

News from UPC *The Season of Lent 2024*



Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

Unionville Presbyterian Church www.upc.community
600 Village Parkway, Unionville, ON L3R 6C2 905-475-6233

A message from our Minister

Reflection for the dedication of our new door

Have you ever considered how many different thresholds you cross during the course of a single day? First your own bathroom, kitchen, main entrance or elevator doors, shop entrances, doctor's office, pharmacy, gym, community center, art gallery, coffee shop, bakery, library, concert hall... All these doors guide us into different spaces that have distinct functions in our lives.

A few years ago, I had the privilege to co-host a reflection series based on the book of Joyce Rupp. The meditations encouraged us to contemplate several different doors in our lives. The author emphasized the importance of spending time within our own hearts.

Jesus encouraged us his followers to create an uninterrupted inner space where we can intimately communicate with God. *"When you pray, -said Jesus- go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen."* (Mt. 6,6) Hopefully, this Lenten season we will give permission to ourselves to shift into a slower speed, allow ourselves to spend more time with God and see ordinary subjects from a new and fresh perspective.

"I am convinced that peace among nations will not happen until there is true peace within the hearts of individuals. Within my own life a stronger peace has gradually taken root, mostly due to my commitment to daily, personal meditation. When I open the door of my heart and spend time with the Holy One, I become aware of what thwarts my effort to be peaceful. If I tend to the source of the distress, this, in turn, leads me to greater serenity. Then, when I move beyond the door of my heart into the wider world, this embraced peace accompanies me. Unless I deliberately choose to turn away from inner harmony, I can count on it to bless the people and the work of my life." Joyce Rupp *Open the Door A Journey to the True Self*.

I pray that as we cross the threshold of a new Lent, we will be able to find space, freedom, restoration, and peace.



Continued on next page.

Prayer.....

Eternal God, watchful and caring, our source and our refuge, all that we are and all that we have is yours. Accept us now, as we dedicate our new side door through which we enter our church building to worship, learn and connect with you, with each other and with our community. May you bless all who enter through our gates so that they may always find here a safe, kind, inclusive and nourishing space for themselves and for their loved ones.

We pray that as we exit over this threshold — once nourished and strengthened by your message of hope, we would bring your presence with us and share the love, mercy, and compassion that we learn from Jesus, our Brother and Master.

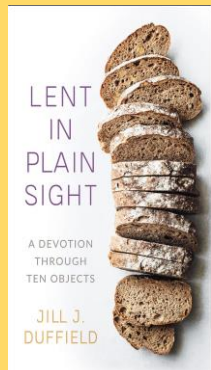
May your Peace that is beyond all human understanding dwell within our walls and may all who enter and exit here find rest for their souls. In the Name of the Father- our Creator, and of the Son -our Redeemer, and of the Holy Spirit- our sustainer. Amen

Rev. Anita

Lenten Reflections and Easter Services

You are invited to join!

In this season of spiritual renewal, Rev. Anita will lead us to read and reflect on the book, **LENT IN PLAIN SIGHT: A Devotion through Ten Objects** by **Jill J. Duffield**. You can join Rev. Anita on **Tuesdays at 11 am (hybrid)** or on **Wednesdays at 7 pm via Zoom (Meeting ID: 860 7576 5600 Passcode: 612303)** starting **the week of February 12, 2024.**



Special Services

Palm Sunday Communion Service

Sunday, March 24, 11:00am

Maundy Thursday Agape Meal

Thursday, March 28, 7:00pm

Good Friday Service

Friday, March 29, 10:30am

Easter Sunday

Sunday, March 31, 11:00am

Lenten Series Objects

Feb. 13

Feb. 18

Feb. 25

Mar. 3

Mar. 10

Mar. 17

Mar. 24

(Palm Sunday)

Holy Week

Mar. 28

(Maundy Thursday)

Mar. 29

(Good Friday)

Mar. 31

(Easter Sunday)

Dust

Bread

Cross

Coins

Shoes

Oil

Palms

Coats

Towels

Thorns

Stones



Maundy Thursday



The Thursday before Easter *What does it mean?*

The word maundy dates back to the 15th century and is derived from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning “commandment.” Our word “mandate” comes from this same Latin word. This word “mandatum” is used in John 13:34-35 in the Latin translation of the Bible. In John’s account of the night of the Last Supper, Jesus said to his disciples I give you a new commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. This verse gave this day its name. So Maundy Thursday, or “Commandment Thursday,” could also be called “Love Thursday.”

On Maundy Thursday, we can pause to reflect on the love of Jesus for us. Do we show the world around us that we are Christians by loving each other as Jesus loved us?

2024 Maundy Thursday, March 28

Make God’s Unconditional Love Visible

Whenever, contrary to the world’s vindictiveness, we love our enemy, we exhibit something of the perfect love of God, whose will is to bring all human beings together as children of one Father.

Whenever we forgive instead of getting angry at one another, bless instead of cursing one another, tend one another’s wounds instead of rubbing salt into them, hearten instead of discouraging one another, give hope instead of driving one another to despair, hug instead of harassing one another, welcome instead of cold-shouldering one another, thank instead of criticizing one another, praise instead of maligning one another . . . in short, whenever we opt for and not against one another, we make God’s unconditional love visible; we are diminishing violence and giving birth to a new community.

Henri Nouwen

A Message from the Clerk of Session

Margaret MacKenzie

Session continues to work together, meeting monthly, always with UPC’s values of Serving, Inclusion, Love and Kindness as our guide. We are grateful to all of you in our UPC family who help throughout the year to make our church a place that reflects those values.

As the new year is getting underway, I am grateful and encouraged by the good people here at UPC. Reflecting on this, brought to mind these inspiring words taken from the late Rev. Roger Hunter’s, *Jeoffry the Cat Meditations*...

Christian encouragement is the bold affirmation of God-among-us even in the face of forces that would squash life out of those who are vulnerable.

Encourage new life and be encouraged!! Christian community is that intense, beautiful, volatile, fruitful, peaceful, urgently needed mix of God and self and neighbor that promotes life. Be encouraged! Hold hands with your community. Hold on tight. Build venues where drifting humanity can be lovingly encouraged!

Be encouraged! Be encouraging!



**UPC Annual
Congregational Meeting
Sunday, February 25, 2024
following the service**

Come for this important time as we gather as a congregation to:

- » **Share lunch**
- » **Reflect on the year that was**
- » **Discuss, plan and look forward in hope to the year ahead - our 40th**
- » **Commit ourselves as a congregation of God’s people**



A report from the Maintenance Team

There has been a lot for the maintenance committee to do this past year.

Our sincere thanks to Jean, Lorne and Rob Cook, Marg MacKenzie, Vikki Cox and Lynn Taylor for helping with the painting and maintenance at the Manse in preparation for Anita arriving. Pot lights and under counter lighting were installed in the kitchen to improve visibility and a track light was installed in the upper hallway to provide light in the stairwell and the exterior lights that were leaking were replaced. A broken shower door in the basement was repaired, the front door lock failed and was replaced. While volunteers painted the bedrooms, we did hire Shannon to prep the walls and paint the stairwells and the entire main floor space. By the time all the work was done the house was looking cozy and ready.

Thanks to a grant received in the Fall, we were able to move ahead with replacing the back door to the church. The replacement door is aluminum which will not need painting and has thermal qualities. It is from the same company that provided the doors to the interior lobby and of matching style. While we have had to add a small amount to the total cost, we could not have done this without the grant.

As we move into 2024 there are some exterior maintenance items at the Manse that will need addressing and which have been budgeted. At the church, our main maintenance focus will be the ceiling and pillars of the front porch.

However, our car park surface needs to be replaced this year. We have been working closely with the City to come up with a plan to address the car park. Plans are under way to widen the curve leading into the carpark, address the poor drainage at the corner and resurface the carpark. The anticipated spend by UPC is \$30,000. As we consider the budget for 2024, please bear this cost in mind.

If you notice anything that is broken or in need of attention, please let us know.

Alison, Vikki & Lynn

Update on UPC's refugee sponsorship – Abass' 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 all of the (many many) steps in the past 24 months. Now it is an issue of waiting for Immigration Canada to provide the final approval, and then soon we can welcome Abass, Sosan, Ali Raze and Zainab to Canada.

Randy Carr



UPC Newsletter

UPC Newsletter is issued four times annually (Lent, Summer, Fall, Advent) for members and friends of UPC.

Contributions on the life and work of UPC are always welcome.

Please send your submission to julie@upc.community at any time throughout the year!

