

UPC Summer 2023 Newsletter



**The flowers appear on the earth; time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.**

(Song of Songs 2:12)

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Dear UPC,

What a joy to write my very first message to you this month!

It is my great privilege to have been called by our Lord and by you to minister to the members, adherents of UPC and the community of Unionville. I would like to grab this opportunity to thank the Rev. Joan Masterton and the UPC Search Team for their dedication, prayers and tireless efforts during the search process.

I feel so blessed and very grateful for your love, care, thoughtfulness and the warm welcome that you all offered to me and my children here at UPC!

I was truly honoured by the beautiful turnout at the morning service and the fellowship on my first Sunday- July 2 and the memorable induction service and reception on July 9. They were very joyful and emotional days that I will always cherish in my heart.

I also wanted to thank all of you who diligently prepared the manse for my arrival. Mojo, my 10-year-old Chihuahua - and I are very blessed to have such a comfortable, cozy and relaxing home in Cornell. I am very grateful that our Lord led our paths together here in Unionville. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you better and to celebrate the Congregation's 40 Anniversary with you in 2024! As Rev. Helen Hartai so delicately highlighted in her message at my induction service, I am indeed "very pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us." 1. Thess. 2, 8

Our Sermon Series – Embracing the Kingdom- will be continued:

Cast the Net "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind." – Matthew 13:47

Part I: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 | "For Righteousness

Part II: Matthew 14:13-21 | "For Compassion"

Part III: Matthew 14:22-33 | "For Faith"

Part IV: Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28 | "For the Heart"

The Keys "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." – Matthew 16:19a

Part I: Matthew 16:13-20 | "Identity"

Part II: Matthew 16:21-28 | "Confrontation"

Part III: Matthew 18:15-20 | "Accountability"

Part IV: Matthew 18:21-35 | "Forgiveness"



Anita



Thank you to UPC's Search Team members for their careful and thoughtful work over the last year or more. They have put in many hours meeting with our congregation, studying resumes of candidates, interviewing, etc. Together with the leadership of Rev. Joan Masterton, they have worked faithfully and with dedication in the best interests of this congregation. We are grateful to: Interim Moderator, Rev. Joan Masterton, Co-chairs, Jean Cook and Margaret MacK, Team members, Tom Giles, Ellen Kaine, Brent MacKinnon, Pat Richards, Nancy Robertson, Alison Toscano. **A special thanks to our Rev. Joan Masterton**, who, as our Interim Moderator, has truly been a blessing to our church. Joan

moderated Session meetings, organized pulpit supply, provided wise leadership as Moderator of the Minister Search Team and provided pastoral care. She was there for all of us.

Session

UPC's Session has faithfully worked together to keep our church on an even keel during the time of our vacancy. But, how wonderful it was on Sunday, July 2, to welcome Anita into the UPC family as our minister. We are so thankful that her faith journey has brought her to us. We are ready and eager to continue the journey ahead with her - ready to continue writing UPC's story together - living in Christ - trusting in God – with Service, Inclusion, Love and Kindness.



Congratulations to Urwah (Julie's daughter) on her graduation from Markville High School. Some of you will already know that our Urwah has not stood still after graduating. On Friday, July 7, she left for a trip to Israel, sponsored through the PCC. She will be learning about the plight of the Palestinians. This should be an incredible time of learning for Urwah. The trip was for 10 days. We hope to hear from Urwah about her trip sometime after her return. Please hold Urwah in your thoughts and prayers. It's onward and upward after her return too. In September, Urwah will continue her studies at the U of T, majoring in History and Religion.



I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. (Psalm 32:8)

UPC Refugee Sponsorships Update on

Abass and family

You'll remember that at the beginning of 2022, UPC started a process, in conjunction with the Refugee Sponsorship team at the Presbyterian Church in Canada office, to sponsor an Afghani family as refugee claimants to Canada.

The family – a husband, wife and two young adult children – is currently safely out of Afghanistan, living in Tajikistan as refugees – until Canada approves their refugee application to come to Canada.

On behalf of UPC, Randy Carr has been managing the refugee application. Working with Randy has been the co-sponsor of the application, Maryam Durani, who is the husband's sister – and Randy's next-door neighbour.

Thankfully, the application has successfully passed several milestones in the past 18 months, and is "on track". But there are still several milestones and perhaps 12 months to go before Canada provides the final approval and we can welcome Abass, Sosan, Ali Raze and Zainab to Canada.

Randy Carr



Ali Al-Harbawi

A young Iraqi man was brought to our attention by the PCC in 2019. His family live here in Markham and Ali has been living in Jordan since he fled from Iraq. He is the last of his immediate family who has not yet made it to Canada. UPC agreed to be the co-sponsor with Ali's father, Yesri, and the process began. Under the guidance of the

Refugee Team of PWS&D the appropriate IRCC (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada) forms and conditions were completed. There have been numerous steps since then and in April, 2023, Ali was approved for settlement in Canada. The last piece that needs to happen is for him to undergo a medical examination. As you can well imagine, his mother and father, Mouroj and Yesri, are anxious for this to take place. We hope and pray that this will happen very soon.

Margaret MacKenzie



The Importance of Summer Stewardship

As we take our summer vacation time, we are thankful to have a church family to return to. While we take needed time for rest and relaxation, let's remember that salaries need to be paid and our other expenses continue. Your offerings are gratefully accepted by e-transfer, through the "Donate Now" link on UPC's website OR why not consider signing up for PAR (Pre-Authorized Mthly Remittance), forms are available in the foyer or speak with Julie. That way UPC will have your support no matter where summer takes you. Your continuing, faithful support is greatly appreciated.

HUGS

*Hugs are a warm and wonderful gift,
they give a person such a big lift.*

*They put on a smile and cure a pout,
give them away all day and never run out.*

*Hugs are fun and so easy to give,
when you know how to hug, you know how to live.*

*written by Brian Howard Buffey
submitted by Tom Giles*





Thank You Thank You

Each summer, the volunteers from *Celebration PC* have been helping UPC maintain our sizable yard. They cut, they trim, they weed, they bundle, and they also donated a hedge hamper! We thank *Celebration* and our own green-thumb, Lorne, who gardens and washes windows. Lorne has started cleaning our windows and if you can help, please contact Lorne or Julie.

A Prayer

*Dear God,
Speak gently in my silence.
When the loud outer noises of my surroundings
and the loud inner noises of my fears
keep pulling me away from you,
help me to trust that you are still there
even when I am unable to hear you.
Give me ears to listen to your small, soft voice
saying:
"Come to me, you who are overburdened, and I
will give you rest . . .
for I am gentle and humble of heart." Let that
loving voice be my guide.
Amen.*

By Henri Nouwen

Urwah's Journey

Thank you for all your prayers, Urwah returned to Canadian soil on Sunday, July 16 after being in Palestine/Israel for 10 days. The brutally hot weather and the experiences she had encountered have exhausted Urwah physically and emotionally. However, this is what Urwah had told Presbyterian Canada upon her return:

"The JAI program was absolutely amazing and is a trip of a lifetime. Ibrahim and his team did an amazing job at educating us, organizing and planning our days. There was a perfect amount of education and leisure time. I met some amazing people from all throughout the world including the local Palestinians themselves. I would more than recommend this opportunity as it was really eye-opening for us and made us realize the amount of sufferings that Palestinians go through on a regular basis and this trip provided us with the education to allow us to come back and spread the word. I highly recommend this trip as I feel there is a lack of knowledge on this conflicting issue, I myself plan on going back next summer. I have made friends and a family for a lifetime in Palestine, it is a beautiful country with kind-hearted people who don't even hesitate for one second when it comes to generosity despite all the sufferings that occur in their lives daily."

Urwah is hoping to become the voice of the Palestinians and is working on a presentation to share her experiences with us and other churches in the near future.

May God bless Urwah with strength and wisdom to become the spokesperson of the voiceless Palestinians.

