

CHRISTMAS EDITION

Editorial



As the holiday season arrives, there's a certain magic in the air that invites us to pause, reflect, and embrace the spirit of togetherness. Christmas, a time for family, friends, and goodwill, reminds us of the simple yet profound joys that can often be lost in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. From twinkling lights to the scent of freshly baked cookies, every detail adds to the tapestry of festive warmth that surrounds us.

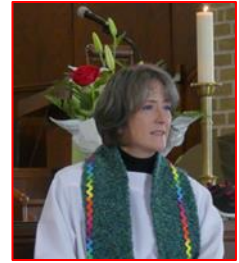
Yet, for many, the holidays can also serve as a reminder of what's missing – the loved ones who have passed, the challenges we've faced, or the loneliness that can sometimes feel amplified during this time. But even in those moments, there is a chance for healing. Christmas encourages us to be gentle with ourselves and others, recognizing that even in difficulty, there is room for hope, compassion, and resilience.

This season also calls on us to remember the wider world, extending a hand to those in need. Whether through donations, volunteering, or simply offering a word of encouragement, Christmas is a time when we can all make a difference. It invites us to think beyond ourselves and reflect on the gifts of health, peace, and love that we too often take for granted.

Merry Christmas to all – may it be a season filled with love, peace, and hope for the future.

Jane Cowell

A Word from the Minister:



Canadian singer Michael Bublé is singing that it is beginning to look like Christmas - and indeed it is! The stores are illuminated with lights and Christmas songs are in the air wherever we walk.

It is truly in my heart and mind that I feel Christmas approaching. When I visit with my elderly neighbours with my dogs, Blue and Bella, and get to see their Nativity on their porch, I can see that my neighbours like Christmas too. They don't have a big family, but people in my neighborhood are from the previous generation of people where everyone speaks to everyone, and we help one another.

In that sense, the spirit of Christmas is with us almost every day. We embody the teachings of Christ. Love one another. Not only at Christmas, but all the time. This makes a neighborhood precious. I wonder if it makes us a little church?

Summerlea people are like this. We care. That is the difference that identifies us and everybody who comes to our church says that: "you are so welcoming". It really makes a difference in the hearts of people who suffer from the most common poverty of the World: loneliness. I love our Summerlea ways, I love our people, and our way of sharing the tasks. I love how we welcome newcomers and take care of those who go through difficult times. I love how we laugh together and get to serious matters when it's time. I love Summerlea. May this last.

Christmas Blessings and best wishes for the New Year.

Rev. Christine Marie Gladu

Church News

Upcoming Services

December



11 1pm-2pm Winter Meditation "The Winter Heart" with Rev. Beryl

12 7:00pm Candlelight Service

15 10:30am 3rd of Advent; Carols & Lessons

15 1pm-2pm Advent Mary Did You Know? Service with Communion with Rev. Beryl

22 10:30am 4th of Advent

24 7:00pm Christmas Eve Family Service

29 10:30am Ecumenical Service at

Merging Waters United 24 Maple, Ste-Anne-de Bellevue

January

05 10:30am Epiphany Sunday

The Church office will be closed for the holiday period from December 21 and will re-open on January 6, 2025. For emergencies, please leave a detailed message at 514.634.2651 and your call will be returned.

Candlelight Service,



Thursday, December 12th at 7:00pm, Summerlea United Church welcomes the community to a joyful evening of carols, scriptures, meditation, & 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. A free-will offering will be much appreciated by those in need in our community.

Donation Envelopes

2025 donation envelopes can now be picked up at the back of the church. If you would like a box of donation envelopes, please speak with John Coffin.

West Island churches+ Hudson + Riverside Initiative

Inspired by the visit of the Moderator of the UCC at Cedar Park United Church in September, a group of leaders (ministers and lay) initiated the process of consulting area churches about how they might work together.

This group includes the West Island "Cluster" plus Riverside and Hudson. The idea is to explore ways in which we could potentially collaborate on educational or outreach projects, share resources, worship etc. An initial survey revealed a particularly strong interest in working together on social justice/outreach projects. So that is where we will begin.

Meetings are being held monthly on Zoom. Summerlea is represented by Rev. Christine, Marion Golden, Sinclair Harris, Mary Reynolds, and Barb Moffat. We are currently trying to identify which social justice/outreach projects we think could be best shared with other congregations.

Summerlea Bazaar

Once again, the amazing Summerlea elves worked their magic, and we had an outstanding array of books, baking, preserves, knitting, handicrafts, tempting treasures, jewelry, green arrangements, bagels, Muir's meat pies, Scout leaf bags, and Girl Guide cookies. Many thanks to the set-up and take-down teams and the Scouts. I owe huge thanks to my muses Nancy and Sinclair. Colleen and George provide immeasurable support at Bazaar time for which I am extremely grateful. An early estimate of our earnings was \$15,000.



You may have noticed the lovely Christmas decorations we had this year. This idea came out of the Bazaar debrief last January. Thanks to Debbie Jeffries and the Rodd Family for providing such a wonderful décor. The Bazaar Committee will have another debrief in the new year.

Jane Cowell

Outreach News

Outreach Sunday in October was a success with a gifted speaker from Sun Youth that Rev. Christine described as an "angel".



Banque alimentaire Résurrection de Lachine

We would like to thank everyone who donated money on Food Bank Sundays. Your generosity enabled us to present the Food Bank with a cheque for \$1,000.00 They are very grateful especially during this holiday season with many more families using the food bank.

Afghan Family

The Afghan siblings are doing well. Their parents have also arrived on a visa - good for 5 years. Fundraising is underway by all the churches involved, to pay the airfares of the 3 siblings and their parents. Summerlea Council voted to contribute \$1000 from church funds.

St Columba House

Although we will not be doing "living gifts" this year because of the challenges and costs involved in organizing receipts, etc., St Columba House still needs our support. You can donate directly online at:

<https://saintcolumbahouse.org/donate/>

William Hunter Memorial Fund

This fund honours the memory and contribution of William Hunter, a former member of Summerlea, who died suddenly in his first years as a United Church Minister. We collect loose offerings from the Christmas Eve service and special envelopes you will find at the back of the church. These contributions are our only source of funds to support our overseas family. We appreciate all your donations which are tax deductible. Our annual commitment is \$1584.00, a cost of \$528.00 per person. Naomi Abdulai, 23 years old, from Ghana will be graduating November 2024. She is part of the Zagyuri community that is now able to continue great progress with your help since 2004. We will connect with another sponsored child. We also currently sponsor Santiago Ezequiel Duarte Ortiz, 10-year-old boy, and Matias Gadiel Samaniego, 4-year-old boy, both from Remansito program in Paraguay. Thank you for your generous support which impacts the living conditions of children and their families. Children and communities facing huge challenges can break barriers and thrive. We are grateful for your continued support.

Dale Romagosa



Donations

Using the monies raised by the committee (e.g., Puzzle Sales), Outreach recently donated \$3500 to various causes:

Indspire (an organisation that supports education for Indigenous youth) \$300

Kid's Help Line \$500

L'Auberge Madelaine \$300

Welcome Hall Mission \$250

Old Brewery Mission \$250

Open Door \$500

Le Parados \$500

Chez Doris \$400

Kairos \$300

L'Oeuvre Soupe Maison \$200



Recipe Corner

Every year, I bake the cookie recipes of my youth, and those that I have picked up over the years. As much as I love the “old” recipes, and the sentimentality that surrounds them, I always try to integrate something new. This is my 2024 addition. Most cranberry cookie recipes use dried cranberries. This one appealed to me because it uses fresh cranberries which have much more flavour.

Jane

Frosted Cranberry Drop Cookies

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 2-1/2 cups chopped fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- **FROSTING:**
- 1/3 cup butter
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 to 4 tablespoons hot water

Directions

1. In a bowl, cream butter and sugars. Add milk, egg and orange juice; mix well. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in cranberries and nuts.
2. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° until golden brown, 12-15 minutes. Cool on wire racks.
3. For frosting, heat the butter in a saucepan over low heat until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Cool for 2 minutes; transfer to a small bowl. Add sugar and vanilla. Beat in water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until frosting reaches desired consistency. Frost the cookies.



Book Reviews

Here are a couple of books you may want to read over the holidays. I enjoyed them both immensely.

Jane

The Women by Kristin Hannah

Kristin Hannah's *The Women* is a compelling tale of resilience, friendship, and the complexity of female bonds. Set against the backdrop of the 20th century, the novel weaves together the lives of several women who face personal and societal challenges with strength and grace. Through rich character development and poignant storytelling, Hannah delves into themes of loss, love, and the power of solidarity.

Framed: Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions by John Grisham & Jim McCloskey

John Grisham's *Framed* is a gripping legal thriller that delves into the complexities of justice and the consequences of wrongful accusations. The novel follows the story of an innocent man, a small-town newspaper editor, who is wrongly imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit. As he navigates a flawed legal system, the tension builds around his struggle for exoneration.



Smile Corner:

