

## News from UPC *The Season of Lent 2025*



**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead  
(1 Peter 1:3)**

Unionville Presbyterian Church      [www.upc.community](http://www.upc.community)  
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### **Rev. Anita's Farewell Message**

On my last Sunday we read the Gospel passage in which Jesus talks about the parable of the barren fig tree and uses it in a crucial teachable moment. (Luke 13:1-19) The crowd and the disciples were troubled by the news of two terrible disasters. They were most likely upset, saddened and maybe even scared.

Many of us are concerned about the signs of our times, natural disasters, heated political climate, the future of our denomination, perhaps even about the very ministry and the future of our own congregations.

Jesus reminds us in this parable that during hardships and difficulties it is best that we focus on investing our time and our gifts into enriching God's Kingdom. Jesus' message was very straight forward- emphasizing some of the core characteristics of the Gospel.

Any time we have is gifted to us by God's grace and the best way to spend it is by prioritizing on investing our gifts, talents and efforts into the Kingdom. This is not some kind of an escapism; it is about growing in our stewardship of our time, gifts, talents and assets as Christians and find the meaning of life in fruitful ministry.

2025 marks my 25th year in ministry and I am truly grateful that God allowed me to spend some of that time at UPC. Thank you for your warm and hospitable welcome, for all the special moments in ministry together.

May our Lord guide you, watch over you and bless you with many fruitful years of ministry in Unionville! You will always be remembered in my prayers.

"I am the vine; you are the branches.  
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;  
apart from me you can do nothing." Gospel of John 15: 5



## A Message from the Clerk of Session

Dear UPC people,

As most of you will know by now, Rev. Anita has resigned as our minister and is taking up a new path as Chaplain/Music Care Specialist at Durham Christian Homes, Seniors' Housing and Long-Term Care. At coffee time on her last Sunday, people expressed their appreciation of Anita, especially her pastoral care, her Bible Study leadership and her thoughtful Sunday services. Anita was presented with a gift of Chimes of Tuscany (wind chimes) and a bouquet of flowers. We sincerely wish Anita God's blessing in all the future holds for her.

Now what...

Session elders will be doing what needs to be done to ensure the wellbeing of UPC. We will be doing this with the support of Oak Ridges Presbytery, who will appoint an interim moderator to help to guide us going forward. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Session will be meeting with Presbytery Pastoral Relations for the customary "exit interview". We should have an interim moderator by that time.

As well, the departure of the minister will change our 2025 budget from that which was presented and voted on at our AGM. We are awaiting figures on some specific costs from Presbytery to finalize numbers. The changes will not have a negative impact on our bottom line. When the final new proposed 2025 budget is ready you will receive it, and it will need congregational approval.

Rev. Anita kindly ensured our pulpit supply for the month of April. This will be one of the roles of our interim moderator once appointed. Here is the schedule we have at this time.

April 6: Christine Way-Skinner  
13: Michael Way-Skinner (Palm Sunday)  
18: Rev. Joan Masterton (Good Friday **10 am**)  
20: Rev. Heather Jones (Easter)  
27: Christine Way-Skinner

Be assured that you will be kept informed as we go forward together and that your input will be sought. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to any member of Session. We are truly grateful for every person in this congregation – for all that we have accomplished together and for all that the future holds. You are a blessing to this church.

Loving God,

In the times when the path forward does not seem clear,  
shine your light in us, through us and over us.

Help us to see with your eyes,  
to be prepared to change and grow with graciousness,  
so we can be the church you have called us to be. Amen

Blessings,

Margaret, Clerk

(Session elders: Eleanor Clayton, Tom Giles, Danielle Huang, Heather Jones,  
Pat Richards, Alison Toscano)



**Lent** is a time of returning to God. It is a time to confess how we keep looking for joy, peace, and satisfaction in the many people and things surrounding us, without really finding what we desire. Only God can give us what we want. So we must be reconciled with God, as Paul says, and let that reconciliation be the basis of our relationships with others. Lent is a time of refocusing, of re-entering the place of truth, of reclaiming our true identity.

- Excerpt from *Sabbatical Journey*  
By *Henri Nouwen*

We were thrilled to celebrate Preetham's success in being accepted to a summer course for high school students at Harvard University and the fact that UPC, through *Hope In Action*, were able to make a financial contribution to his tuition costs.

All the best Preetham!  
We are proud of you!



**Front Landscaping:** As we near Spring and the return of leaves on the trees and flowers in the gardens, we are preparing final plans for replanting the front landscaping. We hope to finalize design in April and plant at the end of May. Thanks for Lorne Cook for being our gardening guru for this project.

**New Fridge:** Our sincere thanks to Alan and Yana Lok (Alan installed the AV system we use) for donating a new fridge for our kitchen. It had been noted that a freezer compartment in the fridge would be helpful and then the offer of a gently used fridge with a freezer was offered.

## FUNDRAISING AT UPC

Our 2025 Spring **Frozen Food Order** (aka Meals on Wheels) had raised \$756 with individual meat pies, meatballs, lentil veg. soup, and green onion & cheese biscuits.

A big thank-you to chefs, *Alison, Margaret and Julie*, for contributing their time and ingredients, *Vikki and Lynn* for packaging, and all the supporters.



## Puppets for Iraqi Children

Several members are hard at work sewing brightly colour squares, others are cutting out the plastic squares, while another group is sewing or gluing on faces and stitching the puppets together. Why all the activity? We have an order for 500 of these little toys that will bring in a good donation to our fund-raising efforts.

The finished puppets will be paid for and destined to northern Iraq where they will be given to children in poor communities. Each puppet will have two small candies in its mouth so a treat for now and a toy for later.

Thanks for the volunteers who are helping to make this a win-win.



## Blessing of Reset

My 80-year-old mother was recently diagnosed with atrial fibrillation. After four nights stay at the NYGH, Mom was released after the cardiologist performed a procedure called cardioversion.

“Cardioversion is where we give her heart an electrical shock which will reset her heartbeat so hopefully her heart rate can go back to the norm again...”, hearing the phrase “electrical shock to the heart” was scary but the doctor explained it is for a very brief second, not even a second. With my medically trained brother who quickly gave his opinion to go ahead with the procedure, Mom was sedated and came out of the procedure room quite quickly and released from the hospital the next day.

Throughout the whole ordeal, Mom was calm and did not complain of any discomfort, even though she was short of breath with a heart rate of 150 to 160. She did not show a sign of fear or anxiety, “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5) anchored her. Mom was confident that the God who took care of her last time when she fell on the icy road resulted in a concussion with internal bleeding in her brain will again watch over her. Being her main caretaker, between home, mom’s place and the hospital, I was full of energy and confidence, my heart was at peace and my mind was clear, I too, did not dread. I knew this is another test, another opportunity to glorify God by giving a testimony once Mom is released from the hospital.

What a God we believe in! Not only is He alive and real, He is also a giver of second chances. A reset, a new opportunity, a new chance. A reset is a gift! Don’t we all need a reset in so many aspects throughout our lives! Our lives are filled with resets from the moment we wake up in the morning, and yet we often are too apathetic to recognize our blessings.

As Christians, the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our saviour is a new beginning, we are given a new life, an eternal life. Our sins are wiped out at that particular second, but more mercifully, we are forgiven again and again throughout our lives as we are blessed with uncounted second chances.

Even though it was less than two years ago when UPC was looking for a new minister, we are now given another blessing of reset to start anew again. We give thanks to God.

Julie



## Dust if You Must

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better

To paint a picture or write a letter,  
Bake a cake or plant a seed,  
Ponder the difference between want  
and need?

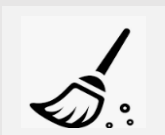
Dust if you must, but there's not much  
time,

With rivers to swim and mountains to  
climb,  
Music to hear, and books to read,  
Friends to cherish and life to lead.

Dust if you must, but the world's out  
there,

With the sun in your eyes, the wind in  
your hair,  
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain.  
This day will not come round again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,  
Old age will come and it's not kind.  
And when you go – and go you must –  
You, yourself, will make more dust.



*By Rose Milligan  
Submitted by Eleanor*



## UPC Spring Food Drive in support of our local Markham Food Bank

Drop your donations off in our Food Bank wagon anytime and we'll get them over to the Food Bank location on Bullock Drive.

### Our Most Needed Food Items:

- Small bags of rice
- Individually Wrapped Snacks for School
- Hot Cereal (Instant Oatmeal, Oats)
- Cold Cereal
- Juice
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Evaporated Milk
- Canned Fruit
- Canned salmon
- Vegetarian Soups
- Kidney Beans
- Cooking Oil
- Pasta sauce
- Crackers

### Our Most Needed Personal Items:

- Shampoo, Conditioner
- Body Wash
- Toothpaste and Toothbrushes
- Menstrual products

You can also make a cash donation. Simply note "Markham Food Bank" on your e-transfer or offering envelope.



Thank you to all the contributors to our newsletter.

The summer edition will be available at the end of June, please send in your article, picture, poem or news to Julie at any time.

