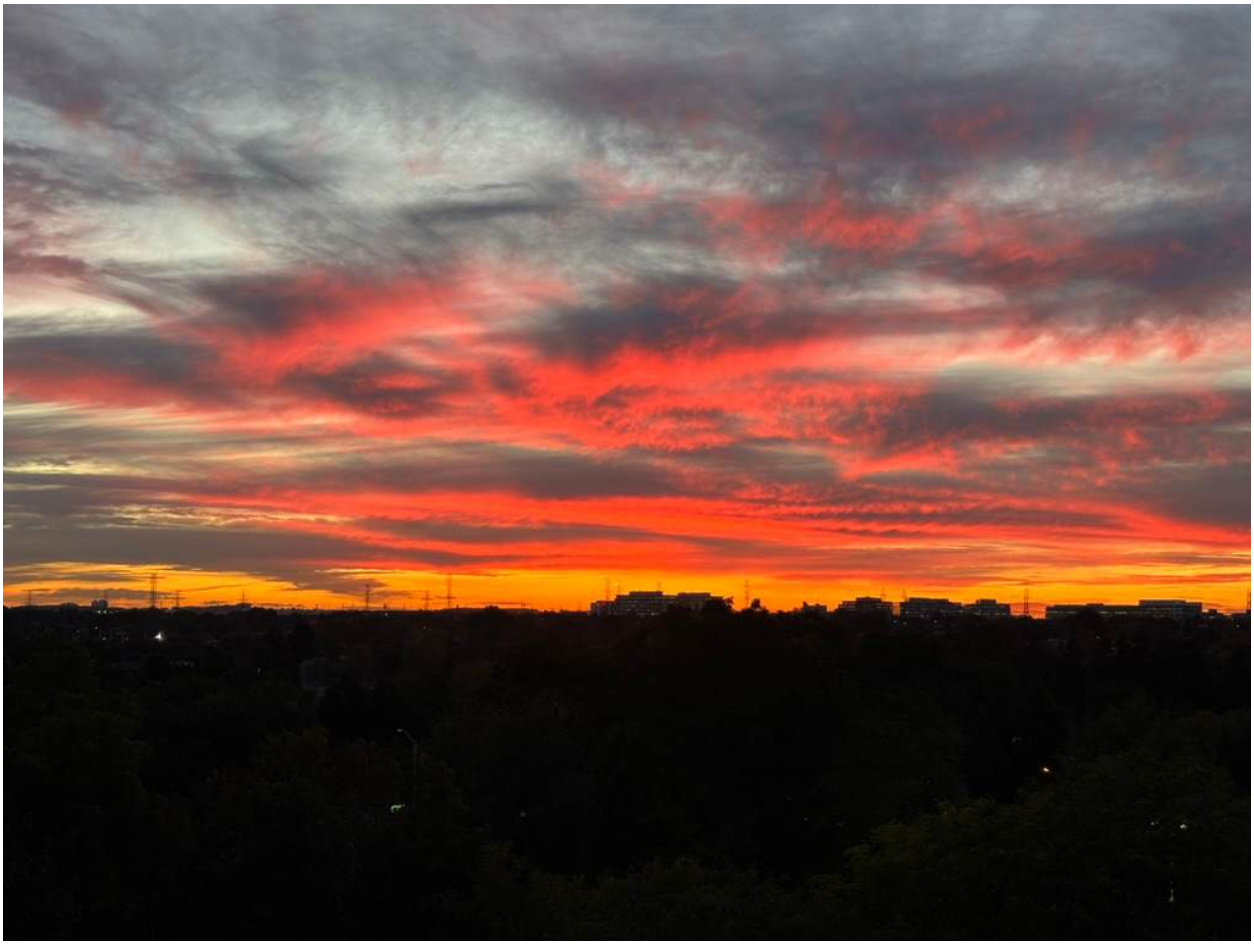
News from the Pews

November 2026

September 26th Etobicoke Sunset *Photo by M. Godley*



St. James United Church
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Mission and Service

Some of us may not be familiar with Mission and Service, the shared funding program of the United Church of Canada.

United Church people across the country have the opportunity to share what we can with people and places in need through a unified fund called **Mission and Service.**

Last year, those who attend and support The United Church of Canada committed over $23 million to people in need and projects and ministries that matter. By giving to Mission and Service, we can turn individual care and compassion into shared action.

What does Mission and Service do?

There are three primary goals:

- to help transform lives
- to inspire meaning and purpose
- to build a better world.

Locally, through Mission and Service, we help each other by supporting food banks, community kitchens, refugee programs and shelters for those without stable housing. We help young people on campuses and through camping outreach. We serve those who are sick or at the end of life by supporting addiction, mental health, counselling services and hospice care.

Globally, we support people seeking better access to clean water, food, and medical care as well as skills training and economic development. We help with peace-building and sustainable agriculture efforts. We provide disaster relief and advocate for the rights of those who all too often do not get a say, migrant workers, for example.

We support opportunities for people to grow spiritually. In Canada, Mission and Service supports theological schools, education / retreat centres, and events that promote spiritual development and personal reflection. We support new and innovative ministries, as well as communities of faith that are remote or in need.

Globally, we support church organizations that work with theological schools, and programs or organizations that offer practical training in agriculture and health.

What is the approach of Mission and Service?

It hinges on respect. The United Church works in partnership with people and organizations; it does not impose solutions or belief systems. We aim for long-term results over quick fixes because we want to make a lasting difference.
Currently, the United Church of Canada, through Mission and Service, is working alongside 68 partners in 23 countries around the world. We have built many of
these relationships over decades. These partnerships allow us to put donations to work quickly and effectively when disaster strikes almost anywhere in the world.

How do I give to Mission and Service?

When you share your financial resources with St James you have the option to designate a portion of your gift to Mission and Service. Each year, St James pledges an amount that we hope to raise from congregational givings. For 2026, we pledged $23,000. By the end of August, we had reached $15,602. We anticipate that we will meet our goal by year end.

Here is a Mission and Service story from Saskatchewan:

In Saskatoon, Mamohkamatowin Spiritual Community Inc. is helping Indigenous people reconnect with culture and community through a ribbon skirt-making program.
Supported by Mission and Service, the program provides Indigenous participants living in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods with the materials, tools, and teachings needed to create their own ribbon skirts at no cost. For many Indigenous women and girls, a ribbon skirt is more than a garment. It is an expression of identity, culture,

and belonging, worn during ceremonies, celebrations, and other cultural and spiritual gatherings. For people living on low incomes, the cost of making or purchasing a ribbon skirt can place that expression of identity out of reach.

Participants learn how to use a sewing machine while making a skirt that reflects their own style and story. Alongside the practical sewing skills, they also receive teachings from an Elder, creating opportunities to deepen their understanding of the cultural and spiritual significance of ribbon skirts.

With support from Mission and Service, the program first started in 2024. Since then, community support has made it possible to purchase sewing machines and tables so participants have the tools they need to learn. Our support through Mission and Service helps provide fabric, ribbon, and other materials for each skirt, ensuring that cost to participants does not become a barrier.

The impact has been evident and ongoing. The women who completed the first sessions wear their ribbon skirts with great pride, knowing they had made them with their own hands while learning traditional teachings and connecting with community.

Programs like this reflect our commitment to supporting Indigenous leadership, strengthening community, and creating opportunities for people to reconnect with culture in meaningful ways. By combining practical skills with cultural teachings, Mamohkamatowin Spiritual Community Inc. is helping participants build confidence, celebrate their identities, and carry their traditions forward.

Our gifts through Mission and Service help support Indigenous-led ministries and community programs like this one. Together, we can help ensure more people have opportunities to learn, connect with culture, and participate fully in the traditions and communities that are meaningful to them.

If you would like to read more stories of Mission and Service in action, you can find them on the United Church website here.

Submitted by Eileen McAuley. (Ed. Apologies to Eileen for missing this article last month.)

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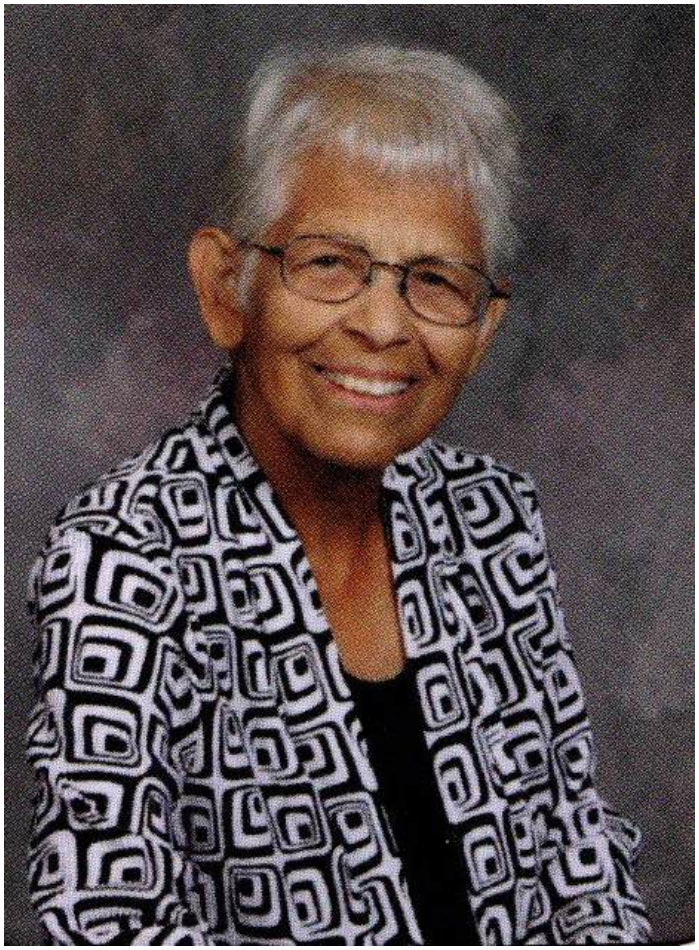
NFTP Deadline for the December Edition is November 22nd or earlier!

Philomena Sirur, On the Move

Philomena has been a member of St James for 33 years. Since the pandemic, she has been watching our worship services online. Philomena is moving to Guelph with her daughter Ruth on October 1st.



Philomena wanted to attend a worship service in person in September before her move, but unfortunately she had a fall and hurt her back.

Philomena is an independent 96 years old. Over the years, she has volunteered at the church in a number of ways. She coordinated the Hospitality teams and served hospitality for many years. She helped at the Food Basket. She was on the Communion Team, and was a member of the Prayer Group.

Please say a prayer for Philomena to heal from her fall and for a smooth move.

May God bless her.

Submitted by Carol Jones

September 27th. - Orange Shirt Sunday at St. James

September 30th, 2026

Drum Circle

Sacred Flame sculpture

A previous Chief of the Mississaugas, Larry Sault, gave the keynote speech. His sister offered smudging to everyone there. Organized by Kairos West/ Mississauga and Eculinks Etobicoke.

Oath to Become a Witness to ReconciliACTION

We stand as Witnesses to ReconciliACTION

With humility and resolve, we pledge:

1. To Learn
We will seek understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives.
We will educate ourselves on the truths of colonization and its ongoing impacts.

2. To Listen
We will centre and amplify Indigenous voices, stories, and teachings.
We will approach these with respect and an open heart.

3. To Act
We will respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Calls for Justice.
We will advocate for systemic change and work toward decolonization.
We will support Indigenous-led initiatives.

4. To Acknowledge and Reflect
We will recognize our roles in these processes—past, present, and future.
We will strive to be good ancestors, leaving a legacy of justice and equity.

5. To Stay Accountable
We will welcome discomfort as part of growth and accountability.
We will hold ourselves and others to the principles of ReconciliACTION.
We make this commitment as witnesses to Truth, supporters of ReconciliACTION, and guardians of future generations.

So it is, and so we will strive.

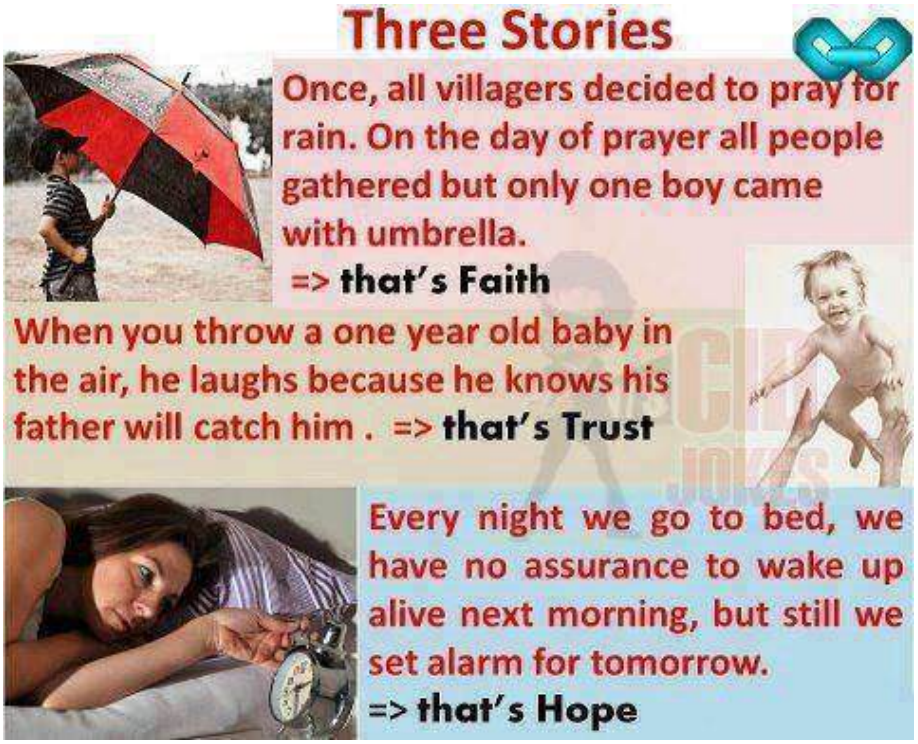
Are you ready to embrace this oath? There can be no Reconciliation without Truth and Respect.

Congratulations

To Bob and Eleanor Harris
On their GOLDEN 50 th

Wedding Anniversary

October 16, 2026



Bring the Babies, Bring the Children

By Karen Taylor

If you're running late because getting everyone out the door was a battle, please still come to worship.
If your kids are loud, please still come to worship.
If your toddler won't sit still, please still come to worship.
If your baby needs to eat or is fussy, please still come to worship.
If your child asks questions at the least convenient moment, please still come to worship.
If someone cries, drops a toy, or has to make their third trip to the bathroom, please still come to worship.
If your child doesn't know all the prayers, responses, or exactly when to sit or stand, please still come to worship.
If you're worried your children are distracting the people around you, please still come to worship.

Children do not learn how to be part of the Church by staying home until they can sit quietly. They learn by being here!

They learn that the church is their home because we make room for them here. The wiggles, whispers, crying babies, and little voices are signs that the church is alive!

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Matthew 19:14

So bring the babies. Bring the toddlers. Bring the big kids. Sit where the little ones can see. Step out when you need to, but always come back in.

November Highlights

Sunday Services: 10:30 am.

1st - All Saints Day

8th - Remembrance Day Service

15th - Stewardship Sunday

22nd - Guest Preacher - Rev. Debbie Johnson

29th - 1st Sunday in Advent. Communion

December 6th - Pageant! December 13th - 7:30pm. - Candlelight Service

Mondays:

1 pm. Reiki

Tuesdays:

7 pm. Reiki

10th and 24th - 1:30 pm. Euchre

Wednesdays:

11-12 a.m. Yoga

Thursdays:

7:30 pm. Choir Practice

Fridays:

27th - 7 pm. Family Games Night

Saturdays:

10 a.m. Yoga

14th - Live and Silent Auction.

Doors open 5 p.m., Dinner will be served at 6 pm.

Work Bee Fall 2026
PIC•COLLAGE

Transition Team Report

As the Search Committee increases its activity, the Transition Team is gradually stepping back from its previous role while continuing to meet monthly. Discussions are now focused on identifying ways to support and assist the Search Committee throughout the ministerial search process.

Minister's Job Description and Planning

The proposed job description for the new minister was reviewed and updated following clarification of several key points. Discussions emphasized the importance of regular communication between the incoming minister and the Ministry & Personnel (M&P) Committee. It was suggested that the new minister work with M&P to develop a six-month plan outlining priorities, activities, and expectations. This approach would help ensure that M&P remains informed and that any changes to scheduling or time-off arrangements are communicated in advance, avoiding unexpected situations. These recommendations will be brought to the Search Committee for further discussion.

St. James Community Profile

The St. James Community Profile was revised to place greater emphasis on the congregation's spiritual identity and faith journey. Once the revised profile is approved, the Search Committee will be able to proceed with posting the minister's job description.

Completion of the Transition Process

The Transition Team plans to complete its final report by mid-March 2027, documenting its work, key accomplishments, and contributions to the transition process.

Rev. Richard's exit interview is scheduled for April 2027. The interview will draw on both Rev. Richard's report and the final report submitted by the Transition Team.

Submitted by Jennifer Ling

Saturday November 14 - 5 pm

Buy Tickets, ($40). Bring friends, neighbours!

Delicious food, not spicy!! (Unless you add the hot sauce!)