

The Thornhill United Church Newsletter



HANDS

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November 2025

A NOTE FROM LEIGH

The Coming Season

The Word Became Flesh

John 1 NRSVA

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

I can't believe that the season is changing so quickly... it seems that summer with all of its bright blossoms and fruit were just here. But the yellows, reds and oranges of the leaves are here in full sway. I'm ready to enjoy watching all of nature with the rabbits, chipmunks, foxes, birds and squirrels, taking walks shuffling my feet through the leaves, with the beautiful colours, the crisp sounds, cool air and the sunshine on our faces. Breathe deeply of the fresh air and all of God's blessings that we have experienced and that are before us.

With the coming of Fall is the knowledge that Advent and Christmas aren't far away. I'm hoping that you will be a part of our worship and programs coming up... with Intercultural Sunday, and the sharing of our wonderful potluck; the choir concert, "JOY OF CHRISTMAS" featuring the church choirs of Thornhill, in fundraising for our Christmas Assistance Program; taking in new members in Baptism on Reign of Christ Sunday; Advent 1 Communion; the Sunday School and Youth Christmas Program; Lessons and Carols;

Advent 4 and Christmas Eve Services. There will be something for everyone. Our first Sunday after Christmas, we will be sharing in a Sunday Carol Sing, so that we can make sure we have sung all of our favourites before the end of 2025.

What will make it complete will be seeing you all here that we may join together in community, worship, praise, and song.

Rev. Leigh Olson

Co-ordinating Minister

"JOY OF CHRISTMAS"

A NEW CONCERT HERE AT TUC

Sat. November 22 at 7:30 p.m.



This year singers from six choirs of our Thornhill churches will unite to present a new concert of seasonal music here at TUC. We wish to increase awareness and raise funds for the **C**hristmas **A**ssistance **P**rogram, which helps families in need each Christmas. The concert will be live-streamed via Zoom; please contact the church office for the special link.

In lieu of tickets, cash, cheque or e-transfer donations will be received and tax receipts will be provided (minimum donation: \$10). You are also encouraged to bring a non-perishable item for the Richmond Hill Food Bank.

The massed choir of over 100 singers will perform all together and separately and there will be instrumental soloists. The audience will also be invited to sing seasonal carols with the choirs!

Refreshments will follow in the auditorium.

Ethel Briggs

Director of Music

A NOTE FROM MINI

Collective 2026: (em)brace for Impact

Get ready for the next chapter of Collective Youth! Following the success of Audacious Hope 2024, the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada are once again joining forces for an unforgettable youth camp — Collective 2026: (em)brace for Impact. This national camp will bring together youth, young adults, and their leaders for inspiring worship, creative workshops, meaningful conversations, and joyful community. It's a space where young people can explore faith, justice, and belonging — where every voice matters and every story adds colour to God's creative work. The camp will take place at Brock University in St. Catharines from August 12 to 15, 2026. I've been invited to co-lead worship with the Presbyterian Church, helping shape inclusive and imaginative worship services. It's an exciting opportunity to collaborate across denominations and create worship that reflects the unity and diversity of God's people.

In preparation for the camp, young people are invited to join a special video storytelling project.

Our youth can help create a short video that shares what they love about Thornhill United Church, how faith is growing here, and how we're serving our community through ministries like Sunday School, High School Class, Youth Group, and TUC Free Hot Dog Tuesday.

If you'd like to take part — in front of, or behind the camera — please contact me. Let's share our story and inspire others as we journey toward Collective 2026: (em)brace for Impact.

Rev. Mini Choi

Christian Development Minister

MUSIC NOTES

Along with all their weekly music for our services, the Sanctuary Choir is busy preparing for the new concert on Nov. 22 which will support the Christmas Assistance Program.

In October several singers led the singing of the Antiphonal Lord's Prayer and we appreciate the positive response from the congregation. It has been some time since we have sung it in our services. We are pleased to welcome Alina Mathews, Grace Law and Jeffrey Zhang to our choir this fall.

The Handbell Choir performed on Oct. 19; they will ring again at our service on Dec. 21.

Special thanks to Jeff Whittington, bass guitarist, who performed a new postlude by Mark Hayes on Oct. 26.



Ethel Briggs
Director of Music

INTERCULTURAL SUNDAY AT TUC

November 16, 2025

On Sunday, Nov. 16, we will celebrate the many heritages found in our TUC congregation. Everyone is invited to wear clothing and/or jewelry that represents their heritage.

We are planning a Pot Luck Lunch in the auditorium after the service, when we can sample food that represents our diverse cultures. From Oct. 26 there will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex, for people to indicate what food they will bring for the lunch.

We will also show many slides which show aspects of each person's cultural heritage, during the lunch. We hope you can join us as we enjoy the variety of foods and the slide show.

Joan Elliott and Leslie Benson,
IWG Co-Chairs

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sat. Nov. 15, 7:00 pm. – at Legend's Restaurant
Fri. Nov. 21, Christmas Play Rehearsal -
time to be determined
Sat. Nov. 22, 7:30 pm. – Concert at TUC
Tues. Nov. 25, 11:00 am. - Free 'Hotdog Tuesday'

"SHARING SUNDAY" – NOVEMBER 30, 2025

On Sunday, November 30, 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.

ASSETS AND ADMINISTRATION

Building Care and Use

To address water infiltration issues into the auditorium during rain storms, Cornerstone Contracting Inc. was retained to excavate along the north wall of the auditorium, replace the subdrains, waterproof the wall and build new stairs at the exit from the auditorium. During the project it was determined that an exterior sump pump was necessary to move water away from the building. We will be adding a railing for the stairs shortly. In the spring, Cornerstone will be returning to construct the window wells along the wall as it is not possible to achieve positive drainage away from the building and final grading and seeding will occur then. This will allow any ground settlement to occur over the winter. Painting continued over the summer with Leigh, Mini and Tanya's offices being painted and a portion of the library.

During the last week of August, 'Dream Tree Montessori' undertook to rebuild the steps at the front that provide access to their entrance. This improved the safety for those using the steps and enhanced the appearance. A thank you to 'Dream Tree Montessori'.

For those entering and exiting the church driveways, you should notice an improved ride. The City completed concrete curb and sidewalk repairs along Dudley Avenue including at the church driveways.

It takes many hands to look after the church and after another successful season, we would like to thank Diane McLeod and Lucina Fraser for looking after and maintaining the church gardens during the year. Thanks to their dedication, we are able to enjoy the gardens throughout the season. No safety or security issues arose.

submitted by
Dave Argue

Stewardship and Fund-Raising

The second Dine-Around Thornhill event was the 'Welcome Back Barbecue' at TUC on September 21st. Over 110 people enjoyed a sumptuous barbecue lunch with 'Fall-off-the-Bone' spareribs, burgers, hot dogs, grilled vegetables, potato salad, Caesar salad, and ice cream dessert. Over \$2,700 was raised from freewill offerings, donations and sponsorship. Thank you to all the volunteers, including 10 Thornhill Secondary School students, who made the event possible.

The next stop on the Dine-Around will be a gourmet Cantonese 10-course dinner at Legend's

Restaurant at the corner of Glen Cameron and Yonge Street. The date is Saturday, November 15, at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$65. The excellent menu includes Spring Rolls, Wonton Soup, Peking Duck Crepes, Lobster, Beef and Onion Fried Noodles, Dessert, and Jasmine Tea.

A big THANK YOU to Hilary Jacob, Carolyn Jackson and their team of volunteers, who organized the Bake Sale for Saturday, October 11th, that raised \$1,070 for the General Fund.

Linda and Lloyd Mather
Co-Chairs Assets and Administration

TUC LAWN SALE

On Saturday August 30th, the church hosted a lawn sale from 9am to noon, with the help of about 25 wonderful volunteers and donations of house wares, clothing, jewelry, books and toys from members of the church and the community. It was a time of not only raising funds for the church but of fellowship and hospitality for the Thornhill community.

Over \$1500. was raised for TUC. What didn't sell was either taken by volunteers to the Markham Recycling Depot for the Salvation Army or to Holy Trinity for their November sale of jewelry and Christmas items.

Blessings to all from,
Catherine Stuart & Ann Louise Ross



"IN THE GARDEN,"

Leigh's Summer Sabbatical

In the United Church of Canada, clergy are encouraged to take a sabbatical after 5 years of service to a congregation. We are encouraged to study or rest for a period of 1-3 months, with the possibility of taking up to a year. I decided that summer would be the perfect time to be away, as our programming winds down and the ministerial work wouldn't be too heavy for Mini by herself.

Summer was just right as it's the perfect time to immerse oneself in the beauty of the earth... especially gardens. My scripture focus was St. John's story of Mary coming in grief and despair to the garden early Easter morning, thinking that her Lord was dead and had not been properly buried. But instead, she found resurrection and new life in Jesus. She was the first to see the risen Christ, leaving the garden in joy, with her heart full. Gardens are places of nourishment, beauty, healing and refreshment. Doctors in England are now writing prescriptions for people to improve their mental health by working with plants and soil in gardens.

I visited around 30 different gardens across Canada, from 5 gardens in Victoria, B.C. (such as Butchart, Abkhazi and Finnerty Gardens), to 9 different gardens in Quebec (including gardens at Les Quatre Vents, Grand Metis, Montreal Botanical Gardens and teaching gardens). I also was so pleased to visit a number of more local gardens that I love (Edwards Gardens, Royal Botanical Gardens, Niagara Falls Botanical Garden and my local Etobicoke Centennial Conservatory to name a few).

What a beautiful summer!! I got to see familiar plants, like all the Day Lilies in full bloom at the Montreal Botanical Gardens and exotic Martagon Lilies, Angel's fishing rods, Japanese Primroses and the entrancing Himalayan Blue Poppies, that seemed iridescent.

I was pleased to present a slide show and talk after worship on September 26. I will take more opportunities to share photographs and stories again.

My heart is full, my body rested and energized, and my spirit lightened by the wonders of God's creation. God's beautiful world continues to bless and keep us. Please feel free to reach out to me about my summer. I'd be happy to visit with you and share about it.

Grace and Peace,
Leigh



ANNUAL TABLE ARRANGEMENT WORKSHOP

"It's Snowing Cats and Dogs and Pollywogs"

On Saturday, December 13th at 9:30 am in the Auditorium, we will be enjoying some Christmas cheer while we make our winter arrangements. This year's theme is "It's Snowing Cats and Dogs and Pollywogs" Cost: \$65 payable in cash on the day of the event or by e-transfer to the church in advance.

New this year: If you cannot make the event, there will be 3 table arrangements for purchase at church on Sunday, December 14th for \$65 each.

Please contact Joan Honsberger at 905 889-3118 or jo.honsie@sympatico.ca to sign up for the event. Applications will be accepted from November 15th onwards. Space is limited for this seasonal fun. Bringing your own clippers would be appreciated but there are some available at the event.

Joan Honsberger



Life Passages

DEATHS



Fran Welch, June 28.

Josie Sagadraca, passed away September 26, wife of the late Noli, mother of Jay (Aida), Ean (Cathryna), Ned (Maila) and Jovy, grandmother and great grandmother of ten grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

CELEBRATIONS

Bob Hill celebrated his 90th birthday on July 19.

FUNDSCRIP

Christmas is just around the corner and our easiest fundraiser is FUNDSCRIP!

Next deadlines are:

November 30th and December 7th.

Two ways to order:

email order form to blair.gabi@gmail.com

e-transfer payment to

treasurer@thornhillunitedchurch.ca

(noting FUNDSCRIP)

or drop off order form and cheque at TUC in the secure drop box.

Questions? Contact Gabi Blair at 416-518-2930

or blair.gabi@gmail.com or

Elizabeth Gartner, 905-660-6692,

or ejgartner@bell.net

UPCOMING SERVICES

Nov. 2, 10:30 am – Memorial Sunday

Nov. 9, 10:30 am – Remembrance Sunday

Nov. 16, 10:30 am – Intercultural Sunday and Potluck Lunch

Nov. 23, 10:30 am – Reign of Christ Sunday, with Baptism

Nov. 30, 10:30 am – 1st Sunday of Advent, “Sharing Sunday” with Communion

Dec. 7, 10:30 am – 2nd Sunday of Advent and Christmas Play

Dec. 14, 10:30 am – 3rd Sunday of Advent, “Lessons and Carols” and Newcomer’s Lunch

Dec. 21, 10:30 am – 4th Sunday of Advent

Dec. 24, 4:00 pm – Christmas Eve Family Service

7:00 pm - Christmas Eve Service with Communion

Dec. 28, 10:30 am – 1st Sunday after Christmas “Songs of Christmas”

Jan. 4, 10:30 am – 2nd after Christmas

Deadline for February ‘**HANDS**’ submissions, is January 26. Articles received after January 26 will appear in the May 2026 issue of ‘**HANDS**’

WELCOME AND AFFIRMING WORKING GROUP (WAWG)

On Sunday, October 19, we celebrated the third anniversary of becoming an Affirming Church. We took this opportunity to pause and reflect on why we felt it was important to become an Affirming Church. Anyone who had been harmed by past discrimination of churches against the 2SLGBTQ+ community is assured that as an Affirming Church we will warmly welcome and fully include them in the life and work of TUC.

Some of our newcomers have joined specifically because we are an Affirming Church and are already contributing by volunteering in various capacities.

Rev. Mini Choi preached a heartwarming service of love and inclusiveness. All were invited to join together after the service for coffee, conversation and some rainbow cake.

Heather Morris

Welcoming and Affirming Working Group Chair

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

| | ytd | ytd | BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | SEPT 2024 | SEPT 2025 | 2025 |
| Receipts | | | |
| Env/PAR/Seasonal | 179,047 | 178,357 | 283,000 |
| Use of Space | 120,615 | 130,573 | 164,000 |
| Fund Raising | 4,388 | 10,909 | 11,000 |
| All Other | 9,261 | 19,947 | 25,300 |
| | 313,311 | 339,786 | 483,300 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Salaries & Benefits | 241,440 | 249,021 | 333,500 |
| Pillars---BCU | 95,154 | 118,134 | 151,000 |
| All Other | 2,538 | 3,120 | 5,350 |
| UCC Assessment | 13,410 | 14,850 | 19,820 |
| Council | 5,534 | 5,919 | 8,700 |
| | 358,076 | 391,044 | 518,370 |
| Trans From | - | - | 35,070 |
| Visionary Fund | | | |
| Operating | (44,765) | (51,258) | - |
| Surplus (Deficit) | | | |

Salaries & Benefits along with Building Care & Use costs are much higher than 2024 as per budgeted expectations.