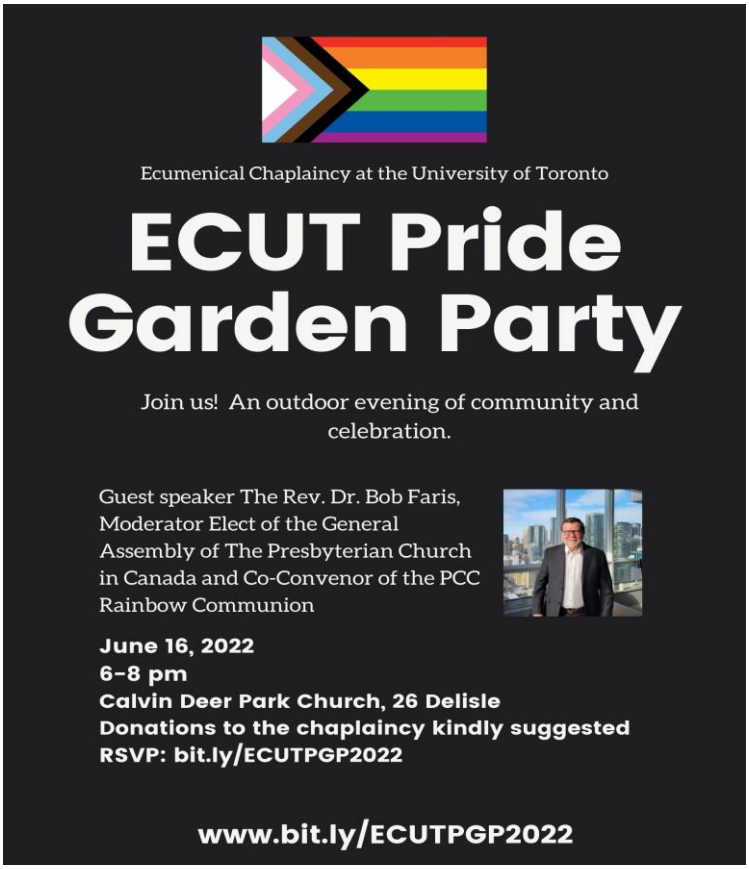
Chaplain Tim Kennedy

Mother Theresa once said, "Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty." We live in one of the most prosperous nations on earth and engage in ministry from a place of great privilege, yet find that many in our community are lonely.

Human beings were not created to go through life alone. God created us to be in relationship with one another. Jesus gathered around himself a group of people to journey with him as he went about proclaiming the liberating power of God's love.

The Ecumenical Chaplaincy stands in this great tradition of offering community and friendship in Jesus' name. As life begins to return to normal on campus and in our world, let's double down on community and friendship. *We need each other.* Perhaps this is the greatest lesson we have learned from the last two years.

Join us for an ECUT Pride Garden Party!



The Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto (ECUT) is pleased to announce that that Rev. Bob Farris, Associate Minister of St. Andrew's Church (Toronto) and Moderator Elect of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) will serve as our keynote speaker at a special Pride Garden Party on Thursday, June 16th from 6-8pm at Calvin-Deer Park Church.

Bob is a member of ECUT's Board of Directors and a lifelong Presbyterian with an ecumenical spirit and a calling to be open to the new thing that God is doing in our time. This has included more than 35 years of innovative ministry within the PCC that has been focused on understanding and working toward the improvement of lives and communities negatively impacted by social injustice and colonialism.

ECUT Pride Garden Party…..

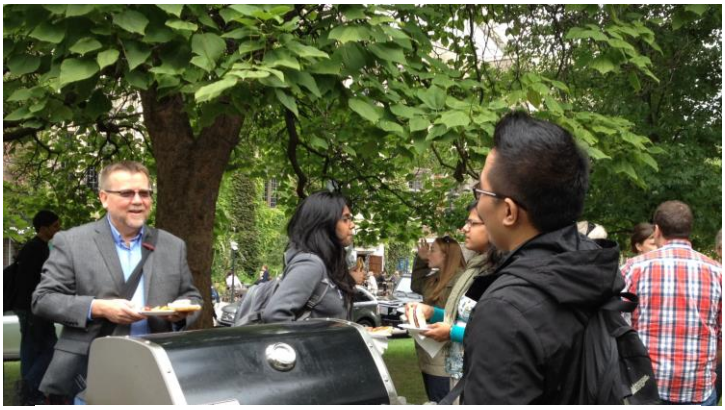
Raised in Newmarket and Sarnia, Ontario, Bob completed his undergraduate studies at Queen's University. Both his late parents were Elders and Bob felt the call to ordained ministry early in life. His involvement in the Presbyterian Young People's Society and Camp Kintail led to his ordination to camping ministry as the first fulltime Director of Kintail.

Bob's passion for the life of the global church was fed in his studies at New College in Edinburgh where he received a M.Th.. He served with the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique as a professor at the Seminário Unido de Ricatla, the first Canadian Presbyterian to be appointed to Mozambique. His admiration for the courage and witness of Christians in Mozambique in the face of immense violence and poverty led to his doctoral thesis at the University of Cape Town in 2007, which was later published with the title, Liberating Mission in Mozambique: Faith and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane. His experience in southern Africa also opened his eyes more fully to the legacy of colonialism in Canada and particularly the catastrophic harm done to Indigenous Peoples.

As a minister at St. Andrew's Church, Bob shares in worship leadership, coordinates large Out of the Cold and Refugee Sponsorship programs, has provided innovative leadership in adult education and has fostered a partnership relationship with Marabella Church in Trinidad.

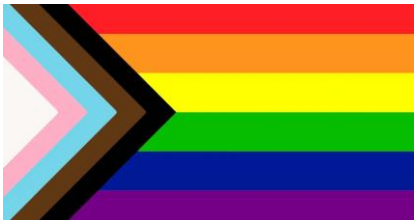
Over four years, Bob served as Co-Convener of the General Assembly's Special Listening Committee re. LGBTQI, known as Rainbow Communion. As a gay man, Bob has personally experienced the harm done to people who identify as LGBTQI in the church. He has sought to live with integrity while calling the church to change its doctrine and practice that has diminished and harmed God's beloved LGBTQI children. He rejoiced when all twenty-three recommendations of Rainbow Communion were adopted in 2021 as well as the Remits which allowed for same sex marriage and the ordination of people in same sex relationships.

ECUT looks forward to this special community event in June and to celebrating all that God has done and continues to do in Christian communities moving toward inclusion and affirmation. Join us by registering your attendance at www.bit.ly/ECUTPGP2022



Bob Faris (left) chatting with students at an ECUT BBQ in 2012

Qu(e)erying Religion (QR) Fund News



ECUT is thrilled to be the recipient of an anonymous $50,000 donation to the QR Fund for Gender, Sexuality and Faith in Campus Ministry. We are deeply grateful for this act of generosity and celebrate what it means for affirming and inclusive campus ministry.

This fund started in 2013 with a gala "Ave QR: On the Way" in the hopes of raising support for ECUT's personnel and programs for current and future generations of LGBTQ students, thus freeing up funding from other sources for other projects and new initiatives. This donation helps to make this vision possible and the ECUT board is developing guidelines on the use of this money.

A recent QR student states: "*I have learned that gay people and Christians don't have to be two sides fighting against each other. There are many who are willing to work together to create loving Christian communities that value everyone's voice, but there is still much work to do.*"

We welcome your donations and encourage you to consider supporting campus ministry so that we can continue to do this important work.

Grateful to Our Friends

Many thanks to the following donors and sponsors who contributed to ECUT since **November 2021.** Your financial support is making a difference in student lives across the U of T. We do our best to acknowledge all donations received. Please let us know if your name is missing.

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CONTACT US: ECUT, 59 St. George Street, Toronto ON M5S 2E6
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Reflections on Qu(e)erying Religion
by Ruqayyah

This past year, 2021-2022, I had the opportunity to serve as the Qu(e)erying Religion Work Study Student with ECUT through the Multi Faith Centre at U of T. This was an experience I very much enjoyed, as even though it was during the midst of the pandemic and conducted entirely online, I was able to meet many like-minded individuals from the greater University of Toronto community.

As part of my role, I had the opportunity to conduct bi-weekly drop-in sessions, which switched to weekly drop-in sessions later in the term. This was my favourite part of the role as I was able to meet with other queer students of faith to offer support, encouragement and love, and provide resources for queer students and allies alike. The other part of my role included developing a resource list of local affirming communities of faith and organizations. It was very encouraging to see so many spiritual and faith-based spaces being open and welcoming for those who identify as LGBTQI+. I was able to use this resource list during my drop-in sessions to help support students, and this is something that will be available through ECUT and the Multi Faith Centre in future years.

Overall, this year was an amazing and affirming experience that has not only helped me develop my own facilitation and leadership skills, but helped me meet other queer students, work on critical resource lists, and assist in planning large scale events that represent the various intersections of faith, spirituality, religion, gender, and sexuality.

Thanks to Jae!!

After five years as associate chaplain at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus, Leonard Clarke Jr (Jae) has left ECUT for a position at Yonge Street Mission as of May 1, 2022. We're grateful for Leonard's commitment to supporting student spiritual well-being, for being a welcoming and inclusive Christian presence, and for sharing his warmth and friendliness on campus. Over these years Jae worked many extra hours, offering time and care for UTSC students who were struggling with their identities, particularly those who were recognizing their identity as LGBTQI2S+ and who sought him out as a safe person to talk to.

When reflecting on his ministry at UTSC, Jae said hanging out with students was by far the best part of the work. Whether shooting the breeze or listening to students share deeply profound stories, each conversation leaves a mark.

Jae offered an online reflection for St. Andrew's church Lent series. He spoke about community as whole-heartedness, acceptance, healing and belonging. "***We need people. Community reveals who we are as people and how we are going to be purposeful in the world, it helps reveal our place, it's not supposed to be divisive or segregated…. Community is finding who you are, joining others, and using this recognition to bring change to the world.***" Thanks, Jae, for bringing these gifts and this wisdom to your campus chaplaincy work with ECUT! We wish you all the best.