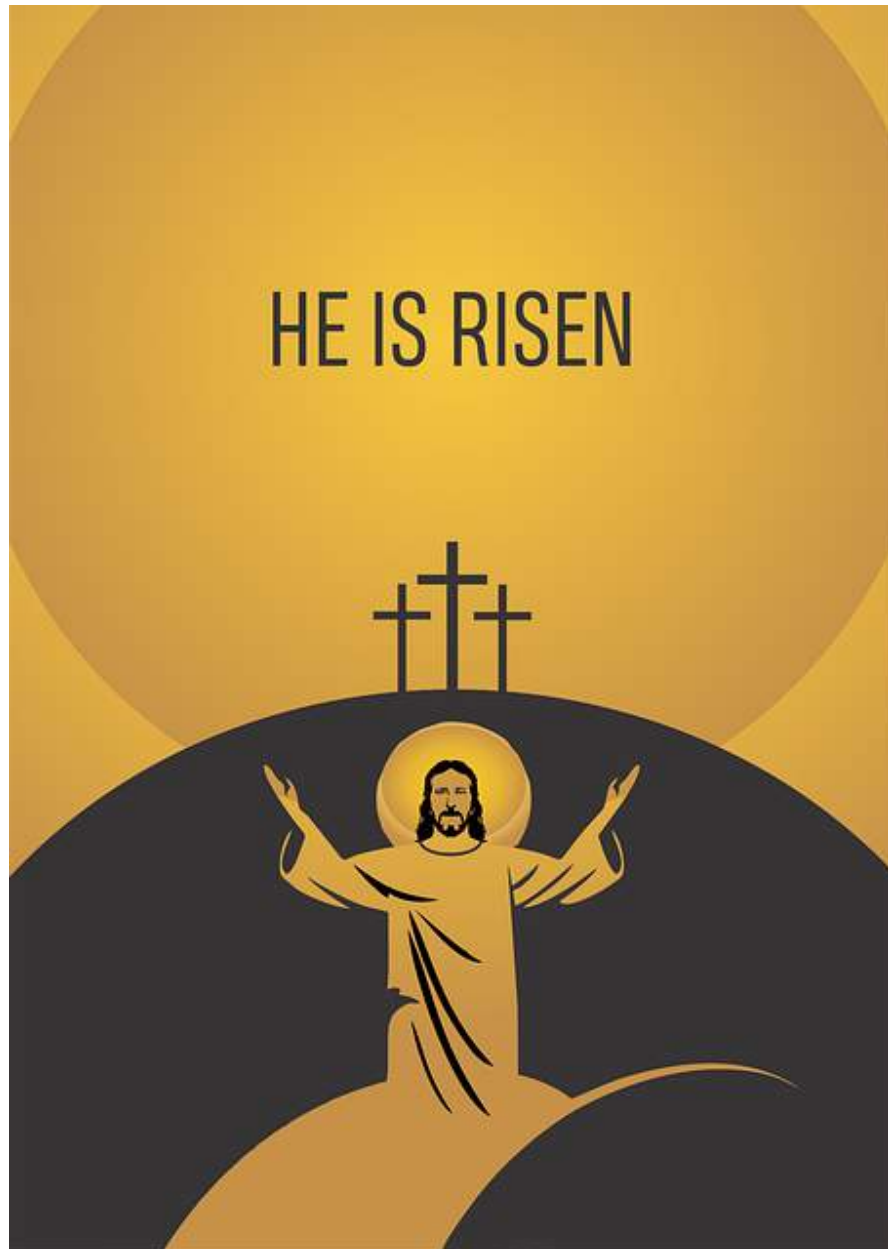


# NEWS FROM THE PEWS

April 2024



400 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke. M9B 2A8  
416 622 4113. [www.stjamesunitedchurch.com](http://www.stjamesunitedchurch.com)

# April Highlights

## Sundays:

March 31 - EASTER SUNDAY

7th - 1st after Easter - Faith Talk with Eileen McAuley on Palestine

14th - 2nd after Easter - Rev. Richard Choe.

21st - Guest: Tom Watson

28th - 4th after Easter. Faith talk with Transition Team

**MAY 5 - Anniversary, Covenanting with Rev. Richard. Guest preacher**

**Rev. Pegi Ridout**

**Delicious catered LUNCH and**

**CHOIR FUNDRAISER!**

## Mondays:

Reiki 1 p.m.- 3 p.m.

## Tuesdays:

Reiki - 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Euchre -9th and 23rd - Lounge 1:30 - 4 p.m. Cost \$5

## Wednesdays:

Yoga 10:45-11:45 a.m. Lounge. Cost \$20

Food Basket 1 - 4:00 p.m. (EXCEPT APRIL 3RD)

## Thursdays:

Choirs Practise - Seniors 7:15 p.m. Chancel 9 p.m.

## Fridays:

5th - Family Games Night 7 p.m. Note Change to FIRST Friday!

## Saturday, April 13

**Browse and Buy 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** (formerly called Spring Fling)

<https://fundrive.savers.com/e/stjamesunitedchurchfundrive050124>

## AN OPINION ON CHANGE AND GRIEVING - by Nancy Violo

At our recent Annual General Meeting we received an outline of the goals that the Transition Team would be focusing their attention upon as we covenant with our new Intentional Interim Minister, Richard Choe.

We had some discussion about grieving the endings of the 40 years of Clive and Pat Dunstan's time and the 29 years of Coral's time at St. James. I heard quite clearly that this concept did not resonate with some people speaking to the issue. I would like to suggest that it might be important to shift the focus, not on the people who left, making a natural transition into their retirements, but rather into the legacy that their long term service to St. James embedded into our sense of who we understand ourselves to be and how we enact that in the life of the church.

For 45 years we have had a style of music program that has remained relatively consistent. Choral music sung using paid solo leads that support the soprano, alto, tenor and baritone sections of the choir. Wonderful music was created and enjoyed! An award winning performance choir that lifted the Spirit of choristers and listeners. J.-C. continued the same style of music program and his skill and perseverance has helped the choir to find its voice again.

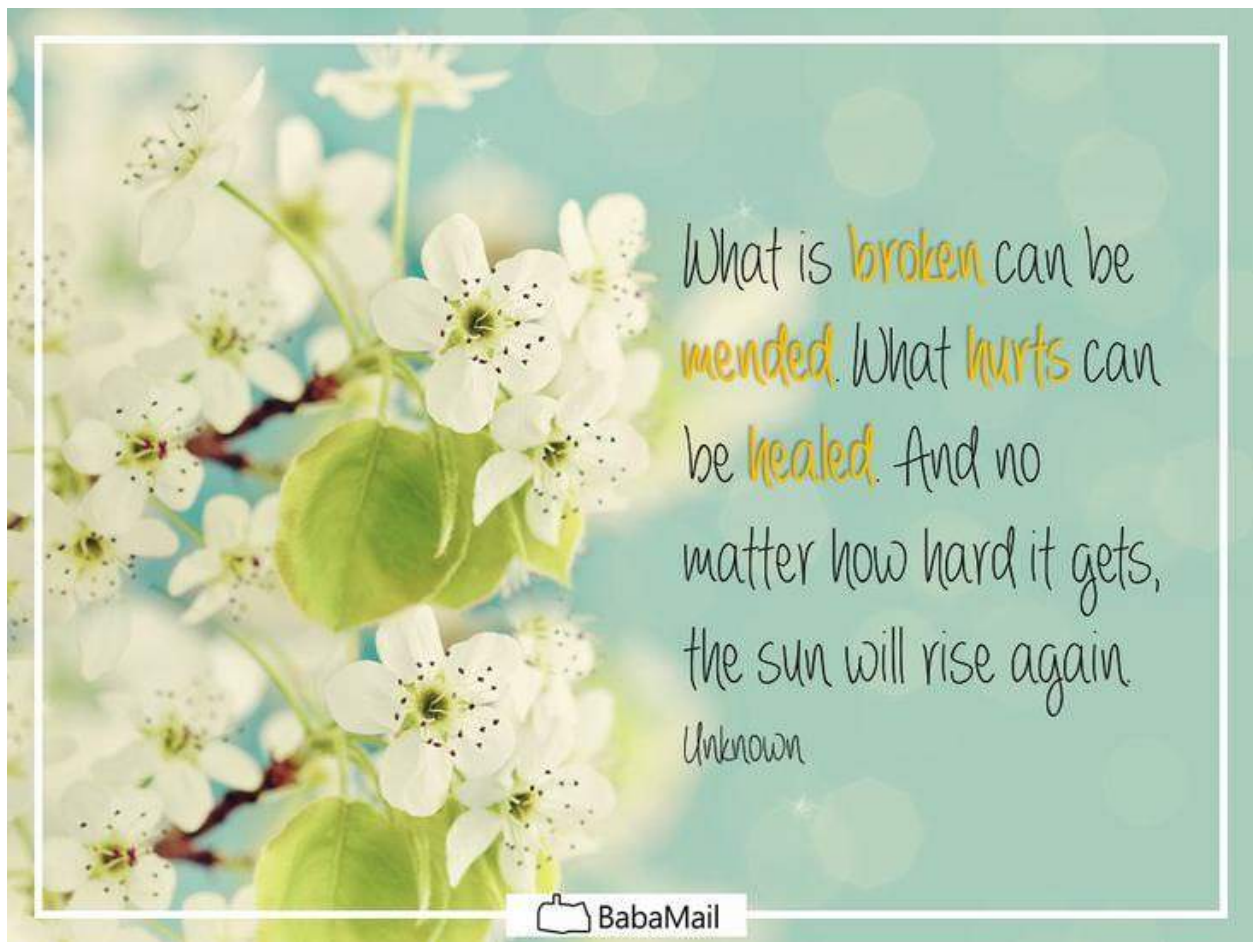
Times have changed and the congregation and the choir are both smaller. There is also a desire to pay our excellent musicians market rates. This has become a challenge as we moved into deficit budgets at St. James. We had a choice to make. We could continue to do what we have always done and keep the choir going in its present form, enjoying the music and choosing to close the church when the finances dictate, probably 2 years. Your leadership team made a different choice and that is to explore different ways of having music expressed at St. James. Yes, that is unknown territory and feels scary.

For me, it has been the Word rather than the music that has kept me at St. James. Coral's form of Ministry spoke to my Soul and deepened and broadened my sense of the Spirit active in my life. It has been hard as I have listened to the different Ministers and large contingent of guest Ministers come through our doors in the last years. I could walk away and have considered it often. I have struggled to be open to something different.

But the church is more than a Minister and how she inspired, and more than how the music is sung. Grieving is to let go of what was, to be aware of each other and bear witness to the anger, pain and fear as we release the familiar, and face an unknown and different future together. Letting go clears the space for love to flow. It makes space for imagining how to be relevant to our surrounding community.

Letting go allows the Holy Spirit to come into the open space and move us in different ways of Co-Creation and rebirth.

Isn't that the resurrection story?



# Faith for the Future

## **WE HAVE HOPE!**

- We have incredibly valuable and important programs and ministries for not only St. James members and congregants but for the community users, rental groups, outreach programs and the wider community of faith
- We have some great ideas to make us stronger in the future
- We have an amazing IIM to work with over the next two years

## **Population**

- 1) The number of congregants and households has decreased by 16% since 2019, on average 4.25% each year
- 2) The number of total **Active** Givers has fallen even more – 30% since 2019
- 3) **Only 63%** of the households actively contribute to the General, Building, and Mission & Service funds meaning that in 2023, 84 households did not contribute financially to the church. (Let's show we value God by changing that! Ed.)
- 4) Thankfully the Active Givers have increased their individual donations so the decrease to total donations is closer to 14%
- 5) Membership losses outweigh new members significantly. Our aging demographic is reflected in the rising number of members lost by death each year and the percentage of non-resident members
- 6) Overall revenue from all sources (e.g. givings, rental, fundraising, other income) has fallen by 5.3% while expenses have risen by 6.1%

## **What does this all mean?**

- 1) We have recorded deficits for the past 3 years
- 2) Unrestricted funds held by Trustees are significantly depleted
- 3) We need to take action now! Please be as generous as possible.

Sunday March 17. Ruth Kause preached on Philemon 1-25  
Church as a Peacemaking Community

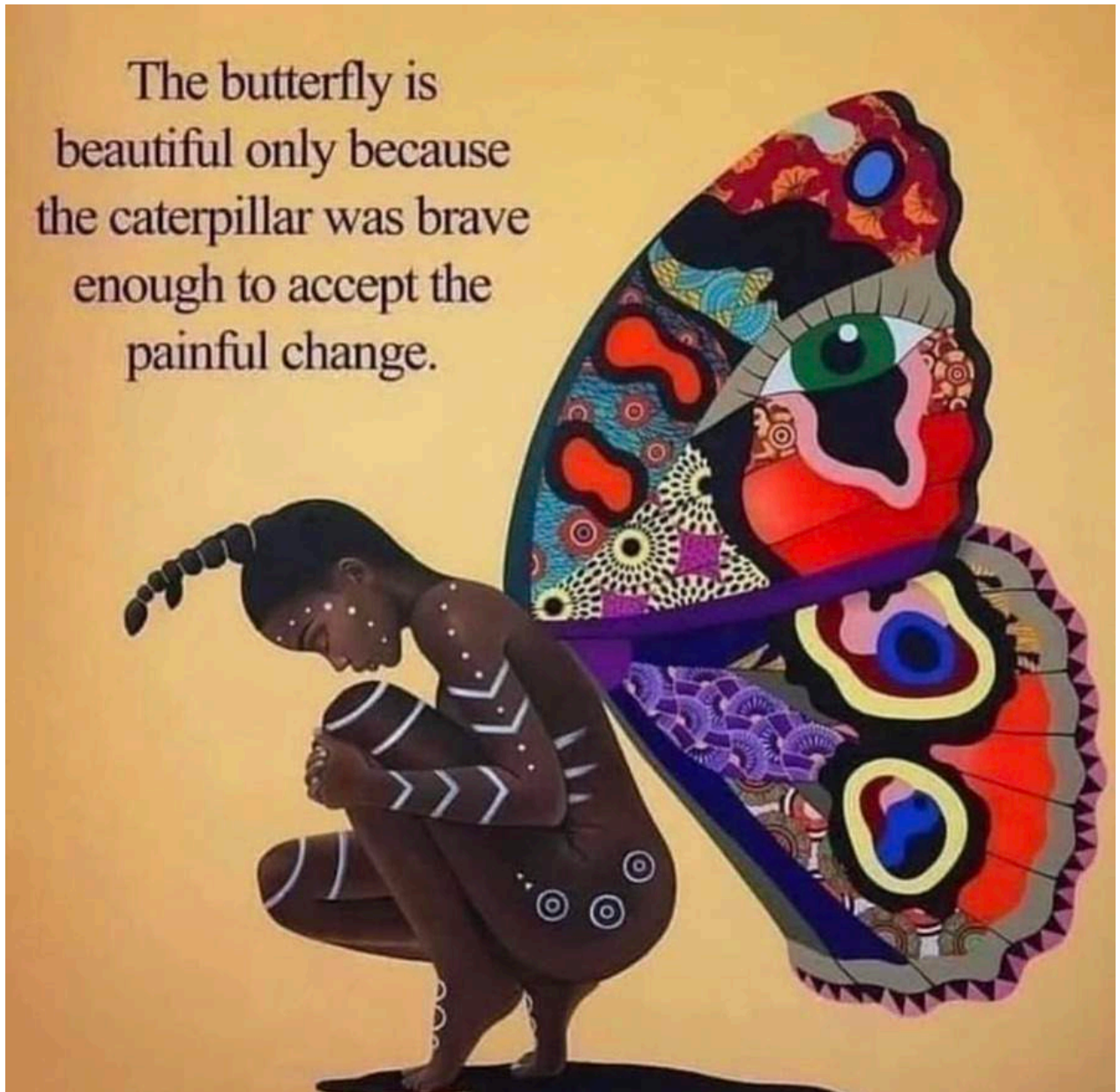


## **Thoughts about Change**

The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution.

**Albert Einstein**

Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.  
**J.F. Kennedy**



To keep our hearts open is probably the most urgent responsibility you have as you get older.  
**Leonard Cohen**

The past is a foreign country: They do things differently there.  
**L.P. Hartley - Novelist**

St. James United Church  
400 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke

# BROWSE & BUY

SATURDAY, APRIL 13TH

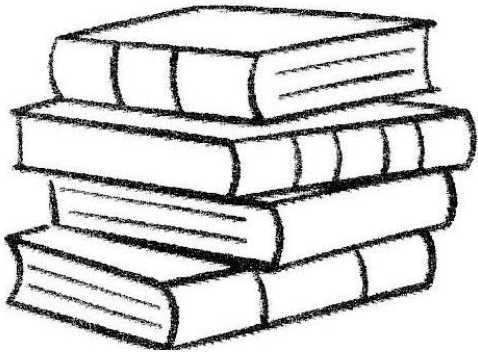
9am-1pm

Free Parking

Free Entry No Tax

Books

Jewelry



Toys, Puzzles,

Games

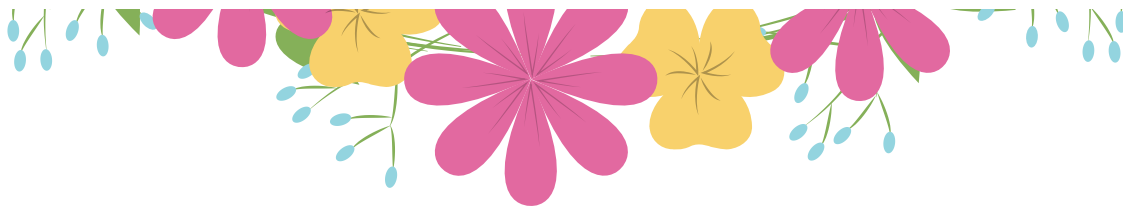
Bake Sale

Collectibles

Lunch







# St. James United Church Choirs present:

## **SOUNDS OF SPRING**

**Directed by J.-C. Coolen**

Fundraiser lunch and choir concert

**Sunday May 5th, 2024**

Lunch 12:00 pm

Concert 1:00 pm

Tickets: \$35 Adult

\$10 children 12 & under

**Catering provided by Blazing Kitchen &  
Rancho Relaxo  
400 Burnhamthorpe Rd, Etobicoke  
416-622-4113**

