



# HANDS

25 Elgin Street (at Dudley), Thornhill, ON L3T 1W5  
Email: [info@thornhillunitedchurch.ca](mailto:info@thornhillunitedchurch.ca)

Tel: 905 889-2131

Website: [www.thornhillunitedchurch.ca](http://www.thornhillunitedchurch.ca)

February 2026

## A NOTE FROM LEIGH...

### Our Wintertime

*All beautiful the march of days,  
As seasons come and go.  
The hand that shaped the rose has wrought,  
The crystal of the snow,  
Has sent the hoary frost of heav'n,  
The flowing waters sealed,  
And laid a silent loveliness,  
On hill and wood and field.*

Frances Whitmarsh Wile

Looking out our windows, reminds us of winter scenes on Christmas cards. Though it has been harshly cold, it is beautiful. On the sunshiny days, the snow glistens in the light, like gems sprinkled across the landscape. The footprints of birds and rabbits remind us that life is still being lived without our notice, reminders that our lives are filled with miracles and God's gifts. The snow blankets the earth, protecting it, so that in the spring, when the warmth comes, the snow will gently offer the earth sustenance.

In the Church, this is a season for learning, as Jesus illumines lives, teaching his disciples and us about being part of the Kingdom of God. God loves us and cares for us and all of creation and calls us to be aware, to learn, to care and to share. We sing God's praises!

My note is framed by winter hymns, telling us that God forms the elements of our creation, sharing beauty, to lift our spirits, to encourage us, to remind us that there is meaning and purpose to life and that everything has been made with holiness.

Know that God is watching over you and keeping you,

*'Tis winter now;*

*the fallen snow has left the heavens  
all coldly clear;*

*Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,  
And all the earth lies dead and drear.  
And yet God's love is not withdrawn;  
His life within the keen air breathes;  
His beauty paints the crimson dawn,  
and clothes the boughs with glittering wreaths.*

Samuel Longfellow

Grace and peace,

**Rev. Leigh Olson**



## Lenten Ecumenical Services beginning Sunday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 4pm



The Lenten series of sermons was developed over 50 years ago by the Ministerial Association of Thornhill.

For 3 Sundays of Lent ministers and priests from the Christian churches in our area will preach to a common theme. Our theme for this series is "*Change and Stress*".

**Joan Honsberger,**

Lenten Committee Member

Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> - Lent 1 at Thornhill United Church  
Speaker: Pastoral Assoc. John Humphries  
from St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church  
Theme: 'Inevitability of Change'.

Mar. 8<sup>th</sup> - Lent 3 at  
Holy Trinity Anglican Church  
Speaker: Rev. Paul Gibbon  
from Thornhill Baptist Church  
Theme: 'The Stresses of Change'.

Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup> - Lent 5 at St. Luke's  
Roman Catholic Church  
Speaker: Rev. Dr. Heather Vais  
from Thornhill Presbyterian Church  
Theme: 'The Joys of Stress'.



## HAS YOUR PHONE NUMBER CHANGED?

Please reach out to the church to update your contact information if there has been a change. We know a number of people are no longer using a home phone. We look forward to hearing from you so that we can stay in touch.

## GENTLE REMINDER OF OUR FRAGRANCE FREE POLICY:

As we try to make our church a welcoming place where all can worship in comfort and health, please do not wear scented products such as perfumes, lotions, hair sprays, aftershave, deodorants, etc. These items can cause health issues like migraines, breathing problems and other serious allergic reactions. Thank you for helping us to make our church a safe place.



### "MUSIC NOTES"

On Saturday, Nov. 22 our Sanctuary Choir, along with singers from the other churches in Thornhill, presented a new concert, "Joy of Christmas", to help raise awareness and funds to support the Christmas Assistance Program which helps needy families in Thornhill. There was a large, supportive audience, including members of our provincial and federal governments. Special thanks to Jeff Whittington who handled the sound system and the Zoom livestreaming. After the concert everyone enjoyed refreshments provided by all the singers and time to visit with our Thornhill friends.

Our TUC Symphonie of eight instrumentalists led the singing of carols before the services on Dec. 14 and 21. It is always a pleasure to hear this ensemble play at Christmas. The Handbell Choir performed three pieces at the Dec. 21 service and they will be playing during services in January and February. Lori Ball shared her talent by performing piano-organ duets with me, in two December services.

*Ethel Briggs*  
Director of Music

## *Pancake Supper*

Tuesday, February 17, 2026  
THORNHILL UNITED CHURCH  
5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$10.00  
Children 5 yrs. & under: Free



## *Looking Ahead to Easter*

**Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>**, Pancake Tuesday at 5:00 pm.  
Service of Ashes at 6:30 pm  
**Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>**, 10:30am Palm Sunday  
**Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup>**, 10:30am Good Friday  
Good Friday Worship  
**Apr. 5<sup>th</sup>**, 10:30am Easter Sunday  
Worship with Communion

## PRAYER SHAWLS

Prayer shawls are **free**.

Any member of the congregation is welcome to take a shawl to give to someone close to them who is in need of a hug or a reminder that they are in our prayers such as: those who are ill or grieving or celebrating a special occasion. The recipient does not need to be a TUC member. The shape of the shawl is written on the plastic bag for example: rectangle, triangle, crescent and there is a gift card included with each shawl. The pictures on the cards vary but the verse is the same for all cards.

We mainly rely on donations of wool, although we have on occasion received cash donations which have been used to purchase yarn. Any wool donations may be left with Tanya in the office. Anyone interested in joining our group to knit or crochet is welcome. We meet the first Friday of the month in the Gathering Place from 10:30 a.m. until noon.

*Marg Stainsby*  
Co-ordinator

~ *Life Passages* ~



## BIRTHS

Hedieh Marghoub and Ali Fotouhi welcomed their baby boy, Kaaren, into this world, on Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

## REPORT OF ASSETS AND ADMINISTRATION PILLAR

### Building Care and Use (submitted by David Argue)

Regular building maintenance has been ongoing with interior painting continuing. Painting will continue with the next areas being the kitchen, sanctuary, narthex, and washrooms.

### Safety and Security

Based on a tour of the TUC property, York Region Police prepared a safety review report for TUC. The report has been received with a number of recommendations. A security task force has been set to review the recommendations and report back with what should be implemented and priority. Thank you to the volunteers of Hilary Jacob, Graeme Jannaway, Ethel Briggs, Sandi Weir and David Argue who will undertake the review.

### Stewardship and Fund-Raising

We are pleased to report that TUC ended the year with a surplus. Thank you to all of our financial supporters, especially an anonymous contributor who made an exceptional donation in December that put us over the top.

The fourth Dine-Around Thornhill event was held at Philoxenia Greek Restaurant on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Twenty people enjoyed a delicious Greek dinner. Plans are underway to continue this fund-raising activity in 2026.

A big THANK YOU to Joe and Diane Ricciuti for making this possible and for their generous support of the events.

*Linda and Lloyd Mather*

Co-Chairs, Assets and Administration

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO???

We sure did get some snow the weekend of January 25, didn't we? As there was some confusion that Sunday morning about how worship would take place, we will follow this plan:

\*If there is a forecast of possible bad weather for Sunday, a decision will be made on Saturday with an e-blast announcement to everyone, that we will only have Zoom worship the next day.

\*If there is a reason early Sunday, that it will not be possible to worship in the sanctuary on that day, an e-blast announcement will go out between 7:00 and 8:00 in the morning.

## WELCOME AND AFFIRMING WORKING GROUP (WAWG)

In January we hosted a luncheon for those who just recently began attending TUC. This was a great opportunity to get to know those who have recently come to TUC and for them to learn more about the church and each other.

Rev. Leigh Olson and Heather Morris also hosted a Welcome Host Appreciation Lunch where we also shared input about welcoming and discussed how we could better follow up with newcomers.

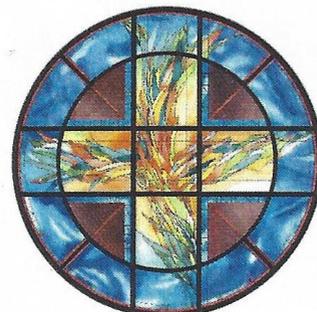
Our next event will be March 15 for P.I.E. day, providing a focus on being **P**ublic, **I**ntentional and **E**xplicit in our support for the LGBTQ2S+ community. Coffee and conversation that Sunday will also offer samples of yummy pies. If you can bake a pie or two to contribute, we would be so appreciative. Please contact me.

In October, we celebrated our third anniversary of becoming an Affirming Church. Rev. Olson preached a lovely sermon, reflecting our group members' feelings as to why they believe it is important to them to be an Affirming Church. Afterward a rainbow cake was served with Coffee and Conversation.

The work of WAWG is expanding with our new responsibility for Accessibility Policy and a few of our members have, for very valid reasons, not been able to continue with the group. We invite anyone interested in this work to join WAWG and help with the various aspects, such as Welcome Hosts, events for Affirming support or Accessibility Policy.

Current members are Rev. Leigh Olson, Linda Mather, Jennifer Wilson, and Pan (Goordat) Mathews.

*Heather Morris,*  
Chair of WAWG



## A NOTE FROM THE PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

As you are most likely aware the Pastoral Care Committee is a group of volunteers who visit members of the church who are no longer able to attend church or may have needs that would benefit from support of the church. They may be living at home, in assisted living residences or in long term care facilities. We will visit those members who are in hospital for acute or chronic issues or rehabilitation.

Quite often we hear after the fact that someone has been ill, or has been in an accident, or has fallen or is grieving a loss of any kind. We would like to be able to reach members at their times of need.

If you know someone who is dealing with a crisis or issue that would benefit from our support, please let any of our committee members know: Tanya Melbourne, Leigh Olson, Doug Whidden, Heather Morris, Linda Mather, Ann Louise Ross, Catharine Montgomery, Barbe Carruthers.

*Barbara Carruthers*  
Chair of Pastoral Care

## VILLAGE GROUP EVENT

Save the date! Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, we will be gathering for fun, food and fellowship with a pot luck dinner. This year there is no theme for the food so feel free to bring your favourite main dish, salad, side dish or dessert to share with others. Further details will be included in February Sunday bulletins. I will also be looking for volunteers to assist with set up and clean up. Please look for a sign-up sheet in the Narthex a few weeks before the event.

Looking forward to sharing a meal together!

*Elizabeth Gartner*  
Chair, Celebrate Together

Next issue of 'HANDS' is May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.  
Deadline for submissions is April 27<sup>th</sup>.

March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 remember to



.....  
turn your clocks ahead one hour!

## UPCOMING SERVICES

- Feb. 8, 10:30 am – Black Heritage Month
- Feb. 15, 10:30 am – Transfiguration Sunday
- Feb. 22, 10:30 am – Baden Powell Sunday  
guest speaker, Rev. Warren Ball
- Mar. 1, 10:30 am – Communion,  
Annual Congregational Meeting
- Mar. 8, 10:30 am – P.I.E. Sunday
- Mar. 15, 10:30 am – 4<sup>th</sup> in Lent
- Mar. 22, 10:30 am – 5<sup>th</sup> in Lent
- Mar. 29, 10:30 am – Palm Sunday,  
guest speaker, Rev. Warren Ball
- Apr. 3, 10:30 am – Good Friday
- Apr. 5, 10:30 am – Easter Sunday with  
Communion
- Apr. 12, 10:30 am – 2<sup>nd</sup> of Easter
- Apr. 19, 10:30 am – Foodgrains Sunday
- Apr. 26, 10:30 am – guest speaker,  
Rev. Warren Ball

## EASTER PLANTS

If you would like to purchase a spring plant to decorate our sanctuary for Easter, please contact the church office no later than Mar. 20.

Plants can be donated in memory of someone, in thanksgiving for someone, or a designation of your choice. Plants are \$20 each and may be taken home after the Easter Sunday service on April 5.

