



The Thornhill United Church Newsletter

HANDS



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November 2023

BOOK STUDY AND MEET THE AUTHOR OF "HOMECOMING"

During the Lent book study, we had the privilege of inviting Rev. Dr. Gordon Smith to fly to Ontario from Calgary to meet us at the "Meet the Author" book study. This fall, we have another incredible opportunity to meet a profound artist and author, Heather Beamish. Her work is birthed out of the rich and intersectional lens of her Queer, Black, Indigenous, and female identities.

"Homecoming" is all about self-discovery and gaining confidence. After years of ministering in Evangelical churches, Heather reached a crossroads where she had to confront her queer identity. Faced with a difficult choice between living a lie or leaving the only place she had ever truly belonged, she bravely chose liberation. "Homecoming" is her story of finding her identity and summoning the courage to be herself. She discusses embracing our differences and the importance of standing up for who you are.

In "Homecoming," Heather beautifully articulates how a number of traumatic experiences from her childhood left her feeling helpless and vulnerable to the 'big bad monster' called life. It's a narrative many of us can relate to—how tragic moments can roll in, shatter everything that was safe and familiar, and leave us feeling powerless. Heather spent years taking a backseat to her own story, but she also recognized her own competence and capability. She reminds us that knowing the type of person you want to be and being that person are two different realities. Her therapy journey allowed her to bridge that gap.

As we embark on this book study, let's draw inspiration from Heather Beamish's story of healing, self-discovery, and the power of reflection. We hope you'll join us in this enriching journey as we engage with "Homecoming" by Heather Beamish. Please RSVP to the Christian Development Minister, Mini Choi, at mini@thornhillunitedchurch.ca to let us know if you can participate. For those interested in meeting the author, the in-person session on November 24th promises to be a special occasion. We're excited to dive into this inspiring book together.

Mini Choi

Christian Development Minister

Book Study Schedule:

November 3rd, 2:00 pm (online via Zoom). We'll begin by discussing the early chapters of the book and its central themes.

November 24th, 5:00 pm (in-person). You'll have a chance to meet Heather Beamish here at TUC, and we'll delve deeper into "Homecoming."

December 8th, 2:00 pm (online via Zoom). We'll conclude our study by exploring the final chapters and reflecting on the book's profound messages.

A NOTE FROM LEIGH

The trees are beginning to show the depth of their colours this week and we are fully into the transition time of Fall. It's a beautiful time. It was wonderful to see so many of you for our Countryside Faire, to renew friendships and relationships, and then to celebrate our anniversary together with Rev. Dr. Todd McDonald.

In this season, the days are growing shorter, and the night air is cool and crisp. With the smell of Fall, these are signs that Christmas will soon be here... the celebration of Christ's light, born to illumine our lives. God knew our struggles and still today, breaks into our lives in dynamic ways to touch us, to enfold us with love and hope. Revel in this love, celebrate it with family and friends, join in the festivities and bask in the glory of God for us.

I invite you to take time to centre yourself in your faith this year. To be intentional about time to talk with God, think about what your relationship with God means for your life and how you might let God's love flow from you. As you do this, we have plenty of ways for you to prepare yourself to let Jesus in this year. Read through these pages, mark your calendar with the dates for the concert, special events and days of worship. I hope to see you here or to say, "hi," on Zoom. God's amazing grace is epic and it is ours to receive, accept and share. May God truly bless you as we gather together.

Rev. Leigh Olson
Co-ordinating Minister

Saturday night, November 4th,
before going to bed,



BAND CONCERT

Sat. Nov. 18th – 7:30 p.m.
at Thornhill United Church



The Metropolitan Silver Band is coming back, under the sponsorship of the Sanctuary Choir! Last year they performed a wonderful variety concert here, with some audience participation too. We are looking forward to another great program.

This band is part of the music ministry of Metropolitan United Church and has been performing for over 90 years. Graeme Jannaway (Rev. Leigh Olson's husband who is also a member of our tech team and the Sanctuary Choir) has been playing percussion instruments with this band for over 50 years!

Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased Sundays after worship, from choir members and at the door.

You may also watch the concert via Zoom, after paying for your ticket and receiving the link.

Mark your calendars for this great start to the Advent/Christmas season at TUC!



Poinsettias for Christmas

Call the church office, 905 889-2131
by **Friday, December 8th**,
to place an order for a poinsettia.

The plant can be dedicated in memory of someone, in thanksgiving for something or a designation of your choice. Plants are \$20 each and may be taken home on Christmas Eve.

~ Life Passages ~



DEATHS

George Jackson, October 12, 2023, at 90 years of age. Husband of Jean (nee Kneeshaw), father and father-in-law of Susan and Mark, Catharine and Ken, Janet, Barbara and Norman. Grandfather of Andrew, Stephanie and Jacqueline, James, Sean and Nicola, Summer and Rachel. Great-grandfather of Isla and John.

Rob Johnston, September 29, 2023. Son of the late Jean and Bruce Johnston; long-time TUC piano tuner.



BAPTISMS

Kynleigh Hayden Kennedy Clarke, June 11, 2023, daughter of Bronwyn Clarke.

Leila Zamani, August 13, 2023

Amir Mohammadi, August 13, 2023

Manezi Mohammadi, August 13, 2023

WINTER TABLE ARRANGEMENT WORKSHOP



Coming "Gnome" for the Holidays!!!
Saturday, December 9th, 10 am - 1pm.
Cost: \$65 Limited spots available.

Sandra from Toronto Florists will assist you in your creations. Have a little fun and take home a center piece for the holidays.

Please sign up with Joan Honsberger 905 889 3118 or at jo.honsie@sympatico.ca

MUSICAL NOTES



This fall the Sanctuary Choir was delighted to welcome three new singers: Tim Min, Willow Shi and Sandra Weir. Tim and Willow who are both piano teachers, have also joined our Handbell Choir. We really appreciate them sharing their talents in both choirs.

In August Tim Min performed a piano solo, improvising on Gershwin's "Summertime", as a Summer Music guest.

Sandra Weir was a Zoom co-host in our early days of Zoom services in 2020. We are glad to have her sing with us now.

If you are interested in singing or ringing in our choirs, please speak to me or any choir member.



Ethel Briggs
Director of Music

ASSETS AND ADMINISTRATION

Building Care and Use

The committee includes Chair, Dave Argue, members, Doug Alder, Bob Shortreed and Gary Montgomery and our Administrator Tanya Melbourne. They have been active in assisting with the preparation for the Montessori School, as well as looking after the routine day to day operational issues.

Items accomplished

In early 2023 the outdoor lighting around the building was upgraded for improved safety and security. Additional lighting will be added before the end of Daylight-Saving Time.

The Dream Tree Montessori (new name) nursery school received its final approval in the last week of June and commenced operations on July 1st. They completed many renovations to their space including painting, flooring, a fenced outdoor play area, repairs and new railing on the stairs leading to the lower yard, grading, re-sodding and a new walkway to the North Entrance. Most recently they installed air conditioning in their space.

Special thanks to volunteers: Diane McLeod and Lucina Fraser for planting and maintaining our beautiful gardens, Ian McLeod and Bob Campolin for mowing the lawns and, Nobue Khan for organizing the Community Garden again this year.

Renters

Our major users of space are now The Dream Tree Montessori School and The Tree of Life Korean Presbyterian Church. During the summer the Pedalheads Bicycle Day Camp used our parking lot and auditorium. We also provide space for The Boy Scouts, an outside meditation group, Gamblers Anonymous, Moderation Management, Opera York and, from time to time, other users of space.

Technology

Further upgrades have been implemented in the computer and A/V equipment in the sanctuary to improve the quality of live-streaming our services. On-line attendance continues to be preferred by many members who are unable to attend worship in the sanctuary because of health or distance reasons. We are encouraged by the continuing increase of in-person attendance at worship.

We are working on improving our building security system with the addition of security cameras. After recent incidents of intruders causing nuisances and damage on our property, we had the underbrush and low branches removed at the top of the hill at Elgin Street. Since doing this there has been no recurrence of the problem.

The solar panels and related control equipment have been sold. The panels and attachment hardware have been removed from the auditorium.

Spirit Garden Team

The team is still in the process of creating a new mandate to be presented to Council.

We continue to enjoy our role as co-chairs of this pillar, and we appreciate the support that we receive from everyone.

Linda and Lloyd Mather

Co-chairs

SHARING SUNDAY"

On Sunday December 3rd, we invite you to bring non-perishable food items that will be given to the Richmond Hill Food Bank, or new items of winter clothing, e.g. mittens, toques, scarves, that could help a family at a shelter, e.g. Yellow Brick House.

Please check the expiry date on the food items as we cannot accept stale-dated food.

CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We are so grateful for the many years that Thornhill United Church has supported the Thornhill Christmas Assistance Program. 2023 brings new challenges for us with rising inflation.

Once again, we will be providing only gift cards for families in need this holiday season. We have found that families appreciate the opportunity to choose what they would like to purchase, and gift cards are easier to administer by our small committee.

We will only be accepting financial donations again this year. We are asking for donations by **November 25th** as we will need to order and distribute gift cards to our clients on December 9th.

Your donations may be paid by cash, cheque or e-transfer to: attention TUC CAP.

treasurer@thornhillunitedchurch.ca,

If you have any questions please contact:

Gabi Blair (blair.gabi@gmail.com)

or Deb Heatherly (heatherly@rogers.com)



VILLAGE GROUP 1 LAUNCHING SOON

Village Group 1 is a new addition to the TUC Village Groups this year. We will be meeting exclusively on Zoom, the first Thursday of the month from 1 – 2 pm, starting on December 7th. At each meeting, we will have someone from TUC as a guest speaker for a ten-minute presentation, followed by a Q&A time, then social time (BYOC – bring your own coffee!).

The Zoom link will be in the e-blast on the Sunday before the meeting, and ALL are welcome. You can join us for a meeting and still remain a member of your in-person group. Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Margaret Wilson



START YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WITH OUR GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER (FUNDScriP)

Deadlines: November 26th, December 3rd and December 10th.

- How it works! Example: Every time someone orders a \$100 gift card, TUC receives \$3-5 depending on the store, but you still get your whole \$100 and pay \$100. Basically free money for TUC.
- Since starting 9 years ago, TUC has earned \$7,300, with no cost to anyone. This is with very few people participating. Imagine how much we could earn if more people participated. Use a gift card for your everyday shopping such as gas, groceries, restaurants, etc.
- Email order to blair.gabi@gmail.com or give to Elizabeth Gartner at church. E-transfer the money or write a cheque to TUC. Pick up your order at TUC the following Sunday or from Tanya during the week.
- Don't want to be restricted to deadlines?
- Order on-line anytime and have cards mailed to your house. Here's how:
- Click on the link <https://www.fundscrip.com/support-a-group/4DKNFG>
- Enter your name, address, email, password, postal code, and phone number.
- Click on the box to "accept terms" and then click "Support a Group". It will then tell you that your account has been set up and an email has been sent.
- Go to your email and click on the link to confirm your email.
- Place your order.
- For shipping, select "direct shipping" and add your address. You will be charged postal rates.
- For payment "Online Bill Payment" is best for TUC (most donations) and there are instructions on how to set it up. This is like a regular bill payment from your bank account.
- Questions? Contact Gabi Blair at blair.gabi@gmail.com or 416-518-2930 or Elizabeth Gartner at ejgartner@bell.net or 905-660-6692



KNIT. CROCHET. PRAY.

Prayer Shawl Group: We meet at 10:30 a.m. on the first Friday of the month. New members are always welcome as are donations of wool. Shawls are available in the narthex or give me a call to arrange to pick one up at my home at 905-881-2673 or stainsby@interlog.com

Marg Stainsby



WOODCARVERS –

Come out and try a new skill or burnish your existing skills on Tuesday afternoons from 1-3 pm. Don't feel intimidated. There is more chatting than chipping!!! Please contact Joan Honsberger at 905 889-3118 or Tanya at the church office, 905 889-2131, if you are interested in attending.

As in the recent movie,... "Knives Out"!!!

UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS

- Nov. 3 - 2:00pm Book Study (online)
- Nov. 5 - 10:30am Remembrance Sunday
- Nov. 12 - 10:30am Foodgrains Sunday
- Nov. 18 - 7:30pm Metropolitan Silver Band Concert
- Nov. 19 - 10:30am Worship
- Nov. 24 - 5:00pm Meet the Author - at TUC
- Nov. 26 - 10:30am Intercultural Sunday
- Nov. 28 - 10:30am TUC Free Hotdog Tuesday
- Dec. 3 - 10:30am Advent 1 - Sharing Sunday-Communion
- Dec. 8 - 2:00pm Book Study (online)
- Dec. 9 - 10:00am Table Arrangement Workshop
- Dec. 10 - 10:30am Advent 2 - Christmas Pageant
- Dec. 17 - 10:30am Advent 3 - Lessons and Carols
- Dec. 24 - 10:30am Advent 4
4:00pm Family Service
7:00pm Communion
- Dec. 31 - 10:30 Sunday Worship



COUNTRYE FAIRE

Saturday, October 21 marked the first Countrye Faire in 4 years. No one knew what to expect. Would we have enough volunteers? Would we have enough donations? Would people from the community show up? The answer to all of these questions was a resounding YES, and YES, and YES!

What was abundantly clear from the beginning was everyone really missed the Countrye Faire. From working together, smiling together, to sitting and enjoying an All Day Breakfast meal, we really missed being together.

But as it is with any Countrye Faire, so it was with this one. None of this is possible without the people who volunteer their time, donate items or bake pies and goodies.

To the area conveners and volunteers: it was such a pleasure working with you. You make my job, as your coordinator, so much easier. The number of hours you pour into this event is amazing and it does not go unrecognized.

To Tanya, our administrator: your communication and follow-through, as always were flawless. Your reminders, Tanya, were invaluable.

To everyone who donated books, jewelry, Christmas items and toys, or baked pies and baked goods: without your donations none of this would be possible.

So on behalf of the entire TUC congregation, thank you! As the bonus part of this year's Countrye Faire, we also raised a lot of money. This year we raised \$4100, which is an amazing total for our first year back.

It truly was such an enjoyable experience and I hope everyone enjoyed the day as much as I did. Thank you,

Jeff Knowles

Countrye Faire Coordinator



Countrye Store



Jewelry Table



Christmas Store



TWO ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN OCTOBER!

On October 15th, we celebrated the 1st anniversary of TUC becoming an Affirming Church. We were pleased to have a video message by Jennifer Wilson, who grew up here at TUC. She spoke about her faith journey and how proud she is that her congregation voted to become Affirming. As she lives in eastern Ontario, she appreciates our hybrid services, online Bible Study and committee meetings. The Welcome and Affirming Working Group served an anniversary cake after the service.

On October 22nd, we celebrated the 220th anniversary of our congregation with Rev. Dr. Todd McDonald as our guest preacher. Todd served here at TUC from 1999 to 2007 and now is the Pastoral Relations Minister with Shining Waters Regional Council. For his theme, "What's the Buzz?" he had invited us to submit answers to his question about what makes TUC special to each of us. Responses to his question were displayed in the narthex, balloons brightened the sanctuary and another anniversary cake made the occasion special.

Ethel Briggs



Next issue of 'HANDS' is February 2024. Deadline for submissions is January 29, 2024.