

MOUNTAINSIDE UNITED CHURCH

November 2026 Newsletter

"Lest We Forget"

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Calendar

"There is a calmness to a life lived in gratitude." Ralph H. Blum

November 1. Worship @ 10:30am in BHC with Rev. Throop.

November 8. Worship @ 10:30am in BHC with Rev. Throop.

November 15. Worship @ 10:30am in BHC with Rev. Throop.

November 22. Worship @ 10:30am in BHC with Rev. Throop.

November 29. Worship @ 10.30am in BHC with Rev. Throop.

November 1 we worship and remember that it is All Saints Day. Please note those whom we remember in the bulletin.
If you did not receive a Broadview Magazine last week please take one today, Level 1, to read/ study about small churches.

November 8 we worship and recall to memory that it is Remembrance Day and a time to honour all those who served in war, are serving in war and pray for peace.

November 15 we enjoy Lunch after the worship service and celebrate with all who have November Birthdays.

November 22 is Reign of Christ Sunday.

November 29 is the First Sunday of Advent- HOPE- and we celebrate with families as we light the Advent-candles.

Elva Crawford, Chair, L&L

Minister's Message

Dear Friends at Mountainside,

I hope that you had a great Thanksgiving and were able to reconnect with family and friends. Maintaining connections is important and doing so around feasting even more so. Somehow the one contributes to the other. Did you bother to say grace, a collective prayer of thanksgiving?
Recently, I enjoyed connecting with people that I have known from my days in Vancouver. It was a chance to catch up with both their lives and those of the community that I served and to learn of the changes that have occurred. It was good to keep connected.

I was pleased to see two young men now launching their post high school lives, to learn of their accomplishments and goals, and to see the pride in their parents as we gathered. I must confess my amazement as I had cradled each of these two young lads in my arms when I asked the parents, by what name shall this child of God be known? They, like the Douglas Firs in Stanley Park, now towered over me. But it was plain that, to paraphrase Carl Jung, invoked or not invoked, God had been busy with their lives.

I also enjoyed the feasting which included a wild sockeye salmon that had been caught off Haida Gwaii. It would not be the West Coast without a salmon feast, and certainly not the tradition of the members of that community of faith as we always had a BBQ salmon church picnic in August. When the community hosted the Presbytery when I was Chair, they offered their guests grilled salmon that was also caught by another member off Haida Gwaii.

Whenever I enjoyed a salmon feast, I recall the tradition of some Christian communities who have fish for Easter, where the Greek word for fish recalls a secret exchange of faith identity in a hostile world, it represented Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. My family's tradition for Easter was lamb, recalling the Paschal Lamb, and Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, through whom we seek mercy. Both traditions keep Christ at the centre of the feasting and fellowship at the table.

I hope that those of you who attended the joint service with Kahnawake felt Christ's presence, not only in the service but at the table when we both feasted and hosted the feast. I did say grace. It was wonderful for me to see everyone engaged in joyous fellowship around the same long table. The meal was so abundant that many took home the leftovers of their meals for another day. I anticipate that other lasting connections and memories were made. Worshipping, hearing another's journey, learning, and celebrating at table mirrors the greater table that unites us all. There is always room and abundance at the Lord's table.

I had time to reflect on our experiences at Kahnawake, and on my family who recently gathered to say goodbye to my beloved aunt, while I walked the 9km route of the seawall around Stanley Park. It is a walk that I always considered a time for reflection and prayer. You leave the business and urban towers of Coal Harbour enter the rustic beauty of the park until you arrive at English Bay. The clean salt air clears your sinuses and head, and the rhythm of the walk become a vehicle for meditation. On your journey you hear many languages as you briefly encounter the world with smiles, polite nods of the head, and hellos in many tongues. On the journey you thus connect with a greater human family all enjoying the beauty of God's creation.

It is good for us to take time in prayer to reflect on our connections and inter-connectedness including our relationship with the Holy. Prayer is not only something that happens in a worship setting. It is a question of mindfulness and intentionality. It can happen over a special dinner when we reflect with others (think of the tea ceremony and Holy Communion), it can happen when we engage in physical activity alone, and it occurs when we take time to walk and be immersed in the beauty of creation. Prayer centres us and reconnects us with a greater reality in a hectic and troublesome world, normally invoking a sense of gratitude. Prayer is an important part of our spiritual life. So, as John Wesley put it so well, "if you are too busy to pray you are too busy." Find your own path but it is important to take time to reflect and to pray.

In Christ,

Rev. Doug





Message from the Director of Music

Dear Friends,

November is always a busy time of year, with meaningful occasions such as Remembrance Day, but also the excitement of preparing for the upcoming holiday season and Christmas concerts! With that in mind, there are two exciting musical events I'd like to bring to your attention!

First, I'd like to invite you to a concert presented by the McGill Choral Society, an organization I've been very much involved with, along with some familiar faces you may recognize from our church, including Marek, Sofia, and Georgia! The concert will take place on Sunday, November 29, at 3:00 PM, at Saint-Jean-Baptiste Church. This is going to be a very exciting one, featuring over 200 choristers, an orchestra, and of course, I'll also have the pleasure of accompanying and conducting a smaller advanced choir during the concert! There will be a wonderful variety of music, including tango, jazz-inspired pieces, and much more! Some of you may remember the jazz-themed music we performed with our own church choir last year. If you enjoyed that, then I'm certain you'll enjoy this concert as well! It's going to be a refreshing and exciting afternoon of music, and I really hope you can join us! Tickets can be purchased through the McGill Choral Society website at www.mcgillchoral.ca, or you can simply get in touch with me, Marek, Sofia, or Georgia for more information!

That being said, the second event is our very own Mountainside United Church Christmas Concert, which will take place on Sunday, December 13, at 3:00 PM, here at Birks Chapel! Please mark your calendars and save the date for another exciting afternoon of music! Our choir and I are working hard to prepare a beautiful selection of Christmas music, and with everyone's enthusiasm and wonderful spirits, I'm certain this will be one you won't want to miss! I think this is also the perfect time of year to come together and celebrate God's wonderful gift of music, while taking a moment to slow down, relax, and enjoy the warmth and joy of the Christmas season. With how busy our lives can get and everything going on in the world today, I hope this concert will give everyone a chance to simply enjoy some beautiful music, feel uplifted, and share in the spirit of Christmas together.

And one more thing! We're also on the lookout for more choristers, particularly basses! If you've ever thought about joining our choir, or know someone who might be interested, it's certainly not too late! Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. We'd be more than happy to welcome you!

I'm really looking forward to both of these concerts, and I hope to see many of you there! Thank you all, as always, for your continued support of music in our church. It truly means a lot to me, and I'm very grateful to be able to share these wonderful musical experiences with all of you!

In music and fellowship,

Alberto Santos
Music Director

Message from the Chair of Session

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ. November is here and we are one hour back in our clocks as we embark winter.

Indeed, we are preparing our winter holidays like putting up our Christmas trees, baking and cooking not to mention listening to Christmas carols.

Myself, I started cleaning up my balcony, taking in my geraniums and other plants to keep inside my apartment for winter. It’s quite a task but it’s my therapy.

And then, I am very excited putting together my Christmas lights and other ornaments around my balcony. It’s quite a challenge for me to make sure all the lights are in working condition. It’s almost done and I am looking forward turning it on for the holidays.

How about you? Do you do any decorating for the holidays? Well, I wish you all to have a wonderful holiday in advance and enjoy the season with your family and friends including your pets if you have any.

Stay healthy and God Bless.

Yours Truly,

Ethel Ann Flores
Chair of Session

Two Remarkable Women, One Inspiring Story

Jill Harrison (with the permission of both women)

Over the past six months, two members of our Mountainside community have inspired us with their adventures on the Camino de Santiago, a historic network of pilgrimage routes across Europe that lead to the shrine of the Apostle St. James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Blanca Baquero, one of our senior members who joins us online from Nova Scotia, walked the French route with a friend in April and May. At age 81, she covered 650 of the 790 kilometre route over five weeks! What an extraordinary accomplishment. (She insisted I be accurate. They did have to hop on the bus once or twice because of inclement weather.)

Milan Heck, one of our younger members and a recent McGill graduate student, took on the Portuguese Coastal Route with her dad, Darryl, in October. Together, they walked 290 kilometres in two weeks. What a wonderful adventure it must have been to share with a parent!

Walking the Camino is an achievement in itself, whether one travels a few kilometres or hundreds. But what makes these journeys even more remarkable is that both women live with medical challenges that might have discouraged many from even thinking about such an adventure.

These are two remarkable women whose determination, courage, and spirit of adventure inspire us all at Mountainside. Their stories remind us that we are often capable of far more than we imagine and that challenges need not define the limits of what we can do. May their example encourage each of us to keep moving forward—even when our journey seems daunting.

Both women documented their walk through emails and photographs shared with friends back home. Here is a final reflection from each of them.

From Blanca Baquero: *The crux of the Camino is that it mirrors life itself, with its ups and downs. There are majestic moments of sheer joy and ecstasy, as well as moments when one must scrape the bottom of the barrel to find the courage to continue.*

The Camino is a walk with God and a walk with oneself. Like life, it is unpredictable, no matter how carefully we prepare. Each pivotal step is a prelude to the next, compelling one to sift and separate what is essential from what is not, forcing one to confront one's uncertainties, only to discover a determination we may not have known we possessed.

Ultimately, the Camino-Frances is not simply a journey across a landscape. It is a 790 km journey inward, one that deepens our awareness of ourselves, of others, and of our connection with something greater than ourselves.

The Camino taught me, too, that faith is not knowing what lies ahead, but finding the courage to take the next step, trusting that one is never entirely alone.



From Milan Heck:



"Many meditations on life that seemed to be repeating themes on the walk have continued to echo in my mind.

One is a lesson that I have learned time and time again, that I have told to myself endlessly, which is simply that everything passes. Doesn't sound so profound, does it? But those were words that were comfortingly spoken to me by Ulysses, the chapel volunteer, and that were silently reinforced by the ever changing landscapes we moved through.

All hardships pass. Good things, too. You can see equal parts pain and reprieve in that message, depending on the angle you look at, but I think there is much meaning to be found either way. There is pain in leaving behind all things we are attached to, whether it be a beautiful coastline view, a person, the warmth of a season. While sadness exists in watching them pass, we can be happy that they moved us enough to make us feel that way. And like everything, that sadness ends too. It's cold here in Calgary and I hate it, but I know spring will always come again."

Mountainside wishes them continued success in their next chapter. Blanca is currently working on a Camino presentation for multiple groups and is planning on writing a book about her experience that would include haikus written along the way.

Milan has returned to her hometown of Calgary, but is preparing for more jet setting, off to Italy on her own, and from there, to Australia with friends. Then it's time for some serious job hunting.

Stewardship Campaign

Mountainside's Stewardship Campaign is underway.
The Stewardship Sunday service on Oct 25th was led by Jill Harrison, Chair of Finance.
Here are excerpts from her Reflection.

Stewards of Love, Builders of Peace

…Let's step back for a minute. What does Stewardship mean? I suppose a simple definition is the "the care, or management, of something entrusted to me". So maybe consider this little checklist as it applies to you personally, and to us collectively as a community of faith.

We're stewards of our money and material resources. How are <u>you</u> doing? How are <u>we</u> doing? Mountainside is blessed with money in its coffers.

We're stewards of our time and energy. Realistically speaking, today there are fewer stewards and with less energy.

We're stewards of our abilities, our talents as we like to say on Stewardship Sunday. We still have plenty of talent; maybe we can re-direct it.

We are stewards of creation. At Mountainside we try to do our part at coffee hour and birthday lunches, but you have to admit, as a whole, we humans aren't doing a great job. Here we have much to learn from our indigenous brothers and sisters about the stewardship of the land and of all creation. Are we protecting it for the seven generations to come?

And maybe most importantly, we are stewards of our relationships, stewards of our community, stewards of the well-being of our neighbours. I ask, are we doing all we can on this front? …

Both our readings this morning talk about loving your neighbour. In the passage from Matthew, they ask Jesus, "Which law is the greatest of the laws?" He says, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 'This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

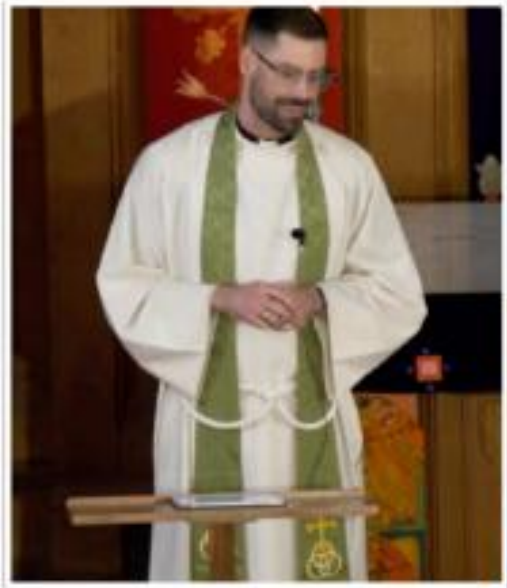
Then if loving my neighbour is central to Christian faith, does-stewardship not ask: **"What has God entrusted to me, and how can I use it for the flourishing of others?"** Can we not argue then, that peace isn't something we hope for or pray for, but it is something we are called to cultivate and steward. Just maybe I have more that I can give to cultivate peace. **"What has God entrusted to Mountainside and how can we use it for the flourishing of others?"** Just maybe we, as a community of faith, have more that we could do to help our neighbour in need. Giving demonstrates God's love in action. Helping those in need is an expression of your faith. And "God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace".

So here's the point of today's reflection:

Jesus tells us that the heart of our faith is love of God and love of neighbour. Christian stewardship is simply the practice of putting that love into action with everything that has been entrusted to us. And when we use our time, talents, resources and influence for the flourishing of our neighbours, we become people who make peace—not simply people who pray for it.

May my pledge for 2027 help to make peace! …

Photos from October 2026



Betsy and Adora celebrate October birthdays.





Ester Nuguid and the Outreach Committee led on Oct 11th.



Rev. Morgan Bell, Director of United Church Studies at Diocesan Theological College led the service Oct 18th.









Jill Harrison led the Stewardship Sunday service Oct 25th.



