

SPIRITED SUMMERLEA

Advent 2023

Editorial



The world can seem to be a very sad place at the moment. The seemingly never-ending war in Ukraine, the Israeli-Palestine conflict, Canada's homelessness, and food insecurity problems – the list seems endless. I want to stay informed but watching the news these days can be downright

depressing!

As we gather to celebrate Advent and Christmas at Summerlea, I am nonetheless filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude for our blessings. This year has brought its challenges, but it has also shown us the strength of our faith and the power of our community.

In a world that often seems divided and uncertain, our congregation has remained a steadfast source of love and support both inside and outside our church. With the advent of SouthWest United Church formally joining us, the circle of love and support will continue to grow and shine.

Wishing you all a Happy Advent, a Merry Christmas and a bright 2024.

Jane Cowell
Co-Editor



Minister's Message

Dear congregants of Summerlea and Southwest,

I am thinking of this Advent Season, and I wonder what it will be this year. I don't know if the world will be ready to celebrate the birth of Christ for a 2023rd time, but I sure know that our community of faith will!



Our fervent prayer for peace and justice as well as our outreach activities brings us closer to the spirit of the Season and we know that what we do is meaningful.

I encourage us to continue our volunteer work, our wellness checks, our phone calls, the sending of Christmas cards and our personal prayers, so that linked to everything good being done in the world, we contribute to make 2024 a better year for all.

Our reputation of being welcoming congregations together is spreading outside of our traditional membership lists! Our events are attended by the larger community of Lachine and further, and our building is known for its versatility, its resources, and its friendly welcome. All this speaks for God.

Throughout the year, the life and teachings of Christ are our *pillar of cloud* that we can always follow. As we journey together in the coming year, we can rest assured that the Spirit of God goes with us. Let us trust God. Besides, where else could we go? Jesus has the words of eternal life. (John 6: 68) Even better: He showed us the way, whether we follow Him barefoot or in snowshoes!

Happy Advent and Blessed Christmas to you all.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Christine Marie Gladu

Church News

Thanks to all who showed up for the Outreach Committee **Puzzle Sale** on December 2nd. We are thrilled to announce that while we don't yet have an exact figure, over \$900 was raised for various Outreach projects as well as support of various community organizations.



Vote on the Amalgamation Agreement December 10th



Meetings to vote on the amalgamation agreement between SouthWest United and Summerlea United

All members and adherents of SouthWest and Summerlea are asked to attend important meetings to vote on the amalgamation agreement. The meetings will be held immediately following worship on **Sunday, December 10th, 2023**. The two congregations will meet in separate rooms but will vote on the same questions.

The proposed agreement is available for distribution by email and on paper. You are asked to read it ahead of the meeting. Questions may be directed to members of the Executive Board of Summerlea or the Church Council of SouthWest.

There will be two questions on the ballot. The first asks if you are in favour of the agreement. The second asks if you are in favour of calling Rev. Dr. Christine-Marie Gladu as full-time minister of the newly amalgamated entity. This additional vote is required given that the new community of faith must approve her effective change in pastoral relations.

A large turnout is essential to have adequate representation of both communities. Please come in person to participate in this significant turning point for our congregations.

Stewardship 2023/24



The annual Stewardship Campaign of Summerlea United Church was launched the week prior to the Bazaar. Personalized information packages were distributed to over 120 people. It's not too late to complete and return yours. Ideally by the end of the year.

Pledge intentions assist in planning and supporting essential work often making life better for many. In the case where you have not received yours, a call to the church office will see you get one or more.

To date, numerous forms have been favourably returned with increases and switches to PAR.

Thank you for your attention.

Much appreciation,
Your Stewardship Committee

Calendar

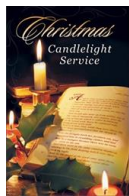


December

- 10 10:30am 2nd of Advent; Human Rights Sunday;
White Gift Sunday; Food Sunday
- 14 7:00pm *Candlelight Service*
- 17 10:30am 3rd of Advent
- 24 7:00pm **Christmas Eve Family Service**
- 31 10:30am at Roxboro United, 116 rue Cartier, Roxboro

The Church office will be closed for the holiday period from December 25 and will re-open on January 7, 2024. For emergencies, please leave a detailed message at 514.634.2651 and your call will be returned.

Candlelight Service, Thursday, December 14th at 7:00pm



Summerlea United Church welcomes the community to a joyful evening of carols, scriptures, meditation, and candlelight to help put the glow of Christmas deep into everyone's heart. Bring your friends and neighbours for a beautiful service of Christmas hymns and music.

The free-will offering will be much appreciated by those in need in our community.

Evergreen centerpiece(s) for Christmas

These centerpieces are made of fresh evergreen boughs, pinecones and decorated with lots of festive "bling". Each centerpiece is a one-of-a-kind! If you haven't done so yet please place your order by calling Kim Blatherwick at 514-945-5136 or by email at roywick@hotmail.com

William Hunter Memorial Fund

Thank you for your support of the **William Hunter Memorial Fund** which honours the memory and contribution of William Hunter. We receive loose offerings from the service on Christmas Eve and special envelopes you will find at the back of the church.

These offerings are our only source of funds to support our overseas family. We appreciate all your donations which are tax deductible.

We currently sponsor Naomi, a 22-year-old girl from Ghana, Santiago, a 9-year-old boy from Paraguay and also from Paraguay, a 3-year-old boy, Matias Gadiel Samaniego.

Our annual commitment is \$1584.00, a cost of \$528.00 per person.

Through your generosity these children will receive an education, medical care, clothing, and improved nutrition. Together we are making a difference in the lives of children and families in developing countries. Thanks again for your continued support.

Dale Romagosa

Amnesty International

Write for Rights is an annual campaign organised by Amnesty International



If you believe in the power of peaceful collective action to bring positive change in the world, you need to participate in our Write for Rights campaign taking place on **Sunday December 10th – International Human Rights Day!**

You will have the opportunity to personalize and sign a letter relating to one specific case and the opportunity to sign any or all of 9 petitions of human rights abuse cases chosen by Amnesty International.

We will provide the letters and envelopes. Please bring “return address” stickers if you have them. We are asking for a \$2 contribution towards postage.

Living Gifts Campaign

“Give a gift that will change someone’s life – even in a small way.

Gifts include a card of acknowledgement made with original Hand in Hand Art on the front of the card with a description of the living gift you have chosen inside.

You will receive a tax-deductible receipt for the full amount of your gift (over \$20)

Gift pkgs available during coffee hour on Sundays, December 3, 10 and 17

This year you can choose your cause and customize your own label to insert in the gift cards provided. There is no specific price on any of the gifts.

You may choose to purchase Christmas dinners, hot lunches for children in the lunch program, or for any other programs offered at St Columba House. These are outlined below.

Programs offered at St Columba include:

Food security: Hot lunches, Christmas dinners, Take out, Community Garden,


Children’s programs: After school, Alternate school, summer camp

Youth programs: CIT, Leadership, “In Transit” for youth 12-14yrs.

Adult Programs: Senior group, Men’s group, Women’s discussion group, Hand in Hand (for low income “challenged” adults). Pronto café.



Bazaar & Book Sale

 I am very proud to announce that our Annual Bazaar and Book Sale was a big success.

Our friends and neighbours came out in droves to support us once again, on both Friday for the Book Sale and Saturday for the Bazaar and Book Sale. It was so much fun seeing people from the community we had not seen in months - if not years! Not all the figures are in yet, but we made more than \$20,000!

A big thank you to the Summerlea folk who were involved in preparing, donating, and picking up all the things that we sold - from tourtières to tempting treasures to books, baking and candy to gift baskets, pickles, and jams to knitted goods and crafts, and from chili and hot dogs to centerpieces. It warmed my heart to see so many SouthWest members working alongside us. It goes to show that working as a team we can achieve great things!

A big thank you to all those that worked at the Bazaar. The set-up and take-down teams, all the booth convenors and helpers, the money counters, door minders, those who made coffee for the volunteers and those who roasted hot dogs and served chili. Helpers came in all weeks long to tidy and organize the books which was much appreciated and the Scouts did an amazing job of cleaning up!

And a special thank you to Nancy Mark and Sinclair Harris for continuing to mentor me and to George and Colleen for going above and beyond the call of duty. I will be having a debrief meeting with the booth convenors soon to see how we can make things even better for next year.

Jane Cowell
Bazaar Convenor

Recipe Corner

We have been treated to wonderful baked goods at Coffee Hour this Fall. Many people asked for the recipes for these two, so we decided to put them in the Newsletter.

Cherry Chip Cake mix Cookies with Tofu

Makes between 24-30 cookies (depending on cookie scoop)

Ingredients:

1 package (375 g) Betty Crocker Cherry Chip cake mix
½ cup Silken soft tofu (pureed) (1 x 10 oz package of silken soft tofu makes about 1 cup of puree; you can save the other ½ cup in refrigerator for other recipes. **If you do not want to use tofu you can substitute 2 large eggs in the recipe)**

½ cup vegetable oil
1 cup white chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl combine the cake mix, oil and tofu and mix well with motorized hand mixer or stand mixer. Mix until batter holds together and pulls away from sides of bowl.
3. Stir in white chocolate chips until well dispersed (may need to use spatula to get all chips into batter).
5. Using 1 tbsp size cookie scoop drop onto parchment paper lined baking sheet leaving 2 inches between scoops.
6. Bake for 11-13 mins or until turning slightly brown on edges (depends on oven). Cookies will spread out.
6. Cool for 5 mins before removing cookies from baking sheets and then allow to cool completely on rack.

Fruit Jam Thumbprint Cookies

(Makes about 24-28 cookies)

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
1 tbsp vanilla extract
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (for more fiber and protein you can use 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour + ½ cup soy flour)
1 tsp salt
½ tsp ground cardamom
½ cup fruit jam (any jam that you like can be used)

½ cup (85 grams) white chocolate (melting wafers or almond bark) used for dipping or piping

Directions

1. Beat butter and granulated sugar with a mixer at med speed until creamy (about 2 mins), stopping occasionally to scrape sides of bowl.
2. Beat in egg and vanilla until combined.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flours, salt and cardamom. Add flour mixture to butter mixture beating until just combined. Shape dough into a disk, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 2 hours (can leave overnight as well).
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Break off dough and roll into 1 inch balls by hand and place 2 inches apart on baking sheets. Using a large pestle (from a mortar and pestle) or your finger, press in the center of each ball to create a crater (fix any cracks on cookie edge with fingers).
6. Spoon about ½ -1 tsp of fruit jam into the craters of each cookie, careful not to overfill craters.

7. Bake until lightly browned, about 15-18 minutes.
8. Allow cookies to completely cool on racks before drizzling with white chocolate (next step).
9. Melt the white chocolate according to manufacturer's instructions and drizzle each cookie. Let the chocolate set before storing cookies. (Placing the cookies in the refrigerator helps the chocolate set completely set. Cookies do well in refrigerator overnight.)



Merry Christmas!