

NOTICE: St James United church Annual Congregation Meeting will be held Sunday, March 17 at noon in the Sanctuary. Refreshments will be provided.

Hearing devices: We seem to be missing three of our hearing devices. If you have borrowed one and taken it home by mistake, could you please return it at your earliest convenience to the church office or on Sunday. Thank you.

Looking for Friends: Are you a younger person and missing your Nan? Are you a bit older and would appreciate a surrogate uncle or sibling? Then look no further. We are looking to connect some of our more senior members with people who will give them a call, stop by for a visit, be a friend. If this interests you, contact Stephanie at info@stjamesuc.org.

Looking for Photos: Calling all photographers. We are looking for photographs that we can include as the front cover of future bulletins. Feel free to submit your photos of nature, still-life arrangements, seasonal celebrations and the like. Avoid photographs of people. We would need their permission to publish their likeness.

Volunteer Opportunity: Are you someone who tries to make sure everyone is included? Do you believe strongly in St. James as a congregation where people of all identities, backgrounds, sexualities and experiences belong? Then you should consider joining our Diversity Committee. Please contact Paul Walsh at jpaulwalsh1209@yahoo.com

Reflective Thursdays at 12:30: Each Thursday throughout Lent, (Rev.) James will lead an informal communion service in the Fellowship Room. Communion is at 12:30PM, followed by the sharing of lunch. Bring a bag lunch if you wish and have lunch together!

Make Your Lent Green: This year we are using a green lens as we explore the readings for each Sunday in Lent. Why not make your whole Lent green? One way to do this is to follow the suggestions by A Rocha, a Christian environmental organisation started in the UK. Here's a link to their UK website:

<https://arocha.org.uk/go-green-for-lent/>

Reflecting this Week: Did you know there are two Creation stories? In the first one we read how God created the world over a six-day period, concluding with the creation of humans in God's image and likeness. In the second, God begins by forming the first human out of the earth and then blows the breath of life into the human to bring them to life. These stories are connected, the second helping us understand how we are made in God's image and likeness. There is a famous rabbi from the 19th century who uses the image of glass blowing to explain it. He says there are three types of breath. The first is *neschama*, the breath in the mouth, then *ruach*, the breath in movement in the tube, and finally this breath as *nefesh* fuses with the glass, helping it to expand. He suggests that this is how it is with God, God's breath in us as our soul, our *nefesh*, not completely separate from God but still part of God. God is always breathing within us, inspiring us, breathing in everyone, and in all of creation. This reminds us to look after each other and the earth. God is with us helping us to do just that, inspiring us to do what we need to in service of God's love, care and peace for the world.

Prayer Practice:

Sometime this week, try focused breath prayer for as short as five minutes or longer if you wish. Find a quiet and comfortable spot to sit. Take time to settle yourself. Pray a short prayer that helps focus your attention. Then simply breathe. There are no words. Simply be aware as you inhale, drawing air through your nose and into your lungs. Be aware as you exhale, releasing air from your lungs. Breathe with attentiveness. Come to stillness, aware that in that stillness is God, closer to you than your breath.

Ponder:

What does it mean to you that God breathed into the first human? What responsibility is given to us in this process?

What is the significance for you that our soul comes from God's breath?

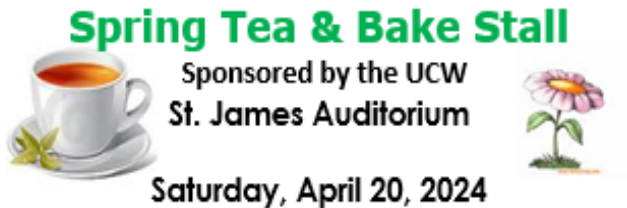
As you listen for God's inspiration, how do you promote God's peace and love for all of the world?

Support our Music Program Challenge: The congregation has been challenged by one of our regular financial givers to raise money dedicated to our music program at St. James. They will match donations to a total of \$500.00. They encourage other members to consider a special contribution to support the music enjoyed during our services. Council is

currently considering the budget for 2024 and special contributions, in addition to your regular annual financial gift, will help considerably in this process. Please make a donation to this worthy cause and identify it as "Music Program Challenge". Let's watch the total grow as we record it weekly.

UCW Spring Tea:

St. James United Church
330 Elizabeth Avenue



Time: 2 – 4 pm Cost: \$8.00

Co-Conveners:

Barbara Butt: (709) 687-1041

Sheilah Beckett: (709) 726-7421

Tickets: May be purchased at the door. Please contact the church office for more information.

Purdy's Chocolates: St. James invites you to celebrate easter with delicious Purdy's Chocolates! At the same time you'll be helping our congregation achieve its financial goals. The order deadline is: Wednesday, March 6, 2024. You can pick up your order at the church on Saturday, March 30, 2024.

To order some chocolates, you can use this link:

<https://fundraising.purdys.com/1570516-117000> and it will take you to a page where you enter your email. Once you have done that, click the "Join a campaign" button and it will take you to our St. James page. In the top right corner you will see three horizontal lines (that is the symbol for menu on a website). Click on it and scroll down to "shop online". Clicking on that will take you to a page where you can choose between "the marketplace" (so you can see pictures and read descriptions) or the online form. Let us know if you need help with any of this and we will order on your behalf.

The Affirm Committees of Gower Street and St. James United Churches invites you to attend our education session on Gender Inclusive Curricula.

Over the past year, protests and counter-protests have erupted across Canada in response to new developments around gender inclusive curricula.

The United Church of Canada is an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming denomination. We are called to daring justice, which requires us to show up and be allies in spaces where there is inequity. Gower Street and St. James United Churches are Affirming Congregations committed to being Public, Intentional and Explicit in our welcome and presence, believing in a God who loves all individuals and desires an inclusive society. We know that there is misinformation, confusion, and concerns from many, both in our church communities and in the broader society.

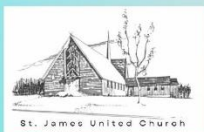
In celebration of P.I.E. day^[1] and to address and reflect on some of these questions, the Affirm committees from Gower Street and St. James United Churches have planned a joint education event to be held on March 14th at St. James United Church from 5:00 to 7:00. A light supper will be provided. The objective of the event is to provide a safe and respectful space to address questions and concerns about the issue of gender inclusive curricula. The format of the event will include a panel of presenters with lived and professional experience of gender inclusive spaces, practices, and policies. Some examples of questions we will consider are:

- What does it mean when someone says "I identify as [gender diverse]?"
- What can we learn about the experience of identifying in a gender diverse way?
- What is gender inclusive curricula?
- Why is gender inclusive curricula important?
- Why are people opposed to gender inclusive curricula?
- What are parental rights and children's rights in the context of gender inclusive curricula?

If you have questions you'd like to submit – we'd be happy to include them!

SAVE THE DAY!
MARCH 14TH, 5 PM TO 7 PM
MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW.

For more information, or to submit your own questions contact Gail Wideman at gwideman@mun.ca or 709-691-0350.



[1] National Affirming/PIE Day was co-founded by Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble and Affirming Connections to set aside time on March 14th every year to celebrate the full inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in faith communities and beyond! We call this P.I.E. Day. This day also reminds and challenges us to be Public, Intentional, and Explicit as we celebrate gender and sexual diversity in all its forms.

Want to donate online this morning?

Scan this QR code with your phone and it will take you to our website.
Then click “Donate”. Thank you for your support.



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