



The season of Advent has arrived, Christmas is coming!

You are invited to Unionville Presbyterian Church...

Newsletter

Advent Season 2025

Unionville Presbyterian Church

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

Advent Message from Rev. Joan

In his letter to the believers in Galatia, the Apostle Paul wrote, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his son..." (Gal. 4:4).

In the fullness of time, our lives unfold, step by step, day by day. At Christmas time, we wait and ponder as we move through Advent, a time of thoughtful reflection and preparation for the coming of the Christ child. We enter the darkest days of the year and experience a taste of what the forthcoming winter season will offer us. We make an extra effort to seek out light and warmth with Christmas trees and lights, special baking, social events including our own Mistletoe Market and the extension of good wishes to others: Merry Christmas! We move through the Advent Calendar as we await God's "fullness of time," in our own personal lives and in our life together as a community of God's people.

In the fullness of time, the first quarter of the 21st century will be completed... soon! We await the new year, the new quarter of the century and the next adventures in life that God has set before us. God teaches us patience and encourages us to live today well; the worries of tomorrow are God's domain, as are the surprises, the joys and those moments when God's Spirit will touch us and fill us with deep joy and peace. May we be fully awake and alive in those moments.

This year of 2025 has been one of great transition for Unionville Presbyterian. Once again, UPC is without a lead minister and now comes to a time of pondering its own future. Session, in its wisdom, has decided to take the time necessary to explore all the options before committing to one direction.

You, as a congregation, have had opportunities to ask questions and offer insight into potential next steps, and all of these have been taken into consideration. One initiative that was urged was for us to interact more frequently and in new ways with our sister congregation, Celebration Presbyterian. Shared worship services, the joint caring for our building and property and even the Mistletoe Market have allowed us to get to know each other better, and to build new relationships. I sense a new excitement and hopefulness as we share ministry in our neighbourhood.

It has been my joy to serve as your Interim Moderator during this time of transition, and I look forward to new adventures with you in the new year. Rather than making new year's resolutions, I invite you to search your hearts and invite God into them, asking God how UPC can serve God's calling of us into the future. UPC remains God's church, serving God's mission, today and tomorrow. May God grant us wisdom and courage and may we all be blessed this Christmas season with the hope, peace, joy and love inspired by God's gift of the birth of Jesus. Merry Christmas!

Joan

Rev. Joan Masterton
Interim Moderator
Unionville Presbyterian Church



Message from Session

Here we are already at the beginning of the Advent Season. Where does the time go! Never fear, UPC is preparing. If you happened to be at the church, on Thursday, you would have seen our lovely Christmas tree starting to take shape in the sanctuary. Thank you to Vikki, Lynn and Chris for their decorating skills, to Linda and Rachad for set up help, and to Lorne for the beautiful festive planters outside our front doors. UPC is definitely beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

This past Sunday, with the leadership of Rev. Heather, we lit the 1st Advent candle of Hope and celebrated communion together. Rachad and the choir are working on special music for our Christmas Eve service, along with narrators, Brent and Scott, who will take on a few roles including those of Ebenezer Scrooge and Bob Cratchit. Please come on Christmas Eve to soak up the spirit of the season and hopefully find peace in your heart amid this world's chaos.

As has always been UPC's way, there is lots of activity underway, these days it's in preparation for our annual Mistletoe Market. You may recall that at our congregational gathering last Sept. we talked about finding ways to build relationships with our CPC brothers and sisters. Well, our market gives us an opportunity to do so. CPC is partnering with UPC this year. Heather and Ellen are leading and have met with UPC and CPC folks to get plans in place. We've already had a wonderful get together at the pie baking bee last week. We are really looking forward to a successful and fun event, working together.



As well, at our September gathering when asked, what do you value most, what are you most grateful for at UPC, here are just some of the comments shared: UPC welcomed me, no questions asked. When feeling alone, UPC was there. The music. UPC lives the Christian message, reaching out beyond ourselves (ESL.,

CAYR, 360 Kids, Evangel Hall, etc.) These are but a few of the uplifting comments. So, while we are still working out what UPC's future will look like, we can be encouraged. We continue to strive to be the church God calls us to be: Serving, Inclusion, Love and Kindness.

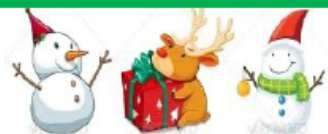
Thank you for your support and care for UPC. Let's continue to travel together during this time when our path may not yet be clear, but working together with God's grace we will find our way forward.

Wishing you and all those you love, the peace and blessings of this Christmas season.

Margaret
Clerk of Session



Team Work



Mistletoe Market

- * Baking & preserves
- * Christmas décor
- * Attic Treasures
- * Nature Photography by local artist
- * Jewelry boutique
- * Gently Used Christmas Decorations
- * Hand Crafts
- * Silent Auction
- * 'Mystery' bags?
- * Kids' craft corner
- * Candyland Café

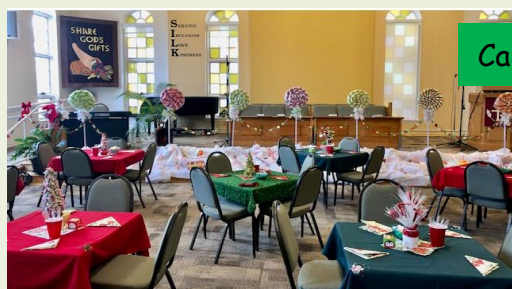
Come to shop & stay for lunch!

**Saturday
Dec. 6
9am – 1pm**

UPC Community Church & Celebration Church

600 Village Pkwy., Unionville
905-475-6233
upc.community

Proceeds going to Presbyterians
Sharing: serving vulnerable people,
walking with Indigenous people,
seeking justice in Canada & around
the world.



Candy Cafe

Décor Team



4 to 1 Matching Donations to Markham Food Bank!

In the spirit of UPC's Hope in Action mission 'to make a positive difference through engaging with the wider community in acts of compassion and service', an anonymous donor is offering to match donations to the Markham Food Bank 4 to 1, with the target of reaching \$20,000 in total.

This generous offer has been presented by the donor as a way of bringing a benefit to our community that may have been achieved with the \$20,000 of HIA dollars that was used to support our operations finances, and which loan was recently voted to forgive by the congregation.

For example: \$10 with matching donation becomes \$50, \$100 becomes \$500, \$1,000 becomes \$5,000. This matching offer will continue until the total reaches \$20,000 (e.g. \$4,000 in donations with \$16,000 in matched donations = \$20,000; \$8,000 in donations with \$12,000 in matched donations = \$20,000).

The timeframe begins now and will end Feb. 22, the last Sunday in February.

We are truly blessed that out of these regrettable circumstances something good has come. Please Note: Donations to this program must be made through UPC, marked "Markham Food Bank", for privacy, verification and summation purposes.

Thank you.

UNIONVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH		Date <u>XX/XX/XXXX</u>
600 Village Parkway Unionville, L3R 6C2		
PAY TO THE ORDER OF	Markham Food Bank	\$ 20,000.00
Twenty Thousand and 00/100		DOLLARS
MEMO _____		
123456788904 000123456789		



Advent & Christmas Eve Services

All are welcome!

1st Sunday in Advent

November 30

"Lighting the Candle of Hope"
Communion Service

2nd Sunday in Advent

December 7

"Lighting the Candle of Peace"

3rd Sunday in Advent

December 14

"Lighting the Candle of Joy"
UPC & CPC together

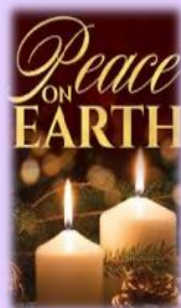
4th Sunday in Advent

December 21

"Lighting the Candle of Love"



Sunday
services,
are at
11am



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

with Rev. Joan Masterton

7:00pm

Presenting:

"A Christmas Carol in Bethlehem"

An adaptation based on the story by Charles Dickens

Music Director: Rachad Feizoullaev

The voices of the UPC Choir

narrations including: Bob Cratchit, Ebenezer
Scrooge (Brent MacKinnon & Scott Masterton)

Active Waiting

Most of us consider waiting as something very passive, a hopeless state determined by events totally out of our hands. The bus is late? We cannot do anything about it, so we have to sit there and just wait. It is not difficult to understand the irritation people feel when somebody says, "Just wait." Words like that push us into passivity.

But there is none of this passivity in Scripture. Those who are waiting are waiting very actively. They know that what they are waiting for is growing from the ground on which they are standing. Right here is a secret for us about waiting. If we wait in the conviction that a seed has been planted and that something has already begun, it changes the way we wait. Active waiting implies being fully present to the moment with the conviction that something is happening where we are and that we want to be present to it. A waiting person is someone who is present to the moment, believing that this moment is the moment.

Henri Nouwen

*But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.
~ Isaiah 40:31*

Christmas Eve ~ Candlelight Service

7:00pm, here at UPC

Presenting:

"A Christmas Carol in Bethlehem"

An adaptation based on the story by Charles Dickens

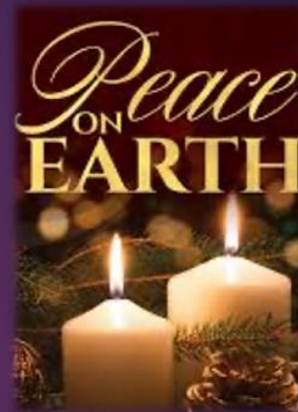
Music Director: Rachad Feizoullaev

The UPC Choir

narrations including: Bob Cratchit, Ebenezer Scrooge
(Brent MacKinnon & Scott Masterton)

with Rev. Joan Masterton

All are welcome!



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UPC Finance Update

We are pleased to report that, subsequent to the congregational meeting, the HIA loan has been written off the books. Also, we cashed in the GICs and have repaid the loan to the City for the car park in its entirety. This leaves us with no debt as we look towards our future.

As of this writing, we will be sitting in a surplus position at year end which is an incredible blessing. Thank you all for your prayerful support.

Alison, Margaret, Julie



An Update on our Sponsored Refugee Family: Abass, Sosan, Ali Reza and Zainab

You'll remember that after four years of applying and waiting, our sponsored Afghani refugee family arrived safely in Toronto in September. Parents Abass and Sosan, and young adult children Ali Reza and Zainab joined us a few weeks later at a UPC Sunday service to eloquently say thank you for our support and their new life opportunity.

Since then, the family has been living with family members in Richmond Hill and trying to figure out which way is up. Abass has been looking for employment (he has considerable experience as a baker and a tailor, but at the moment has little command of English), Ali Reza is participating in two daily ESL classes and working in the evenings, Zainab is a full-time student at an adult school in Richmond Hill, aiming for her Canadian high school diploma as quickly as possible (and higher education after that), and the mother, Sosan, is the homemaker, staying with the Farsi-speaking family members.

Although the Canadian bureaucratic paths have been challenging, there have indeed been paths, and the family has successfully obtained their permanent residence credentials and Ontario health cards, among others.

And as well as financial support from the family, UPC has been able to assist with some Presto card bus passes and a generous amount of winter clothing. Much of the clothing – from UPC and Celebration and some church friends – fits! And anything that didn't fit will be delivered to a community services centre in Toronto that specializes in helping new refugee families. The bus passes have helped Abass as he travels to job opportunities, Ali Reza to one of his ESL classes (he can walk to the other), and Zainab to school.

If you have any suggestions re employment opportunities for Abass, please let me or Julie know.

Randy Carr



A picture of the family with Randy and Marg Carr is featured in the 2025 Winter Edition of the Presbyterian Connection Newspaper.

Gifts of Change: The Presbyterian World Service and Development "Gifts of Change" catalogue lists numerous mission projects that will help make a difference in the lives of people in our own country as well as people around the world.



Gifts of Change funds carry out life-changing programs that are responding to the needs of people affected by poverty, hunger, natural disasters and conflict.

Presbyterian.ca/donate/

