

Ministry Personnel:
Rev Cheryl-Lynn
MacPherson

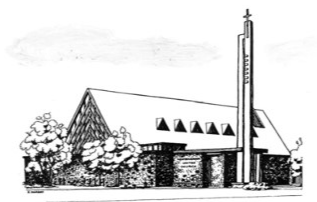
**Director of Music
Ministries:**
Taylor Sullivan

**Program Director,
Drop-Inn:**
Sandra Seepaul

**Church
Administrator:**
Heather Miller

SPROUTS

Advent Greetings



Inside this issue:

article	page
In the Christmas Spirit	2
Carvings at Cummer	3
Browsing	4
Affirming Process Team	5
New Year's Resolutions	5
Chritmas Pageant	6
Green Notes	6
Advent & Christmas Services	7
Mark Your Calendar	7
Milestones	7

Advent Greetings dear members and friends of Cummer Avenue United Church! I give thanks to God for you and for the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are present within you; gifts that you offer with faithfulness and joy.

Hannah said, “My heart exults in the Lord.” (1 Samuel 2:1)

Mary said, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.” (Luke 1: 46)

Hannah and Mary begin their songs with similar words, acknowledging all the Holy One has done for them. The voice of wonder and gratitude in these two amazing women is the inner voice I want to keep this Advent. In this season of “counting down the days ‘til Christmas,” it is easy to get trapped in our frenetic world of self-imposed preparations and miss the things for which we need to give thanks. Our hearts forget to “exult in God” because we are unaware of so much that is happening. We get caught up in complaining about “how little time there is” to do all the things we hope to do. We become inattentive to the consistent goodness of God as revealed in people and creation around us.

So, in this Advent season, let us try to awaken each morning and recommit our hearts to “exulting in God” by seeing and welcoming with gratitude the numerous blessings that are ours. Let us be grateful for the use of our bodies and minds, for the voices of those who care, for the hands and hearts that send letters of cheer, and for each moment that we breathe and have life. At evening let us again “exult in God” by calling to mind the joys each day has held.

If you have been away from church for a while, I invite you to re-connect with us. Give yourself and us the opportunity to be spiritually centered in community together as we welcome Emmanuel – God-with-us.

I wish you a blessed Christmas season and a New Year filled with peace.

Sincerely,
Cheryl-Lynn MacPherson (Rev.)



In the Christmas Spirit

An Evening of Seasonal Stories and Songs

Saturday, December 2, 2017 at 7 p.m.

(Doors open at 6:15 p.m.)

Cummer Avenue United Church

53 Cummer Avenue (at Yonge Street)

Bring your family and friends to an exciting evening of readings, adult & children's choir performances, instrumental music and carol singing.

Featuring

Zuraidah Alman	- CTV News
Paul Bliss	- CTV News
Jill Dempsey	- CBC News
Mike Wise	- CBC News

Telling traditional and contemporary stories:

The Christmas Orange; Three Wise Women;
Auntie Claus and the Key to Christmas; Christmas Presents

with the music of

Toronto French Montessori School Choir
Seneca Hill Public School
Cummer Avenue United Church Chancel Choir
VIP (Vision Impaired People) Choir
East York Concert Band

A wonderful way to get into the Christmas spirit. Proceeds support the *Cummer Avenue Drop-Inn Program* for the homeless and hungry. Contributions on show night will be much appreciated.

Tickets: Adults \$10; Children 12 & under \$5

Call (416)222-5417 for ticket information

Meet the performers at a reception after the show

Carvings at Cummer

When you enter our sanctuary you are never alone. Yes, often there are other people, but three carved figures around the cross always welcome you. Representing the three Christian graces of Faith, Hope and Love, they are there for all. Observe the positions of heads and hands as they look to the cross in worship, caring and concern. The sculptor carefully planned the progression from the clasped hands of Faith in prayer, through the open hands of Hope anticipating a blessing, to the horizontally extended arms of the cross representing the the position of Christ crucified, to the downward reaching hands of Love.

The pulpit panel is an expanded version of the United Church Seal embodying the symbols of the three founding denominations which entered Church Union in 1925: the Dove to represent the Methodist Church, the open Bible with the Alpha and Omega to represent the Congregational Church, and the Burning Bush to represent the Presbyterian Church. The veil at the top symbolizes the hidden mystery of God, and the mountain in the lower background reminds us of Mount Sinai where Moses received The Ten Commandments, and the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Bible belongs to all people, so the symbol on the lectern is the seal of the World Council of Churches. It is the Cross in the ship representing God's church taking the Gospel to all churches in all ages.

The carvings in the sanctuary, created by sculptor William McElcheran R.C.A. [1927-1999] , are of White Oak with a natural wax finish. "Bill" often described himself as 'the least known well known artist'. You can check him out on Google.

- Andrea Journeaux

[with thanks to Velma McGregor who did the research for a newsletter in 1981]



photo credits: Heather Miller

Browsing: Books for Living

Will Schwalbe in “Books for Living” tells how 26 books have influenced him by delighting him, inspiring him, or teaching him something new. They are about evenly divided, fiction and non-fiction, obscure and familiar. Schwalbe is the supreme avid reader and collector, completely entranced by the world of books.

“I’m not the same reader when I finish a book as I was when I started. Brains are tangles of pathways, and reading creates new ones. Every book changes your life.” “Books are uniquely suited to helping us change our relationship to the rhythms and habits of daily life in this world of endless connectivity.” “I read novels because they help me figure out who I want to be,” perhaps more like the kind caregiver and less like the schoolyard bully. “What are you reading?” is a way of asking, “Who are you now and who are you becoming?”

Top of his list is “The Importance of Living” written in 1937 by Lin Yutang. This book “makes a case for loafing, for savouring food and drink, for not striving too much.” Lin believed taking naps would promote energy and creativity. It worked for him: He led a “wildly productive” life. When Schwalbe first heard of Lin’s book he found a well-worn copy in the local library. Toronto has 18.

Some others on the list: “The Little Prince” on friendship, Anne Morrow Lindbergh’s “Gifts from the Sea” on loss, a children’s book called “More, more, more, Said the Baby” on love.

Lin Yutang keeps turning up throughout the book. On the second last page: “No-one can be perfect; he can only aim at being a likable, reasonable human being.” Schwalbe’s last words: “(Reading) is one of the world’s great joys.” “I read to live.”

- Barbara McNutt



photo credit: Valerie Ferrier

Affirming Process Team (APT) Update

On October 29 and October 30, APT hosted two workshops. During the workshops, we viewed a video that shared Affirming Congregation Stories from two United Church congregations. In the video, the congregations discussed the reasons they initiated the process, their experiences during the process, and what becoming and affirming ministry has meant to the members. Following the videos, the workshop participants considered the following questions in small groups: How does being Affirming affect a church? What are the benefits to a congregation of becoming Affirming? How is becoming Affirming a way of showing / living your faith? What biblical faith stories might underlie the actions of Affirming congregations? What is the difference between Affirming and tolerating, and Affirming and welcoming? How is becoming Affirming a justice issue? How can becoming

affirming help us to embrace diversity and welcome people of other races, nationalities, and abilities? Why is becoming affirming important to LGBTQ members? In addition to the APT members, 19 people participated in the two workshops. APT would like to thank each of the participants for their time, their questions, and their thoughtful discussion. APT is continuing to meet to plan the next steps in our process. For more information on the affirming process, please visit <http://affirmunited.ausc.ca/>. If you have questions or comments that you would like APT to consider, please submit a question or comment in the rainbow question box located on the information table by the office.

- Angela Carley



New Year's Resolutions

Every year, as December moves quickly towards January and a new year, we all start to think about the clean slate; a chance to start over and do things better in a brand new year! As we munch our way through company dinners, yet another party and the family gatherings around tables groaning with foods far too rich to serve at any other time of the year, we tell ourselves that one more piece of chocolate won't hurt because starting on January 1st we're turning over a new leaf.

We are resolving to become healthier and fitter. We are going to watch our diets, walk to the store for fresh fruit and veg, count our steps, dig out that old exercise DVD (or was it a video cassette requiring a VCR that no longer works?) and join the gym! Easy peasy, at least until the second week of January when you realize that you're not actually feeling energetic enough to begin such an aggressive new regime!

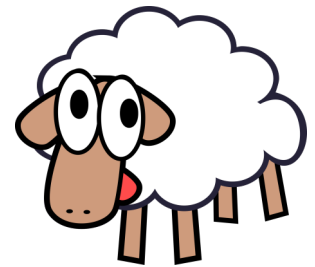
Why not be a little kinder to yourself and try one new resolution at a time? **You could try out the Wednesday Night Fitness Class right here at Cummer Avenue United Church.** That's just one hour a week. We have a great instructor who encourages us to exercise at our own pace, doing general strengthening and cardio exercises and there are no mirrors! We have a lot of fun too - remember that laughter is good for you and uses many muscles!

If you're even the slightest bit tempted to join this group, please call me for details. How about giving someone you love the gift of fitness this Christmas (10-week sessions are just \$70).

- Barb Anderson, 416-222-4986

Christmas Pageant

We are having a special Christmas 6 week program for children Sunday mornings, commencing November 26, 2017 which will include everyone participating in a Christmas Pageant on Sunday morning, December 24, 2017. There will be Christmas crafts, songs, games and lots of the Christmas cheer.



Find the true spirit of Christmas by bringing your children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren for the Cummer Avenue United Church Christmas program for six Sunday mornings, starting November 26th at 10:00a.m.

We need a Star in the east, Angels on high, and Shepherds with flocks of sheep (little lambs too) seated all around and Cows lowing in a stable with a manger and Mary and Joseph and the Baby Jesus (no memory work necessary)

To make sure that we have enough craft supplies (we will always have extra if you want to bring a friend) We are asking you to sign up by either dropping off the free registration at the church office or emailing it to CAUChurchSchool@gmail.com or give to Barb Puckering. The registration form is included with your bulletin or you can drop us an email and one will be sent to you.

You can drop off the child for the program, join the child in class or remain in the church for the service. All are welcome to learn the Christmas story!

- Barb Puckering

Green Notes

Newtonbrook Neighbourhood Garden, produced reasonably well despite the cool and wet summer. Whatever vegetables were not needed by the Drop-Inn were donated to The Hub at Bathurst and Finch. Many thanks to the volunteers who planted, picked and weeded.

Over the past several years 53 Cummer has experienced some environmental upgrades. The original oil furnace was replaced by more efficient natural gas. Toilets are now low-flush and major appliances are more energy-efficient.

The Green Team has worked with the congregation and tenants to adopt recycling efforts and these have been largely successful.

Well done!

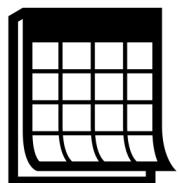


Advent and Christmas at Cummer

December 3: Advent 1	Paying Attention to God, Communion
December 10: Advent 2	Making Space for God
December 17: Advent 3	Carol Service (during 10:30 worship)
December 24: Advent 4	Surprised by God, Christmas Pageant
December 24: Christmas Eve	7:00 pm Carol Sing
	7:30 pm Service, Communion



Mark Your Calendar



Annual reports from committees and team leads must be submitted by **December 28, 2017**.

The Annual General Meeting will be **February 25, 2018**.

Milestones



Deaths:

Mary Embree	October 27, 2017
Sheena Gailis	November 1, 2017
Barb Cohan	November 2, 2017

Cummer Avenue United Church
53 Cummer Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M2M 2E5
phone: 416-222-5417
www.cummeravenueuc.ca

Lent/Easter
Newsletter Deadline:
Sunday, February 25 2018

Contact: _____
Phone: _____
