

News from the Pews

May 2026



St James United Church

400 Burnhamthorpe Rd. M9B 2A8

416 622 4113

www.stjamesunitedchurch.com

May Highlights

Sundays:

3rd - 74th Anniversary Sunday- Special guest Minister Nicole Joy-Fraser

Noon - Catered lunch

1 p.m. - St. James Choir and very talented friends present....Ta Da!

“Songs of Courage and Faith”

10th - Easter 6. Mothers’ Day / Christian Family Sunday.

17th -International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

24th - Pentecost. Communion. Transition discussion group

31st-

Mondays:

Reiki - 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

Tuesdays:

12th and 24th Euchre 1 p.m.

Reiki -7 p.m.

Wednesdays:

Yoga - 11 a.m.

6th - Unified Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Thursdays:

Choir Practice - 7:30 p.m.

Fridays:

22nd - Family Games Night 7 - 9 p.m.

Saturdays:

Yoga - 10 a.m.

23rd - 2 p.m. Family and Friends Scavenger Hunt and Trivia Car Rally.

Dinner in Hillsburgh at the lovely home of Jennifer and Scott Heltcher

Browse and Buy - submitted by Karen Forgrave

A big thank you to all of the volunteers who helped to organize and run the spring “Browse and Buy” event that took place on Saturday, April 18. Thank you to people who brought in donations, as well as the people who came and enjoyed shopping! It was a really successful event, raising about \$6000 in total for St. James.





Sunday School Updates

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Secret Pen Pal Project! It was fun to have the pen pals meet each other after church on Easter Sunday and plant bean seeds together! Our bean plants are already very tall! It is a nice visual example of God's love in action!



This month in Sunday School we have been learning about Zacchaeus the tax collector. He was a short man who no one liked, and when he climbed up a tree to see Jesus, Jesus surprised everyone by inviting Zacchaeus to dine with him! People were outraged that Jesus was eating with “a sinner” (tax collectors often took more

money from people than they were supposed to, and kept the extra for themselves!). Jesus explained that he had come “to save the lost” – and this was one example. After meeting Jesus in person, Zacchaeus was a changed man – he gave half of what he owned to the poor, and announced that if he had cheated anyone out of money, he would give



back 4X as much money as he took from them.

Our workshops in this rotation are varied – students are building with circuits to make a tree for Zacchaeus that will “light up” or have a fan spin when Jesus walks by! Students in the cooking workshop have been baking cupcakes in ice cream cones to represent the same tree! The picture of our youngest age group in the games workshop shows how teamwork created a giant cup tower “tree” – they manage to balance Zaccheus on the top, if you look closely! Finally, in the computer workshop, students are playing a variety of games and completing a computer quest that has them reflect on something that Jesus might have them change or improve in their own lives.



Upcoming Dates:

Family Games Night: Friday, May 22nd 7 – 9pm

Family-Friendly Road Rally: Saturday, May 23rd (tickets being sold at church – see below!)

Annual Congregation Picnic (BBQ and Games after church): Sunday, June 14th

Submitted by Karen Forgrave

Saturday, May 23 is the day to participate in a fun and exciting Saturday afternoon with your family and friends from St. James! Pick a team name and **join us at 2 pm for a trivia car rally, scavenger hunt, and 5 pm lasagna dinner** at Jennifer & Scott's home in lovely Hillsburgh - only about 1 hour from the church.

Tickets for adults (including the dinner and dessert) will be only \$20/person, children 3-12 are \$5, and youth are \$10.

**Please let us know if you are vegetarian or gluten-free.
Tickets are on sale each Sunday after church!

23 MAY 2026

COMMUNITY CARRALLY & DINNER

HOSTED BY JENNIFER & SCOTT IN HILLSBURGH
2 PM START, 5 PM DINNER

SUBMIT YOUR TEAM NAME & JOIN THE RALLY, SCAVENGER HUNT, LASAGNA DINNER & PRIZES.

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

TICKETS:
ADULT \$20 YOUTH \$10 CHILD 3-12 \$5

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT CHURCH ON SUNDAYS OR VIA JENNIFER
3 STATION STREET HILLSBURGH. 905-782-0701

April Monthly Transition Team Discussion

Submitted by Jennifer Ling



In an effort to engage with the church congregation, the Transition Team has been hosting informal monthly discussions. On April 26th, our question to those who attended was:

A preliminary discussion on what one thinks a minister's work week looks like in a form of a pie chart totaling 40 hours. This meeting was facilitated by Rev Richard.

There were 15 people in attendance for this discussion. Rev Richard pointed out that we need people to understand how a minister divides his/her time before we can create a pie chart. We also need a clearer understanding of what our congregation expects from the new minister. This means

we need to set up St. James priorities to begin the minister search and be able to create a job description.

There is a misconception that M & P already has a job description for the new minister. This job description was for a different community than we are now. A new one must reflect what the congregation expects, hence the discussions to get people involved in the process.

Rev Richard pointed out we cannot merely "like" a person but this future minister needs to be qualified to meet our specific priorities. For example,

if St. James feels that the new minister needs to do 50% worship and preparation and this person is good at outreach and not sermons, then we will have a mismatch. This future minister needs to meet the expectations of the entire congregation.

Early consultation with members of the congregation allows us to create a list of our needs and priorities. During this process we also need to have our statistics ready to market St. James to the future minister. Our finances are stable now which is something that will attract new ministers. Given the high cost of living in the GTA, we need good reasons for this person to up root and perhaps relocate their family to work at St. James.

The group then discussed what we think are priorities for the new minister. These are the topics that came up in discussion:

Worship service; pastoral care; attending meetings; approachable & understanding; relevant & thoughtful sermons; good PR relationship; connecting & reconnecting with people; Community Outreach (doesn't have to be on a religious basis but can seek out the church for its activities); environmental & social justice; oversight of child care; providing good values and welcoming in their faith journey; strong communication skills both verbal and written; providing strong Christian Education in area of Sunday School for children (if there is not volunteer); administration which can include attending meetings internally and externally such as regional council meetings, meeting with music director, office administrator.

Once we identify some of the above characters for the new minister, we can then move forward and discern and get the congregation's input. The search team needs to have these priorities and then match the search to the minister.

Having these discussions are helpful to get a better understanding of what the congregation wants. Furthermore, there will be surveys with the congregation and within a select sampling of the neighbourhood. This includes renters of SJU, politicians, school principals. We can ask a simple question like "who do you think we are". Sometimes the answer may not be what is expected but we the survey is needed. We will have Emily Corthay to help create a survey. We need to be realistic in how we

think and take the comments from the survey given from an internal and external point of view.

Next, Rev Richard asked how many hours do you think a minister works in certain areas. This question was NOT based on a 40 hour work week. It was just to gauge an idea of what people were thinking.

Here are some of the results based on a weekly schedule:

Sermons 8, 15, 20 hours

Pastoral Care such as funerals, baptisms, weddings, hospital visitations, bereavement – 4, 8, 10 hours

Outreach such as speaking to neighbours, attend events and understanding social issues like poverty 2, 4 hours

Administration – attending meetings, reading minutes, working with church administrators on issues not church related, coaching. Keep in mind most SJU meetings are 2 hours in length – 6,8, 12 hours

Outside programs like regional council – 1, 2 hours

As you can see, if we took some of these hourly statistics, 40 hours would not cover everything.

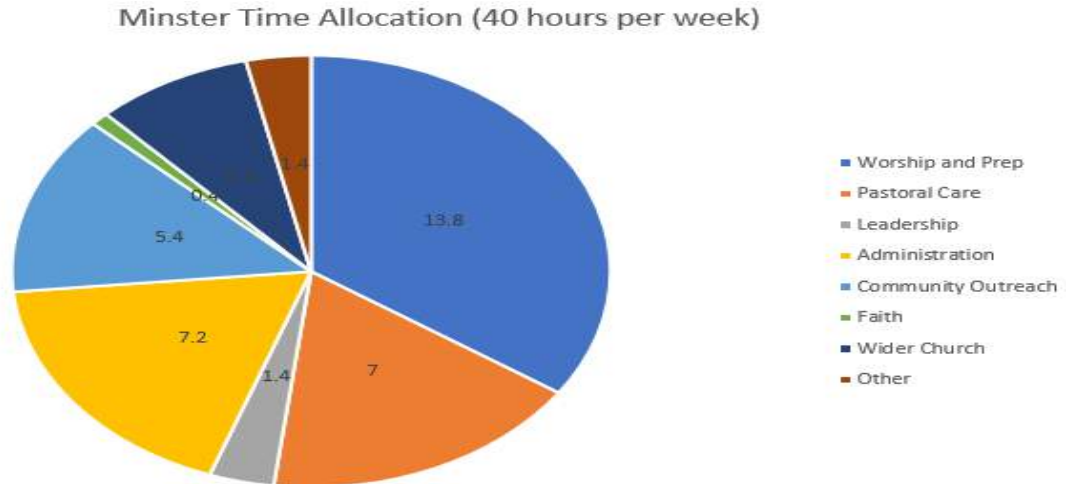
Finally, the group was given an exercise to develop their own chart based on a 40 hour work week. Unfortunately, this exercise was not successful as many had different views of what a minister had to do which did not add up to 40 hours so their results could not be tabulated.

We had 11 responses but could only use 5 of the 11 pie charts to gain an average pie chart of perceived 40 hours work week for a minister. This error could be due to a lack of time to fully understand. More consultation is needed.

These averages were broken down into 8 main categories:

1. Worship & preparation: 13.8 hrs
2. Pastoral care: 7 hr
3. Leadership: 1.4 hrs
4. Administration: 7.2 hrs
5. Community Outreach: 5.4 hrs
6. Faith Formation: 0.4 hrs

- 7. Wider Church 3.4 hrs
- 8. Other 1.4 hrs
- Total: 40 hours



Once this exercise was complete, we handed out 3 charts of ministers to compare. Rev Richard explained that these pie charts needed some context to understand based on the job description of that particular minister. For example, pastoral care was not the priority of Rev Debbie’s job description in a previous church with more than one minister, she did more outreach and faith formation so preaching wasn’t her main duty. For Rev Richard at a previous church, he had no time for visitations and had to rely on the pastoral team for visitations.

It is interesting to note that worship and pastoral care rank high in all results, including the one that was done at this discussion.

Here are the results equaling 100%.

Minister	Ministers Work In Percentage								Total
	Worship and Prep	Pastoral Care	Leadership	Administration	Community Outreach	Faith Formation	Wider Church	Other	
Rev Debb	20	5	10	10	10	15	15	15	100
Rev Pegi	30	20	15	15	10	5	3	2	100
Rev Richa	45	15		15	10		10	5	100

Now that we have a comparison, we must ask ourselves, what are our needs and how are we going to construct it so that the minister’s duties

total 40 hours. Having one guest minister per month may help to free up time for other priorities. More discussion is needed.

A final question was posed to the group: How much time do YOU think we need before we advertise for the new minister. Some said June, mid-June, by end of December. The response was varied.

To conclude, the transition team stressed that we still have a lot of work ahead of us and we would need the assistance of more volunteers to do things like conduct surveys, be part of a focus group, be part of a job description, be part of the search team, etc. The timeline that was discussed earlier will need to be revised and will require the transition team to brain-storm and plan over the summer months.

For those reading, **please consider participating in future discussions so that your voice can be heard.** We have scheduled another discussion after service for May 24th. The topic is TBD. All are welcome to attend.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail us at: sjutransitionteam@gmail.com.

With Gratitude From Your Transition Team,

Gord Burrell, Jennifer Ling, Ariadne Reid, Nancy Violo



“God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

This quote is derived from a prayer written by Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian from the 20th Century,

*entitled “**The Serenity Prayer**”*

