



25 Main Street, P.O. Box 61, Grand Bend, Ontario N0M 1T0 * (519) 238-2402
huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com * www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com

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Compassion Transcending

When learning things, especially if it involves animals, we often learn more about ourselves.

Greetings,

The roller door to the shed was still unlatched. The dog was able to swing the door out from the structure and slide through the slit. The door swung back behind her sealing out the harsh weather elements. She went directly to the large pile of burlap bags tossed in a corner. Once again she stood in the middle of the pile, circling around and around while scratching at the bags. In so doing she created a deep depression similar to the shape of a cereal bowl. This was her third night staying in the shed. The early winter nights were forever getting colder. Although she could fend for herself in numerous ways, she knew she needed shelter, especially in her condition. It was a good sign the roller door had not been latched, even though she knew people had seen her.

When the farmer saw a large black dog leaving his shed he investigated inside. No harm was done, just the pile of bags dished out like a nest. He noted the dog looked in good condition, not gaunt, so perhaps was only passing through. He was reluctant to offer the dog food, but after a week it appeared the dog was staying. It didn't take much persuasion for the farmer's children to accept the new dog.

A trip to the veterinarian resulted in a physical, inoculations, and parasite medication. An X-ray revealed a small white dot, likely a BB pellet. The vet also confirmed the dog to be pregnant. As weeks passed the dog grew larger and larger. A whelping bed was made for her in the warmer barn. Then one cold February night she delivered eleven puppies. Nine survived their ordeal. She was a good mother nursing and cleaning them, and tolerated their constant nipping.

One early spring day when the sun was warm and the air fresh the puppies and mother were taken outside to a snow-fence pen on the lawn. Soon afterwards, the mother jumped the fence and headed to the woods. The farmer and his children were shocked the mother would abandon her puppies. However, within the hour the dog returned, jumped back into the pen, and regurgitated the contents of her stomach. The pups dove in and devoured the warm red meat, perhaps a groundhog.

Within a year all the puppies were adopted throughout the community. Occasionally the new owners would visit back to show how the pups had grown.

One spring day the dog was taken up to the house. A pet goose had laid a clutch of eggs along the south wall of the garage. About fourteen eggs filled a deep nest comprised of goose down, feathers, and straw. The goose was sitting on the nest to trigger embryo development with the temperature of her body. In so doing all the eggs would hatch at approximately the same time. It was important for the eggs to be kept warm. As the farmer and the dog walked passed the nest, the goose took off honking and hissing. The dog and the farmer were startled that the goose would leave her eggs exposed. They stared at the nest. The farmer was bewildered. Not so the dog, for whatever reason, perhaps maternal instinct, she calmly walked over to the nest and proceeded to push in the edges of the nest with her nose until all the eggs were covered with down and straw. She then lightly patted down the fluffy mixture with her chin. The dog returned to the side of the bewildered, and astonished farmer.

Sincerely,

Tom Challen

Editor's note: Please consider sharing your Hope. You can send us a letter for publication or even just a few of your thoughts to our email Hyatt.le.rc@gmail.com

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

