



## The Thornhill United Church Newsletter

# HANDS

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### TUC FREE HOT DOG TUESDAY

When I first arrived in Thornhill from Vancouver last year, to work and serve at Thornhill United Church, I noticed that the high school students next door passed by our church every day but never bothered to look at us. I would love to say hello and ask them 'How's school?' What if we take the first step to practicing what it really means to love your neighbour as yourself?

Jesus invites everyone to his banquet table. We see Jesus feasting with his followers. There are many beautiful images of the overwhelming indulgence of God's grace. We gather to eat with people and to serve others because Jesus has done so. That's how our 'Hot Dog' ministry begins.

After meeting with the principal of Thornhill Secondary School, doing research, and getting support from the Council, we decided to hold our very first TUC FREE HOT DOG TUESDAY in February this year. When we announced this idea, many people stepped up to volunteer! Some people bought and contributed ingredients, supported financially, prepared posters and branding design, spread the news, prepared hot dogs and other snacks, arranged tables, called sponsors, and looked into details. When everyone works together to serve our neighbours as ourselves, it is such a gorgeous thing to reflect the love of God.

Regardless of how many people we serve, we are still coming together to bring God's glory. Many volunteers who served in February would recall the following scene. In the first ten minutes, around ten or twelve students and teachers came in. We were thrilled to see them and served hot dogs to them enthusiastically, even though one hundred hot dogs were prepared. God did miracles. When the clock turned 11:10 am, we started to see the crowds. The high school students rushed in. Students were lining up all the way from the back of the auditorium through the stairs to the main entrance. One hundred and eighty students passed through the door and came to the church. We ran out of hot dogs! What a happy problem we had! Our volunteers quickly ran

out to buy ingredients and refilled them. With God, everything is possible.

Since then, we have served hot dogs every month. From February to June, 678 people experienced TUC FREE HOT DOG TUESDAY and 780 hot dogs were served. We are not only grateful to serve many students but also to have a chance to get together with all our volunteers. We have more than 23 volunteers and 20 contributors to make the mission possible! Some of the volunteers are not our church members, including people who saw the posts on 'Facebook' and came to help out. We are grateful for the support of our major meat sponsor, Stuart Carroll, as well. The joy fills our hearts seeing how everyone on the team is up and engaged.

Some students said "Thank you, Jesus!" and "Amen" when they left the church. Some of them came to the worship services, brought their parents to our services and the youth group activities, asked for pastoral care, and served hot dogs too! The wonderful bonus is that the news of serving hot dogs to the secondary school next door has been spread by word of mouth to the wider community, including churches in the GTA and across the provinces. Thank you to all our volunteers and contributors! We couldn't have done this amazing TUC FREE HOT DOG TUESDAY without their support!

TUC's FREE HOT DOG TUESDAY will resume on September 26. We look forward to your continued support! Everyone is called to serve God by serving others. We can't wait to see you again!

It is our call to love God and our neighbours!

(Matthew 22: 36-40)

*Mini Choi,*

Christian Development Minister





## UPDATE FROM COUNCIL

**Council wishes you  
a warm and enjoyable summer!**

While Council doesn't meet again formally until September, most of us are around and/or available between now and then if you need us. In the meantime, here are a few items for consideration:

**1. Dream Tree Montessori** has completed construction, received their permits and began operating in TUC in July downstairs in what was formerly the classrooms and nursery. Students, families and staff will use the entrance at the north side. We welcome them warmly as they begin their operations. You can learn more about them on their website:

<https://sites.google.com/dreamtreemontessori.com/education/home>.

**2. Vulnerable sector screening:** In order to meet the objectives of the United Church of Canada's duty of care recommendations outlined in their Faithful Footsteps Screening Procedures handbook, we will be requiring volunteers who work with vulnerable persons – such as Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, Club Handi volunteers and pastoral care volunteers - to provide a police vulnerable sector (VSS) record check once every three years. TUC will provide the request on church letterhead and will reimburse the cost of the screening when provided with the receipt. If you are a volunteer recognized as working with potential vulnerable people, you will be contacted during the summer to determine if you already have an active VSS screening (within three years of your expected participation). If needed, a letter and recommendations for screening locations will be provided. Please stay tuned.

**3. Countrye Faire call for feedback:** May I draw your attention to Jeff Knowles' announcement within this issue asking for your guidance in areas of interest for the Countrye Faire, scheduled for October 21st? We are hopeful that the Faire offers much more than pies and preserves this year, and we'll happily organize something fun that fits well with our space and resources.

**4. Save the date – photo directory shoot October 23-28th:** Coming late October, we will be inviting all members to pop by and have their pictures taken. Anybody participating receives a free photo directory and an opportunity to have professional pictures just

in time for Christmas (with no obligation to purchase). Volunteers will be calling you shortly to schedule your time between Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> (make up dates and accommodations will be possible the following week where needed).

**5. Volunteers sought** – live and remote: We are actively looking to fill the following positions:

- ***One or two Shining Waters Regional volunteers.*** The scope of this position is attending scheduled Shining Waters (SW) and United Church of Canada (UCC) meetings periodically, almost always remotely, and distilling the essence of all communications from SW and UCC to Council and the congregation. Usually this culminates in a monthly summary for Council, and sometimes accompanies weekly eBlasts where appropriate. This is an ideal position for remote volunteers.

- ***Prayers of the People volunteer.*** Those offering Prayers of the People volunteer roughly once every six weeks; this can be done either in person or remotely.

- ***Ministry and Personnel Committee member.*** While we are happy to be three-strong, the recommended number of members is four or more. M&P typically meets less often than monthly, but will have bursts of activity annually, such as when doing performance reviews, or any periodic HR involvement. Live participation is preferred over remote.

- ***Treasurer assistant.*** We are looking for somebody to work with and support Lyle, with the prospect of greater involvement over time. Accounting and Quickbooks experience is ideal, and the position could be remote, provided appearances are made at congregational meetings.

- ***Vice Chair.*** If you are a strong coordinator and would like to see the inner workings of the church in a supporting role, this may be the role for you. Obligations include monthly meetings September through June and the coordination of tasks following the meetings, well supported by all Council members. The position could be remote, provided appearances are made at congregational meetings.

- ***Intercultural working group member.*** We are looking for somebody to backfill Elizabeth Gartner who recently took on the role of the Celebrate Together pillar lead. The group meets monthly from Sept-May, and occasionally prior to a big event. The volunteer is asked to join brainstorming sessions around our various

intercultural events (Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, the Indigenous Day of Prayer, and/or Faith Journey videos, etc.) The group thinks about how and what is to be presented. Both 'big ideas' people and tactical people are welcome, either in-person or remotely.

Please ask any Council member for greater detail about any position and they will provide an overview of time commitments and involvement. Thanks for your consideration.

#### **6. Changes to the Village Groups are coming:**

With a special thanks to our Village Group leaders who recently enjoyed a long overdue appreciation lunch, we've heard feedback regarding the needs for redistribution of active participants, and significant interest in a dedicated Zoom-members village group. We are hopeful this reorganization will help people stay in touch and feel a sense of community within our larger TUC community. Please stay tuned for 'local' news from your Village Group lead in the near future.

*Duane Nelson,*  
Chair of Council



### **MY STUDY LEAVE DOWNTOWN**

From July 2-6, I attended "A Festival of Pipes" – a conference hosted by the Royal Canadian College of Organists (of which I am a member) and the Organ Historical Society. It is usually presented biennially and this summer it was held in Toronto. The week included a variety of workshops, services, Convocation and I even climbed the 130 steps for a demonstration of the carillon at Metropolitan United Church. We heard many talented young organists compete for prizes and scholarships on a variety of organs.

Each day I went to four or five different churches for recitals and full evening concerts by international concert organists, which were open to the public. I even had the pleasure of seeing Ruth Noble, one of our former ministers, who was taking tickets at these concerts. Ruth reminded me that she loved organ music and was glad to volunteer in this way.

This was the first in-person organ festival we have been able to hold due to the pandemic, since the one that I attended in Halifax in 2019; it was a busy but inspiring study leave.



*Ethel Briggs*  
Director of Music



### **MUSIC NOTES**



#### **SANCTUARY CHOIR –**

Our Sanctuary Choir led our hymns and performed anthems each Sunday up to the end of June. It is wonderful to have them all sit together, compared to the conditions a year ago, due to Covid-19.

The choir is a devoted, close group of singers and I look forward to their return to the chancel in September.

Choir rehearsals will resume on Thurs. Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. New members are welcome at any time; please speak to Ethel Briggs (416-223-4612) or to any choir member if you'd like to sing with us.

During July and August it has been a pleasure for me to accompany guest musicians: Jeff Whittington, guitar; Abby Minor, bassoon and Anita Crump, handbell soloist. I really appreciate them sharing their time and talents with us, enriching our services with such a variety of instruments and repertoire.



#### **HANDBELL CHOIR –**

The Handbell Choir resumed rehearsals in the spring and performed in a service before their summer vacation. Due to members' retirements and moving away, we have a couple of bell positions open and would welcome new ringers. Some knowledge of reading music is an asset. Our first rehearsal will be on Wed. Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Gallery (upstairs). Please contact Ethel Briggs (416) 223-4612 if you would like to try ringing handbells or even come to audit a rehearsal.



#### **METROPOLITAN SILVER BAND CONCERT**

– after a wonderful concert last November, we have engaged the band to perform at TUC on Sat. Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. Stay tuned for more details in the fall.



*Ethel Briggs*  
Director of Music





## PRAYER SHAWL KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP

Just a reminder that prayer shawls are available for the taking from the table in the narthex. If you know someone who could use a warm hug to let them know that they are not alone, whether it be in time of illness, grief, or celebration, please feel free to take a shawl and donate it to them. The shawls are free and are bagged in Ziploc bags labeled either rectangle, triangle or crescent. Also included in each bag is a card. The exterior of the card varies but the verse inside is identical in all the cards. The shawls come in a variety of colours and patterns and have been made by a small dedicated group of knitters and crocheters from the congregation.

The group usually meets on the first Friday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to roughly 12:00 p.m. in the Gathering Place. However because of Civic and Labour Day weekends our next meetings will be August 11 and September 8. The meetings are a chance to socialize and discuss methods and patterns as well as knit and crochet. The members then work on their projects at home at their leisure. If you think you would like to be part of our group, please come out and join us at one of our meetings and see what we are all about. Everyone is welcome regardless of your level of expertise.

Since the inception of the group in 2013 we have produced 343 shawls and 285 of them have found homes with congregants and friends of church members. If you do the math, you will see that we have an inventory to select from and continue to produce new ones on a monthly basis.




*Marg  
Stainsby*  
Coordinator

## COUNTRYE FAIRE - At Last!

After 3 years away, the Country Faire is tentatively planned for Saturday, October 21. What it will look like is now up to you. Plans are currently underway to sort out what activities and areas we want to bring back. Specifically, I need to know your interest in providing volunteer support and items for sale.

In the past we offered the following. Should we bring them back?

- Jewelry 
- Clothing
- Books / CDs / DVDs 
- Christmas Store
- Scouts' Hot Dog stand 
- Silent Auction
- Vendors' Marketplace  
(tabletop stands for vendors to sell their goods and services)
- Country Store (preserves & baked goods)
- Children's Toys
- Children's Fun Zone (games / carnival)
- Attic Treasures (miscellaneous household / kitchen items)
- All Day Lunch (pancakes & sausages, or other ideas) 
- Popcorn & Cotton Candy stand
- Individual baked goods stand
- Pies 

**NOTE:** We now have no access to the classroom areas downstairs as the Montessori school is currently there. So we will focus on the top draws that will fit our available space. Please email me your thoughts as soon as possible, at [jeffknowles01@gmail.com](mailto:jeffknowles01@gmail.com) or call me at 416-268-7193. I really need your feedback on your favourite areas of the Faire and if you're able to help out. All suggestions are welcome. Thanks,

*Jeff Knowles*  
Your Countrye Faire Coordinator

## Life Passages



### DEATHS

**Ruby Hawley**, May 16<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 107 years, wife of the late Charles "Chuck", mother of Diane(deceased), Dan and daughter-in-law Anne. Loving Grandmother of 8 and Great-grandmother of 9.

### CONGRATULATIONS

**Ruth and Tom Talbot** who celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on July 26<sup>th</sup>.



### A NOTE FROM LEIGH



I love to travel... to see and learn new things, to encounter new perspectives and cultures, and expand my mind and understandings. We look at summer as a time to do something a little different, refresh ourselves or to rest, a trip with a jam-packed agenda, or being at home working with quieter weekends in the city.

No matter where I have traveled though, I am always happy coming home and sleeping in my own bed. When we are away, we aren't able to have our sleep arranged quite the way we want, the pillows aren't quite the same either. When we are at home, we can let our hair down.

Whatever your travels have entailed, be they journeys to special anticipated destinations that have been on your bucket list, to see family and friends, maybe time at the beach, on the water, up north at a cottage or designing a stay-cation with movies or a great book, we hope when it's time, you'll come back to your church home too. We have plenty of room in the sanctuary where your usual spot is waiting for you and familiar and new faces will welcome you back.

I hope that you will find in these pages of HANDS something to get excited about, be it Opening Sunday, our in-person Countrye Faire, and our special preachers and events, like our 220<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Rev. Todd McDonald returning to be our speaker for the day.

Coming home... we look forward to seeing you again this fall!



**Rev. Leigh Olson**  
Coordinating Minister

## WELCOME AND AFFIRMING WORKING GROUP

On July 17, several enthusiastic TUC members marched in the Newmarket York Region Pride Parade, along with Richmond Hill United's cohort. We were excited to see so many people lining both sides of Main Street spanning the few blocks of the route. What fun to experience all the cheering, waving and lively music as we walked along. Those pictured are (left to right) Michael, Mikayla, Mini, Rev. Leigh, Pan and Heather. We invite more from TUC congregation to join the celebration next year. It's only a few blocks to walk, lots of great spirit and very inspiring.

Now we are looking ahead to Sunday, October 15, to mark the first anniversary of becoming an Affirming Church. We invite you to save that date and attend services in person if possible. Stay tuned for further information.

Meanwhile, we are looking for Welcome Host Volunteers. Duties include staffing the Welcome Cart once every 4 to 6 weeks, watching for people you don't recognize and approaching them with a friendly greeting. If you find they are new to TUC, talk with them to help them feel comfortable, invite them to refreshments afterward. Should they like a follow up contact from a minister, have them sign a welcome binder form. There are name tag stickers for new people if they wish. Please contact me if you can help out.

**Heather Morris**

Chair of Welcome and Affirming Group



## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

JUNE 2023

Preliminary

### GENERAL FUND

	YTD June 2022	YTD June 2023	Budget 2023
<b>Receipts</b>			
Env/PAR/Seasonal	115,157	112,558	276,800
Use of Space	24,135	28,855	139,800
Fund Raising	-	568	5,000
All Other	<u>5,664</u>	<u>4,597</u>	<u>36,500</u>
	<b>144,956</b>	<b>146,578</b>	<b>458,100</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Salaries & Benefits	113,676	148,158	292,000
Pillars –BCU	58,702	67,751	124,000
All Other	1,604	2,759	5,460
UCC Assessment	10,084	10,104	20,200
Council	<u>5,654</u>	<u>4,197</u>	<u>16,440</u>
	<b>189,720</b>	<b>232,969</b>	<b>458,100</b>
<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(44,764)</b>	<b>(86,391)</b>	

- YTD givings are approximately \$8,500 less than Budget
- The Budget for Use of Space assumed the Montessori School would commence operations April 1. Actual start date was July 1
- Budget for Council assumed the Real Estate Commission would be paid in April. It was paid in July commensurate with the start of the Montessori School
- All other expenses are in line with Budget

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 10 – Welcome back Picnic   
 Sept. 26 - TUC FREE HOT DOG TUESDAY  
 Oct. 1 – World Day of Communion   
 Oct. 8 – Thanksgiving Sunday  
 Oct. 15 – 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of becoming an Affirming Church  
 Guest Speaker – Rev. Jeffrey Dale  
 Oct. 21 – Countrye Faire  
 Oct. 22 – 220<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sunday  
 Guest Speaker – Rev. Todd McDonald  
 Oct. 29 – Memorial Sunday  
 Nov. 5 – Remembrance Sunday  
 Nov. 12 – Foodgrains Sunday



## CELEBRATE TOGETHER PILLAR

After being elected to the TUC Council as lead for the Celebrate Together Pillar in March 2023 I began to review the role of lead and the different groups making up this pillar. Some familiar groups are: Village Groups (VG), Welcome and Affirming Working Group (WAWG), Intercultural Working Group (IWG), Refreshments and Conversation, Library Administration and Woodworkers.

### Village Groups Update

As part of my new role, I have been working with our ministerial team to review the Village Groups. We are working in phases.

Phase 1 - contacting people in the VG to determine their current connection with TUC, has been completed. We have reviewed the membership for VG lists 1 to 8. Some people have moved on, others have remained on Zoom and many are back in the sanctuary for weekly worship.

Phase 2 - restructuring the 8 VG, into 5 VG. This decision made with input from VG leads is an effort to adjust the groups to better reflect active members, make recruiting Sunday morning volunteers easier and with fewer VG we hope there will be enough volunteers for each group to have co-leads.

Phase 3 - forming a VG for those regularly worshipping on Zoom. Margaret Wilson has agreed to be a lead.

Phase 4 - recruiting additional VG leads! If you are interested, please let me, Leigh or Mini know.

Phase 5 – implementing the roster for ushers/greeters for September 2023 to January 2024. With thanks for volunteers!

*Elizabeth Gartner*

Celebrate Together Pillar Lead



**Next issue of 'HANDS' is November 2023. Deadline for submissions is October 22<sup>nd</sup>.**