



The season of Advent has arrived, Christmas is coming!

You are invited to Unionville Presbyterian Church...

Newsletter

Advent Season 2024

Unionville Presbyterian Church

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Advent Message from Rev. Anita

As I am writing this reflection, the weather outside is mild, with almost spring like freshness in the air. Not surprisingly, the urge of planting surfaced in my heart, and I couldn't resist to bring inside some thawed potting soil. I decided to utilize a gift that I had been saving for the winter season – two herbal starter kits- a parsley one and a lavender one. Even after almost two decades of acclimatizing to the long Canadian winter months- I need some additional boost of energy that the joy of growth and new life can bring on dull and gray mornings.

My little indoor garden project also helped me with deepening my own understanding of the central message of our Advent series about the righteous branch, in which we have been focusing on the different aspects of Joy. Joy that comes from belonging to the Community of God's people, joy that springs from prayerfully relying on Christ's strength and not on our own, joy and excitement that new beginnings and growth bring into our lives.

Jesus' arrival brought an unexpected fresh start into human history. From the lineage of David, a Righteous Branch shoot forth that had broken though and brought fresh joy and deepened hope into the lives of God's people. The prophets were forecasting His arrival, the angels appeared to Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zachariah and the shepherds. They all received both surprising -yet encouraging revelations regarding the arrival of the Promised One. And as they dared to embrace God's new plan for their lives, they all became integral characters of the Christmas Story.

May we also be astonished yet again by the unique opportunity of new beginnings and new growth this Christmas as we continue our faith journey with Christ- the Messiah and open our hearts to deeper Joy.

Rev. Anita

“In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.” ~ Jeremiah 33:16



**Christmas Eve ~ Dec. 24
Candlelight Service at 7 pm**



Everyone is welcome!
Invite your family and friends to a night of beautiful music and prayers.

The UPC choir will be presenting the cantata,
Touched by a Child, Touched by a King by
John Purifoy.

Hi, Dear UPC Friends,

What if we birthed God's light and life in our world in a way that others could see. I believe Christmas comes every time we believe in hope over despair, in joy over sadness, in peace over anxiety and warring, and in love over hatred.

by Presbyterian poet, Ann Weems

I don't know about you, but the Advent-Christmas season is a time I always look forward to at UPC. Our beautiful banners and Christmas tree brighten our sanctuary as each Sunday of Advent we light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. At our Christmas potluck lunch, we laugh and share fellowship and food together. Extending Christmas cheer to others in our community is important at UPC too and we do so through CAYR and 360 Kids.

And, while all is not right with our world, on Christmas Eve at our Candlelight service, when the lights are dimmed and we pass the candle flame to each other to the singing of Silent Night, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding settles into my heart.

Merry Christmas,

Margaret

Hoping to see you soon,
here at UPC!

Wishing you & those you love peace of heart, ease of mind, serenity of soul and sweet moments of joy this Christmas.



“Rejoice in the Lord always I say again, Rejoice.” ~ Philippians 4:4

December 15, 2024, was a historical moment both for Unionville Community PC and for Celebration PC. For the very first time we worshipped together and shared fellowship following the service. Rev. Anita and Rev. Peter Ma- CPC's interim moderator- prepared a contemporary worship outline together and shared a message about Joy. CPC's worship team and UPC's instrumentalists lead a joint worship and UPC's choir and Rachad elevated the mood with their joyful anthem.

In the Christmas message Rev. Anita highlighted that the presence of God gives us permanent joy and spiritual freedom when life is full of challenges and difficulties. Rev. Peter reflected on how to share the joy of the Gospel message with others in a practical way – not to steal, not to bully but to give from our hearts as we learnt from Jesus.

Rev. Anita



Thank you for your generosity!

UPC's Holiday Wish Program

45 gift cards of \$25 each (worth \$1125, in total) were donated by UPC individuals to those served by the two agencies: 360Kids and CAYR Community Connections.

On December 12, UPC also helped to support CAYR's annual holiday dinner for those served through CAYR, by hosting the event at UPC, contributing to the cost, providing musical entertainment, and engaging socially with attendees. CAYR Community Connections is most grateful for UPC's continued support and encouragement for their services to some of the most vulnerable in our community since it began 31 years ago.

Pat Richards



UPC volunteers: Alison, Eleanor, Pat, Linda, Rachad



2024 Mistletoe Market

It's hard to believe that a year has flown and the 2024 Mistletoe Market is now in our rear view mirror. Now that we have recovered, it's time to reflect and thank those who selflessly donated their time and goods to make this event happen. To single out an individual would be an injustice, but just this once I believe a shout-out is necessary to thank Betty Wilson for her tireless efforts to make the Jewelry table the success it was. Every day for the week leading up to the market you would find Betty with her head down pricing the mountain of items for sale at the jewelry table. A daunting task to say the least – Thank You Betty!

As a result of the Mistletoe Market, we are pleased to announce that UPC was able to raise \$5,000.00 in support of the Presbyterians Sharing (*a national church fund that supports mission and ministry in Canada and around the world*), 90% going to Presbyterian Sharing and 10% to the PSW&D Olive Tree in Palestine.

As a ministry and outreach of UPC in our Community, it is felt that Mistletoe Market reached that goal. We are all aware of the phrase: “It takes a community to Raise a Child”, but this can also be applied to the fact that it took all the UPC Community to make this Mistletoe Market the success it was, and a special **THANK YOU** is expressed to all those who participated.

Respectfully submitted:
Your Mistletoe Market Committee:
Alison Toscano, Lynn Taylor & Vikki Cox



A brief update from the Finance Team

Your Finance Team is working hard to manage and oversee UPC's finances in the best way possible. As part of that, UPC's financial recording system has made improvements in the last months that allow us to monitor our financial position in a more timely and efficient manner. These changes for the better have been possible by working with our new bookkeeper, Lydia, and due to upgrades in our accounting system. Lydia is actually able to provide her services to our church in less hours than originally anticipated, which keeps our costs here down.

2024 has been a unique financial challenge. The cost (shared with the City of Markham) of upgrading our parking lot, although financially supported by the Hope in Action Fund, has still strained our bottom line. We have established an interest free loan with the City for the original estimated cost to spread that burden over time. However, the extra excavation required to address standing water in the car park resulted in an unbudgeted \$12,000 of expense which has not yet been paid.

Thank you all for your financial contributions to UPC. Our congregational givings are on track to meet expectations for this year and this is something we can celebrate together. Your ongoing support and the resilience of the UPC Community Church to keep caring with compassion and love for the community is the cornerstone of what allows our church to continue its ministry.

Thank you for your generosity.

UPC Finance Team: Alison Toscano (Chair),
Margaret MacKenzie, Julie Swei



Imagine: a beautifully set table, a delicious and nutritious two course meal, warm conversation and surrounded by friends.

If this appeals to you, join us at the ENJOY (Encouraging Nurturing Just Older Youth) Group lunch on Thursdays at noon.

This thriving ministry within UPC is made possible by a host of volunteers who see a need and magically step up to help. Tables get set, meals and servers appear, clean up happens.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who helps make it possible.

Equally, thanks to all who attend and make others feel welcome when they share their cherished gifts of conversation and caring.

Blessings, Linda



ENJOY Christmas Tacky Gift Exchange
Thursday, December 12, 2024

Alison, Eleanor, Helen, David, Tom,
Margaret, Betty, Rachad, Julie, Linda,
George, Pat, Scott, Lynn, Vikki, Doreen

What is Joy?

"Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God's love for us. We are inclined to think that when we are sad we cannot be glad, but in the life of a God-centered person, sorrow and joy can exist together.

Joy is essential to spiritual life. Whatever we may think or say about God, when we are not joyful, our thoughts and words cannot bear fruit. Jesus reveals to us God's love so that his joy may become ours and that our joy may become complete. Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing — sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death — can take that love away."

Henri Nouwen



Betty and Baby Cameron



*May the blessings of Christmas
bring hope to your life and peace to your heart.*