

---

## ISLINGTON UNITED CHURCH

25 Burnhamthorpe Road

Toronto, Ontario, M9A 1G9

[islingtonunited.org](http://islingtonunited.org) / [@islingtonunited](https://www.instagram.com/islingtonunited)



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## **Our Mission**

*To be an open, friendly and caring church where all people are invited to discover, explore and develop their spirituality in Christ's name and to participate fully in the life and work of the congregation regardless of age, race, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and physical or mental ability.*

## **Solidarity Statement**

*We, at Islington United Church, are an Affirming congregation of the United Church of Canada.*

*We are committed to including everyone: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirited persons and others (LGBTQ2+); those who are marginalized for any reason, including race or age; economically disadvantaged; developmentally or physically challenged.*

*We stand in solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities and all people of colour in our community, our country and throughout the world.*

*We acknowledge that racial injustice is pervasive throughout society. We oppose all forms of racism and racialized violence.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>MINISTRY</b>
1	• Lead Minister
2	• Faith Formation
3	◦ Living with Christ
3	◦ Basketball Program
4	• Music
5	◦ The Resonance Project
6	• Pastoral Care: Meditation
6	• Communications
7	• The GO Project
<b>8</b>	<b>CHURCH COUNCIL</b>
9	• German International School Toronto (GIST) Transition Team
10	• Emergency Response Team
<b>11</b>	<b>COMMITTEES</b>
11	• Communications
12	• Facilities
13	• Hospitality
14	• Ministry and Personnel
17	• Pastoral Care
18	• Social Justice Network
19	◦ Affirm
20	◦ Interfaith Circle
21	◦ Mabelle Food Program
21	◦ Community Partners
21	◦ Statistics
22	◦ Out of the Cold
23	◦ Recess Islington
24	◦ Refugee Support
25	◦ Right Relations Circle
25	• United Church Women
26	• Worship and Music
27	◦ Arts and Environment
<b>28</b>	<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>TREASURER'S REPORT</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>IN MEMORIAM</b>

# LEAD MINISTER

When we set out on a journey to read through the bible in a year, using **The Story**, who could have predicted what would unfold from July 2019 to June 2020? I am so grateful for the ways that the Islington United Church community embraced the invitation of “Finding Our Story in God’s Story” through reading, prayer, art, conversation, preaching, worship, music, and three different bible study groups. Thank you to Rev. Young Rhee and Dr. Jack Grady for their bible study leadership.

We read familiar stories and passages that we loved; we were surprised by what we didn’t know; we wrestled with the harder bits and the ways the stories have been interpreted. We fell in love with new characters who helped us see differently; we laughed, we questioned, we complained; we got confused. We stopped reading for a while; we almost gave up. But in the end, we made it, all the way from Genesis to Revelation. It kept us together when we had to be apart, and deepened our sense as a community of being part of a bigger story.

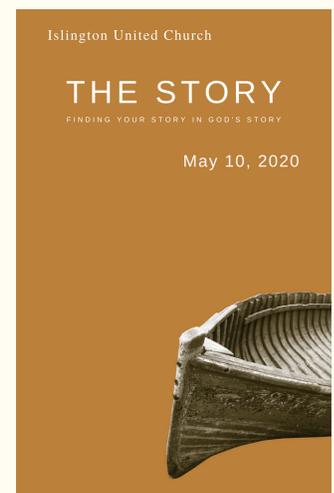
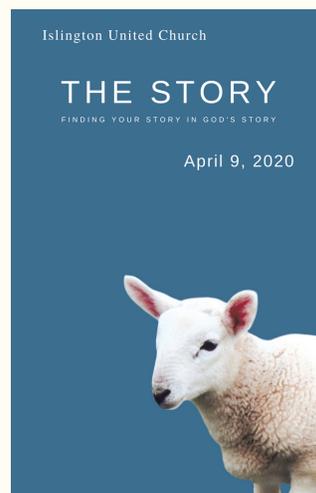
Over and over the people of God have to keep changing direction as they trust in a God who knows them and cares for them. Over and over,

Jesus’ disciples aren’t exactly sure what to do but they trust that Jesus will keep showing them the way. As I reflect back, these words of scripture – “Don’t be afraid” and “Peace be with you” – have carried me through each chapter. They have carried me from “the normal I took for granted” into time of COVID-19 quarantine and the closing of our church building to ministry online and prayers for “the new normal.”

Over and over the people of God had to leave behind the familiar, the things and practices they knew and loved, always trusting that God would provide. In the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic – the loss, the feelings of it all, between the old way and the new – God has sustained us.

I am grateful for the staff team, the lay leaders, our congregation and people now joining Islington United Church virtually, from all around the world, offering their prayers, financial support and commitment to being part of the next chapter in the story of us being the church.

**REV. MAYA LANDELL**  
LEAD MINISTER



*"Give thanks to God, bless God's name. For God is good, God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations." Psalm 100:4b-5*

# FAITH FORMATION

The Faith Formation team experienced a shift in ministry as we said goodbye to Randee Marquez, the Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator. We are grateful for her leadership and hard work in supporting our families. I transitioned into the role as the Children and Families Ministry Coordinator in January 2020. Further, the team was excited to welcome Sandra Tully to the team as our new Church Council representative.

The Thursday night drop-in program has continued to be a safe and welcoming space for children and youth. We are grateful to the hospitality team who help feed approximately 60 people every week. We are also grateful for the continued leadership of Mitch Orsatti who, as a co-founder with Karen Eade, has been a critical support to our basketball program. With the approval of the Embracing Innovation grant in May 2020, I am excited to expand the program to create a recreational program for female youth in the community.

During COVID-19, the work of Faith Formation changed. The Faith Formation team came together in various innovative ways to successfully engage families.

I aimed to support families by leading weekly read aloud sessions for toddlers and older children. I also dropped off worship care packages to family's homes. The Faith Formation team is appreciative of Amy Crawford, Volunteer Associate Minister, for leading Godly Play every Sunday and Heather Childs for providing worship resources on our Class Dojo site. We are also thankful for our staff members: Allison Whiting for heading up youth group and Cynthia Smithers for leading the youth choir online.

The Faith Formation team continues to support Youth Without Shelter. This year, the team launched a summer giving drive and worked to create an online children's summer camp aimed at fostering compassion and care for others.

Faith Formation continues to be active and ready in leading children's ministry in new ways. We are blessed to have such a caring and devoted team.

**MICHELLE REECE**  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
MINISTRY COORDINATOR



*"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11*

# FAITH FORMATION

## Living with Christ

Jack Grady

A longstanding program of Faith Formation, and specifically Youth Ministry, Living With Christ (LWC) has just completed its 46th year. I have been honoured to lead this initiative from its inception. The program is geared to students from grades six to twelve, but also welcomes post-secondary students.

LWC addresses current issues of interest to young people from a Christian perspective. The program is based upon the lectionary readings followed in the worship service each week.

LWC includes video material to support conversations, and encourages active participation, with bible reading, prayer and discussion of the sermon that week. Discussions are free-ranging and I encourage students to explore openly.

## Faith Formation during COVID

During COVID-19, families who do not typically attend Islington United Church, or who live outside of Toronto, have joined us for online programming every Sunday. We have been able to meet and engage new families in addition to supporting our regular families.

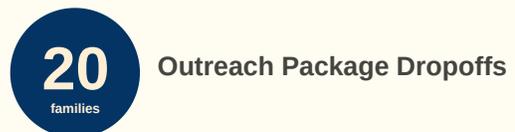
## Basketball Program

Michelle Reece

Our basketball program has consistently had 25+ participants weekly since January 2020.

Our total participant count since September 2019 is 65 unique individuals.

The creation of a basketball Instagram account has kept the youth engaged, especially during COVID-19 when it is not possible to see them in person.



## MUSIC

What an adventurous year it has been for the Islington United Church Music Program: we've experienced a host of unexpected turns and new experiments. Further, we've learned to adapt and "dance with the Spirit" as, during the early days of COVID, flexibility became an essential part of our week-to-week ministry.

In the summer of 2019 we launched Islington United's first ever Band Camp. We built a team including Cynthia Smithers, staff from Christ First United Church in Mississauga, amazing youth volunteers. Participants engaged in many activities designed to nurture a love of music. The youngest children learned recorder and used rhythm, ribbons, instruments, and movement as part of musical expression. Older children and youth were part of building a band, with a chance to learn ukulele on the side.

Under the direction of Christy Cummings, and with assistance from David Walsh, the Junior Choir had a wonderful year of growth. Our congratulations go to William Vuong, the Junior Choir accompanist, who heads off to university in September 2020. The Youth Choir worked hard and contributed to the weekly 9:30 am Sunday worship service. This year we offered gratitude for the years of service given by Andrew Aitchison, and welcomed Cynthia Smithers as the new Youth Choir director. Our handbell choir (under Andrew's direction) provided thoughtful devotional selections during worship and on special occasions. We offer thanks to Joan Hunter and our regular roster of chimers, the Resonance Project House Band and Andrew Aitchison and Catherine Manning who regularly provided music support for the 9:30 am Sunday worship service.

The Senior Choir had a wonderful year also. We offered an especially memorable and beautiful Remembrance concert – Sounds of Peace – in the fall of 2019. The Senior Choir elected a new

executive, which has been energetically working since January 2020. We continue to give thanks for the talents and leadership brought to our choir by our section leads: Peter Barnes, Lyndsay Promane, Jennifer Taverner and David Walsh. Their contributions to Leap Year on Broadway were particularly spectacular! What a wonderful event.

The Don Banks Music Awards (DBMA), like many other events this spring, was cancelled due to COVID-19. We are grateful to Barbara Hruska and the DBMA executive for being dedicated to the musical development of so many young people in our community. DBMA Chair, Cathy Richardson, has indicated that this was another record-breaking year in terms of the number of applications we received. How exciting! We are looking forward to resuming this important community outreach in spring 2021.

Finally, our sound and tech ministry has really sprung into action as a result of the changes we have felt all around us due to the coronavirus pandemic. Robert Picard has stepped up and worked with determination and dedication to provide our community with video coverage of our weekly Sunday worship; Thom Varey has brought consistent and amazing professionalism to his work as our sound engineer.

As the Minister of Music, a real highlight of this year was the culmination of the virtual choir project. It was beautiful to see how technology could be harnessed to help us feel more connected during a season of isolation. I am looking forward to the ways we can continue to be innovative and stay connected into the next season.

**JASON LOCKE**  
MINISTER OF MUSIC

*"When you meet together, sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs, as you praise God with all your hearts." Ephesians 5:19*

# MUSIC

## The Resonance Project

### Committee Members

Andrew Aitchison, James Aitchison, Heather Childs, Catherine Locke, Jason Locke, Catherine Manning, Amy McPherson, Cynthia Smithers, Angeline St. Amour, Thomas Varey, Victoria Vickers

Following a hugely successful first year, The Resonance Project continued to grow and serve the Islington United and greater community in its second of the three-year grant provided by the United Church of Canada. The project continues to be overseen by Jason Locke, James Aitchison, Cynthia Smithers and a dedicated, resourceful and creative committee made up of Islington United members.



In early 2020, Angeline St. Amour left the committee, as she and her partner moved to Nova Scotia to undertake new work opportunities. While we were very sad to see Angeline go, we were thrilled to welcome Heather Childs to the team.

With the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020, The Resonance Project had to adapt its programming. The team quickly pivoted to offer weekly, online Sunday evening programming for the broader Islington United Church community. It has been incredibly exciting to see so many new faces engaging in events that range from trivia, to baking, to name-that-tune. We also engaged in a successful online Zoom Worship Service in May.



Along with the continuation of bi-monthly worship gatherings, The Resonance Project introduced new social events in the intervening months. These events provided a safe, fun space for participants to enjoy new and familiar activities, such as karaoke, board games, baking and sports. The Resonance Socials served as a way to connect more closely with new people and other church communities, such as the youth groups from Forest Hill United Church and Humber Valley United Church.



*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19*

## PASTORAL CARE

### Meditation with James

Meditation has been an active and energetic ministry this year. Prior to COVID changing our lives, we were in the midst of a great season. We met steadily through the fall and winter, averaging about 12 meditators on Mondays, and a slightly smaller circle every other Friday. Practices tended to be quiet and focussed and we were usually feeling pretty relaxed afterwards, sharing a bit about our practice – questions, insights and experiences.

The season of COVID found us shifting to online. By the end of June we were offering meditation six days a week, with consistent engagement during the livestream, and many people tuning into the videos after they had been posted to the Islington United Church website or Facebook page.



**JAMES AITCHISON**  
PASTORAL CARE  
STUDENT MINISTER

## COMMUNICATIONS

Islington United Church understands the importance of providing consistent, frequent and clear communications to our congregation and community. The Communications Ministry advises on best communications practices and approaches to serve and support Islington United and its ministries. We hold a high standard for our materials, from print to digital, and have made significant strides this year in updating both their quality and frequency.

The Communications Ministry has a wealth of responsibilities, including producing the order of worship, a weekly newsletter (Wednesday Weekly), and The Snapshot; editing, proofing and layout of reports and presentations; providing content and design for stewardship campaigns; producing the Annual Report; and generating print and graphic content for events and programs. The Communications Ministry is responsible for the design and maintenance of the Islington United Church website and social media channels.

This ministry also oversees the application of Islington's branding, ensuring our logo, colours and font are accurately and consistently applied on all print and digital copy. Further, the team follows an established style guide to maintain consistency of form and style across all communications media. This work is important to protect our integrity as an organization and our credibility in the greater community.

The Communications Ministry aims to provide quality messaging. Our words may serve to be compelling or comforting, inspiring or informative, and are always tailored to the purpose of the communication and the audience. We are especially vigilant to ensure our messaging is inclusive and consistently reflects our values as followers of Jesus Christ.

**RANDEE MARQUEZ**  
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God." Romans 12:2*

## THE GO PROJECT

### Committee Members

Alana Martin (Minister), Brian Allen, Carla Leon

In June 2020, we mark a transition in the relationship of The GO Project and Islington United.

Fourteen years ago, this ministry was birthed out of an idea from the Islington youth and their leader, Michael Shewburg, of having a mission trip in their own backyard. In those 14 years, GO grew to reach over 500 youth, 1,000 children, and 60 leaders comprising children and youth. GO also employed 145 summer student staff.

And that is not counting the volunteers and mission partners who make our programs as meaningful as they are. Some of you may have fond memories of driving youth to a mission site, baking them cookies or brownies and witnessing their powerful learnings and leadership as they led worship here each summer.

In those 14 years The GO Project has run programs for young people in every province in Canada. Through their participation and leadership in the program, 26 of those young people have discerned a call into paid ministry leadership across the United Church of Canada. I am one of them.



You birthed this and gave it the care and nurturing to grow into what it has become: a leader of innovative children and youth ministry within the United Church of Canada.

It is now time for The GO Project to spread its wings. As of June 1, 2020, we are an incorporated ministry of the United Church of Canada. That means moving our operations from Islington United Church to Shining Waters Regional Council. While this changes our operational relationship with Islington, it does not change our desire to continue to partner with Islington United Church through meaningful and impactful programming. You have not seen the last of us.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all the support and nurturing soil you have given The GO Project throughout the past 14 years. As we say at GO, YOU are a part of making the world a better place.

**ALANA MARTIN**  
MINISTER TO THE GO PROJECT

*"God will watch over your coming and going; both now and forever more." Psalm 121:8*

## CHURCH COUNCIL

In a busy church like Islington United we depend on people saying “yes” when they are asked to volunteer and share their gifts of time and expertise. This year, largely due to the preparation for the German International School Toronto (GIST), we needed to call on so many people to say “yes.” We needed a GIST negotiating team to prepare a lease and a GIST transition team to prepare the space.

We also formed a strategic planning team to lead us in imagining and conceiving how we are “growing forward” as a church. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that we form an Emergency Response Team.

We needed a Recording Secretary for Church Council, a team to plan and fundraise for a new kitchen, and a team to prepare the protocols for re-opening our building post-COVID-19. Our Resonance ministry is thriving thanks to a highly creative group of our next generation leaders saying “yes.”

We were grateful that three new members of Islington United – Heather Childs, Peggy Sheffield and Sandra Tully – are contributing their time and experience on Church Council this year.

### Wendy Sexsmith, Chair

#### Carole Bennett, Vice-chair

Lead, Social Justice Network  
Lay representative, Shining Waters Regional Council

#### Reverend Maya Landell

Lead Minister

#### Helen Delaney, Treasurer

Chair, Finance Committee

#### Isla Grady

Chair, Hospitality Committee  
Representative, United Church Women

#### Jack Grady

Chair, Pastoral Care Committee

#### Ian McPherson

Treasurer, Board of Trustees

The people saying “yes” to these invitations to serve are in addition to the dozens of people who have already said “yes” and are serving week in and week out on committees such as Pastoral Care, Ministry and Personnel, Worship and Music, and our many Social Justice programs.

As Christians, we also need to heed God’s call to rest. God rested after six days of hard work creating the heavens and the earth, and God calls on us to rest as well, so we can restore ourselves and listen to what God is calling us to next.

This year, Grace Quimno retired from Church Council where she was representing the Faith Formation ministry. Helen Delaney completed her three-year term as Church Treasurer. In October 2020 I will complete my term as Chair of Church Council. Ian McPherson resigned from Church Council, but continues as a Trustee and as Co-chair of the Communion Committee. I know others will step up to fill the vacancies.

We all need rest in order to keep Christ at the centre of our lives. May we all feel as comfortable saying “rest” as saying “yes.”

**WENDY SEXSMITH**

CHAIR, CHURCH COUNCIL

#### Peggy Sheffield

Chair, Communications Committee

#### Bob Shirer

Chair, Facilities Committee

#### Sandra Tully | Grace Quimno to January 2020

Chair, Faith Formation Committee

#### Elsa van Vliet

Chair, Worship and Music Committee

#### Janet Wells

Chair, Ministry and Personnel Committee

#### David Allen

Vice-chair, Ministry and Personnel Committee (non-voting)

#### Heather Childs

Recording Secretary

# German International School Toronto (GIST) Transition Team

## Team Members

Val Greenfield (Co-chair), Bev Walton (Co-chair), Leslee Armstrong, Joan Beaver, Kim Blackwell, Marjorie Booth, Bronwen Gates, Wendy Sexsmith, Jill Stewart

Formed in January 2020, the GIST Transition Team was tasked with ensuring both the building and congregation were well prepared for the move-in and the start of school on September 8, 2020. The team comprised representatives from several Islington United Church ministries and committees, namely including Hospitality, Staff, Music, Worship, Church Council, Pastoral Care, Fundraising, and the original GIST negotiating team. The transition team worked closely with Facilities, Library, Ministry and Personnel, Faith Formation, Emergency Response, City of Toronto, GIST and The GO Project teams to ensure that all voices were heard.

We planned, consulted, cleaned, sold, moved, built, demolished, painted and repaired. We pulled in many volunteers. As we worked through the myriad of details, we dealt with issues we hadn't seen coming. It was a learning experience for all. The lockdown of our church building due to COVID allowed us much needed and welcomed time and space to complete the necessary work.

## Some highlights

- We emptied rooms: refugee, archives, music storage, choir, and all GIST-exclusive rooms (library, board, facilities and KRT). We cleaned out every nook and cranny of the lower floor of the building and some storage space upstairs as well.
- We moved rooms: The library moved upstairs to the Pastoral Care office. The beautiful new music room, once home to refugee and music storage, will soon be ready for activities to reconvene.

- The Facilities Office was moved to the former GO Project office space. GO moved back to the former nursery. The Toddler Ministry and Children's Godly Play areas were switched to make better use of space. Both rooms can be used as meeting space in the future. The Archives Room was emptied and material culled with some documents and pictures going to United Church of Canada and some remaining at Islington. The small washroom near the boiler room was refurbished and the foyer and hallways were painted.
- We stayed within our allotted \$50,000 budget including a new ceiling for Scout Hall, fresh paint, new flooring and new keys. Costs were kept to a minimum because of the work of many volunteers: painters, cleaners, organizers, builders and movers. It was a monumental task with so many contributing in various ways.

We were fortunate to have the expertise of Chris Henderson (Project Advisors) and JOVA Construction who consistently walked us through all of the work to be completed. Islington staff have been exceptional in helping us achieve our goals; their flexibility, dedication and hard work have been real assets. Strong church leadership has been a critical element in this transition and we owe Church Council a huge thank you for their support.

Lots of changes have been made, but we feel it is for the better. While it may look and feel different for a little while, the space will still be home.

*"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:3*

## Emergency Response Team (ERT)

### Team Members

John Leavitt (Lead), Carole Bennett, Marjorie Booth, Rev. Maya Landell, Wendy Sexsmith, Peggy Sheffield

It all started on March 11, 2020 when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. On March 12, 2020, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced that all schools would be closed for the two weeks following March break. The grocery store chaos began. Over the next two weeks, there would be emergency orders, border closings and a complete shutdown of most workplaces. The Canadian economy saw its biggest drop since the Great Depression.

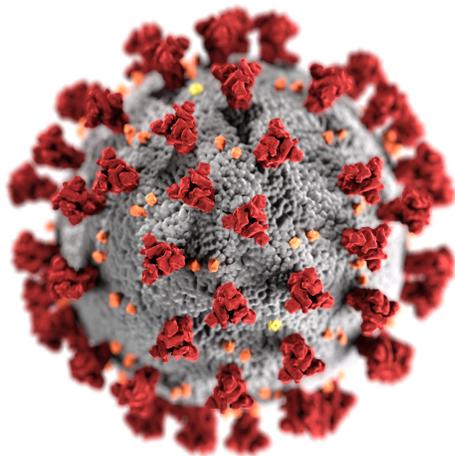
On the eve of the first announcement, Rev. Maya Landell asked Church Council to form an Emergency Response Team (ERT) to manage Islington's response to the impending crisis. Carole Bennett, Marjorie Booth, Rev. Maya Landell, John Leavitt, Wendy Sexsmith and Peggy Sheffield were tasked with tracking, understanding and assessing the implications of COVID-19 for our faith community. The team was to recommend action plans for Islington to respond to the crisis.

Months later, we are still living in the shadow of the virus. Slowly, life is starting to look familiar. There is much talk of a "new normal," but it is unclear as to what that will be.

The ERT continues to adapt. A special sub-group has been formed under the leadership of Sandra Tully to develop plans to allow us to return safely into our beloved church home. Those plans will be based on best practices of public health groups and other faith communities. The congregational survey completed in May 2020 will provide guidance to this group.

We look forward to returning to the Sanctuary to experience, in person, inspiring sermons that make us think, organ postludes that give us goosebumps, and choir anthems that stir the soul. In time we will be there. Reverend Maya shared a quote with the ERT that we should always remember. It was written by Deon K. Johnson, Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Missouri:

"The church does not need to 'open' because the church never 'closed.' We who make up the Body of Christ, the church, love God and our neighbours and ourselves so much that we will stay away from our buildings until it is safe. We are the church."



# COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."*

Isaiah 43:2

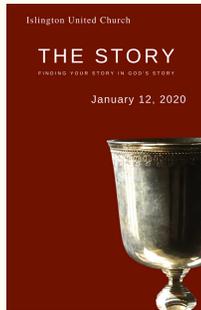
# COMMUNICATIONS

## Committee Members

Peggy Sheffield (Chair), Randeé Marquez, Robert Huff

In spring 2019 our new team got off to a busy start. We collaborated with the German International School Toronto (GIST) Working Group to provide the congregation with accurate and clear information to enable them to make an informed decision regarding having GIST as a tenant.

The November Stewardship Campaign took on a new look and a new form of distribution. Providing the material in an online and printed format was received well by the congregation.



"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."  
Luke 12:34

**THE IMPORTANCE OF STEWARDSHIP**

During the summer, we worked to launch **The Story**, an abridged chronological account of the Bible presented in a novel format. We created a series of print materials to engage both the congregation and broader community. These included a teaser postcard, posters, pull-up banners and bookmark. We revised the order of worship to graphically support **The Story**.

In February 2020 the new **Islington United website** was launched. The site features a fresh, current design with engaging photography and graphics. Intuitive navigation ensures users can easily find what they need. Flexibility in design and function ensures site content is consistently up-to-date.

Following Church Council's formation of the Emergency Response Team in early March, the Communications Committee worked quickly to glean the most relevant information from a wealth of government and global sources to provide timely and frequent updates to the congregation.

As our worship and programming moved online, the new website quickly became the hub for all activity at Islington United – from sermons, devotionals and music to children's programming, meditation and financial support.

**THE SNAPSHOT**  
Islington United Church

**The Story**  
BY REV. MAYA LANDELL

**Annual General Meeting**

THE SNAPSHOT PAGE 01

In the fall we launched the first issue of **The Snapshot**, a full-colour magazine style publication designed to provide the congregation with in-depth updates on church developments and projects.



The Communications Committee remains dedicated to fulfilling its mandate of bringing accurate, credible and relevant information to the congregation and greater community in the service of Islington United Church. This is ever-more-critical as we face continued uncertainty in light of the world pandemic resulting from the COVID-19 virus.

*"Jesus told them: "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." Luke 8:39*

# FACILITIES

## Committee Members

Bob Shirer (Chair), Don Cook, Ian MacDonald, Ian Reece, Bruce Richardson, Murray Wood

The Facilities Team has had a very full and eventful year. We were sad to say goodbye to Paul Mates, Facilities Manager, who went on to a new management position at the City of Toronto. Thank you to the facilities staff team Worku Gebrekidan, Dragon Mrkovic and Paul Vallillee have continued work in their areas, supporting rental groups, cleaning, security, helping our community, and covering seasonal needs inside and outside.

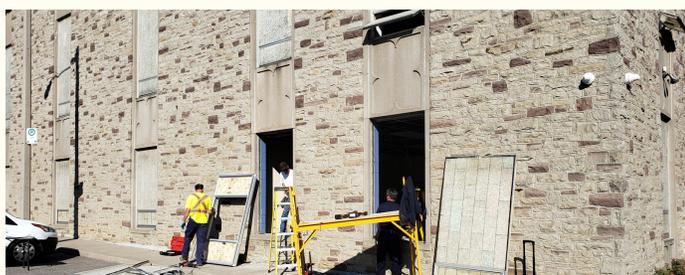
With the German International School Toronto (GIST) rental approaching, many upgrades and renovations were needed to the church building. Two significant highlights of those updates are the new windows installed in the entire 1965 Stewart East Hall wing of the church and the state-of-the-art kitchen. Many thanks to Isla Grady and her team for the many years of preparation and thoughtful planning that have gone into this project.

Other projects included upgrading the entire lower level of the 1965 wing, which was planned and financed by GIST. This work was completed by JOVA Construction. Many thanks to Chris Henderson who served as the project lead, overseeing the kitchen renovation, window replacement, GIST renovations and other projects.

As a result of the allocation of space to GIST, several changes were made to the use and layout of several of our spaces. For a list of more of these projects see the GIST Transition Team report. A big thank you to that team and other volunteers for all their input and hard work around the facility this year. Other projects included upgrades to our fire protection system and the clearing out and organizing of many storage areas.

This year a Building Working Group (Bob Shirer, Paul Summers, Carol Bennett, Rev. Maya Landell, and the future Manager of Operations) was formed with the goal of gathering the information needed to develop a multi-year building plan. This plan will be outlined in a Major Maintenance Assessment Report, presented to Church Council, and shared with the congregation. Following, a staged implementation will occur over the next few years to ensure the ongoing care of our building as an asset so that we can offer strong, safe and relevant ministry in Christ's name.

Thanks to a lot of hard work, our church building, though closed to the community since March 2020, will be ready and welcoming when we reopen our doors again. We will work to integrate best practices learned from other congregations and continue to monitor and implement what the facility requires for safe re-opening.



*"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15*

## HOSPITALITY

### Committee Members

Isla Grady (Chair), Diane Anger, Joan Beaver, Jackie Blackwell, Kim Blackwell (A&E team), Sharon Conway, Don Cook, Jo Cook, Irene Fair, Jack Grady, Adam Hanley, Barbara Hruska, Margaret Isaacs, Margaret Leet, Catherine Locke (Resonance Worship Hospitality Team Coordinator), Elizabeth McEachran, Mollyanna Potter, Judy Powell, Carole Thompson, Lynda Sharpe (Coffee Hour Coordinator and Treasurer), Shirley Tyers, Bev Walton, Meredith Whipp

What a year! The Islington United Church Hospitality Committee spent the early part of the church year living the welcome in our usual busy ways. It was a year that saw sadness as our dear team mate, Gloria Myles, passed away, as well as joy as our team mate, Judy Powell, had kidney transplant surgery.

We remained typically active, cleaning all the church kitchens, serving at funerals and special celebrations, and helping to grow our various ministries by providing food service for Interfaith Circle, Social Justice Network, Mabelle Food Program, and rEcess Islington. In addition, we supported our expanding children and youth programs by preparing and serving dinners for 50 to 70 people every Thursday evening.

A highlight was the February 29 Leap Year on Broadway event – a successful collaboration of our Fundraising, Hospitality, Music, Arts and Environment, Communications, and Resonance Project teams. More than 150 people enjoyed a gourmet dinner while taking in entertainment, and silent and live auctions. The event raised over \$25,000 and a terrific time was had by all.



During the pandemic months since March, we have continued to extend the welcome and invitation of Islington United Church by providing food service to care homes and youth shelters and offering support to frontline workers.

We were grateful that Church Council voted to proceed with the Stewart East Hall Kitchen renovation project. It was a huge undertaking as our team packed up the kitchen. The pandemic underlined the need for a kitchen that would allow us to safely prepare and store food and be easy to sanitize.

Isla Grady and Meredith Whipp, co-leads on the kitchen renovation project, are grateful for their lead team members: Elsa van Vliet and Catherine Locke, Chris Henderson (Project Advisors), and JOVA Construction.

The Hospitality Team offers grateful thanks to both the Islington United Church staff team and congregation members who generously share their service. Special appreciation goes to Lynda Sharpe for her tireless work serving as committee treasurer, and to Bev Walton for her leadership role on the GIST Transition Team.

*"Whatever you did for one of my brothers and sisters, you did for me." Matthew 25:40*

## MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL

### Committee Members

Janet Wells (Chair), David Allen (Vice Chair), Jackie Carter, Rod Haskin (to December 2019), Joan Hunter, Geoff Isaacs (to April 2020), Beth Pollock

Ministry and Personnel would like to begin by recognizing the terrific staff of Islington United Church and all of their efforts and flexibility throughout the past year to adapt to the changes and challenges, including staff departures, GIST preparations and major adaptations in ministry and staff work due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Special recognition must be made of the ministry and lay staff who have shown exemplary dedication and effort during the COVID months to provide alternatives to our traditional worship practices and programs to support the congregation.

The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) committee worked hard to support the staff throughout the year. Thanks go to all committee members. Special appreciation is extended to the newest committee member, Beth Pollock. Sincere thanks are also extended to those who resigned this year; Rod Haskin and Geoff Isaacs each contributed significant time and energy to the committee.

Paul Mates, Facilities Manager, left to pursue other opportunities; we thank him for his efforts over the past years. Randee Marquez was promoted to Communication Specialist and Michelle Reece became the Children and Families Ministry Coordinator. Bailey Fleming resigned as part-time Youth Associate to work full-time for The GO Project.

Our Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAMs) – Adam Hanley, Roger Landell and Janess Landell – contributed to pastoral care, worship, hospitality and faith formation. We are blessed to have had the addition this year of three additional VAMs: Rev. Young Rhee, Rev. Mark Aitchison, and Amy Crawford.

Church Council voted to make the Minister of Music a full-time position (effective January 2021).



With the loss of our Facilities Manager, our new relationship with GIST, and our need for onsite financial oversight, Church Council approved the new position of Manager of Operations (effective October 2020). To expand the capacity and pastoral care abilities of our ministry staff, and reduce their administrative load, Leslee Armstrong's position will become the new Administrative Support to the Ministry Team. These two full-time staff positions will support the many lay leaders in using their spiritual gifts through life-giving volunteer service at Islington United.

The administrative work of the committee included revisions of job descriptions to reflect changes in roles, processes and procedures for performance reviews and vacation schedules. Initial steps were taken to digitize files. The revised employee handbook was distributed to all staff at the M&P annual staff Christmas luncheon party where all employees and VAMS were celebrated for their efforts in their work roles at Islington.

With the onset of COVID, the M&P committee aimed to be accountable stewards as it reviewed staffing costs and government programs available to employees. It made regular recommendations to Council regarding staffing and government program changes.

*"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, while caring for those who belong to the family of believers." Galatians 6:10*

# KITCHEN RENOVATION PROJECT: APRIL TO JUNE 2020

BEFORE



DURING



# KITCHEN RENOVATION PROJECT: APRIL TO JUNE 2020

AFTER



## PASTORAL CARE

### Committee Members

Jack Grady (Chair), Clive Anderson, Jo Cook, Sally Hubbs, Dale Kucharczyk, Gayle Little, Rev. Maya Landell, Lynn Morrison, Jodi Smith, Bev Walton, Ted Wilson, Dorothea Vickers

At the beginning of this church year would any of us have predicted we would be reporting on our activity during a pandemic? It would have been beyond our understanding, yet here we are, doing just that. The Pastoral Care Ministry at Islington United Church, comprising 19 ministry teams, did not know a pandemic was coming, but we were prepared and determined to make the shift from being physically together to remaining firmly connected spiritually and virtually.

Three Prayer Link teams, led by Sally Hubbs, Betty Tansley and Murray Wood, continued to respond to requests for prayer. The Sunday morning Healing Prayer team, led by Rev. Janess Landell, offered telecare healing prayer. The Healing Pathways team, led by Barb Walewski, has been gathering virtually and developing new programs of healing.

The Prayer Shawl and Bear Care Ministry, led by Gayle Little, has been extremely busy creating many lovely shawls delivered safely by our ministry team to those in need of our care. Last fall, Carol Wilson (Co-chair, Interfaith Circle) arranged for 24 shawls to be presented to the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in response to the mass shooting there in 2019.

The Celebration for Seniors and Islington Sings brought joy and laughter until March.

The visitation teams transitioned from face-to-face visits to telecare, and we are grateful to our ministers and Clive Anderson for their leadership.

The bridge social group enjoyed an active fall and early spring season and then, thanks to Bev Walton and the team, transitioned to keeping in touch and building community by telephone check-ins.

Every week, Jo Cook faithfully coordinated the Caring Card Ministry, transitioning from organizing individually signed cards to cards signed on behalf of the congregation.

Sincere thanks to Anne Marriott, Geoffrey King and Francis King, and the library team who have sorted and moved the library to the second floor. It was a huge task and we are grateful for their hard work.

The Neighbourhoods Project has been reorganized and, thanks to David Lang, Isla Grady and Leslee Armstrong, our database updated – a huge job. We are now planning for fall virtual events.

The Week of Guided Prayer, led by Dale Kucharzyk, shifted from a time of being physically together to being together in Spirit. It was a richly rewarding experience for the participating teams.

Lenten Online Devotionals continued as daily devotionals, courtesy of a team of writers who offered daily inspiration, drawing us together in thought and prayer during our time apart.

For more than 20 years, the Stephen Ministry Team continued to offer one-on-one care to their care receivers in safe ways thanks to Stephen Leaders Isla Grady, Dale Kucharzyk, David Lang, and Voluntary Associate Minister, Mark Aitchison.

Sincere gratitude goes to our tireless Ministry Team who, through their ongoing dedicated, faithful commitment, have reached out daily to bring the peace and hope of God to our congregation and beyond. Rev. Maya Landell, James Aitchison, Jason Locke, Michelle Reece, Randee Marquez, and Robert Picard and Thom Varey (our sound and tech team) – thank you!

*“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2*

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NETWORK

### Committee Members

Carole Bennett (Lead), Michelle Allen, Dennis Bradley, Bill Drinnan, Carol Laughton, Dave Laughton, Barbara Sheffield, Peggy Sheffield, Carol Wilson

The God of mission has a church in the world to bring healing and love. At Islington United Church our network comprises groups that have unique perspectives for revealing God's vision of justice and love for the world. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed much of our one-on-one work in our neighbourhood but we found other ways to live out God's mission.

In spite of the uncertainty of Islington's own revenue during the pandemic, Islington continued to support the work of The United Church of Canada, knowing that commitments to Canadian and international partners had already been made. Islington sustained its \$30,000 commitment to Mission & Service to help people in tangible ways, including those most vulnerable during the pandemic.

Through the auspices of the Affirm Ministry, Church Council adopted a Statement of Solidarity for Islington United Church in recognition that systemic racism is pervasive in Canada and throughout the world.

## Mission & Service

### Transforming and Saving Lives

#### Around the world

**28**

partners in seven African and Middle Eastern countries

**27**

partners in five Asian countries

**25**

partners in seven Caribbean and Latin American countries



In Canada, it manifests itself in individual and group racist actions, government policies and practices, policing and other aspects of society. At Islington we are

committing ourselves to listen, learn, lament and act to counter racism against all individuals, groups, religions and cultures.

COVID-19 and racism actions have exposed the vulnerability of those who already suffer from poverty in our rich country. The Social Justice Network will be watching as renewed efforts are made by the Senate of Canada, Citizens for Public Justice, and others who are examining the feasibility of a universal basic minimum income for Canadians. We will be looking for ways that Islington can participate.

Read on to learn more about how the ministries in Islington's Social Justice Network adapted to the pandemic conditions.

#### Across Canada

**29**

chaplains and campus ministries

**28**

United Church camps

**56**

community ministries

**7**

theological schools and three education centres

**56**

Indigenous pastoral charges

*The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood. John 1:14*

## AFFIRM

### Committee Members

Peggy Sheffield (Chair), Jay Armstrong, Carrie Chenier, Marilyn DaSilva, Isla Grady, Jack Grady, Robert Huff, Deborah Jamison, Kaleea Marquez, Ian Rose, Greg Windsor

Islington United Church strives to be a “more than welcoming congregation.” Over the past three years – since becoming an Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada in June 2018 – we have worked to develop a new understanding of what more than welcoming means.

Affirming congregations are part of a United Church of Canada Network that commits to inclusivity of everyone including those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited persons; marginalized for any reason, including for reasons of race or age; economically disadvantaged; and developmentally or physically challenged.

The Affirm team began a fundraising initiative in late 2018 and continued it into 2019. The campaign was specifically in support of rEcess Islington, a monthly respite program offering free care to special needs children and their siblings. The goal of the campaign was to raise sufficient funds to install a chair-lift in Scout Hall for physically challenged young people to access the program space. Upon acceptance of a new long-term tenant, The German International School Toronto, this campaign was put on hold in mid-2019.



Between the fall of 2019 and early 2020, four new members joined the Affirm Team. We had our first planning meeting at the end of February 2020 to brainstorm ideas for our Third Affirm Anniversary service in June. In early March the COVID-19 pandemic struck and our planning was suspended until a more clear idea of the future emerged.

In June 2020, the Affirm Team submitted to Church Council a Solidarity Statement that denounces systemic racism in Canada and around the world. The statement was approved and adopted by Church Council.

Thanks to the Affirm Team members for their dedication to ensuring that Islington United Church steadily lives out and expands its aim to be a “more than welcoming” community.



## INTERFAITH CIRCLE

### Committee Members

Barbara Sheffield (Co-chair), Carol Wilson (Co-chair), James Aitchison

The Interfaith Circle focusses on education, dialogue, advocacy and reflection. It seeks to demonstrate ways to share our values, address racism, and learn more about each other as we work toward justice and peace in our communities.

In August 2019, Interfaith Circle assisted James Aitchison with an Intercultural Awareness workshop focused on interfaith and diversity. The session included an exploration of race-related discomfort as well as unconscious bias. It was well-attended and stimulated some valuable dialogue.

In October 2019, we planned and organized a Sunday morning worship service that included the blessing of 24 handmade prayer shawls before they were sent to the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh to commemorate lives lost there in the 2018 attack. At two morning worship services the shawls were blessed by Islington's Rev. Maya Landell, Rabbi Michal Shekel, Executive Director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis, and Rabbi Rena Arshinoff, Chaplain at Baycrest and Toronto Western Hospital.

We planned, organized and promoted our third annual interfaith lecture series in January 2020. This year's theme was "Interfaith Pathways to Spiritual Practice" and each of the three evening lectures attracted audiences of more than 100 people.



Prayer and Meditation featured Dr. Timothy Gianotti, Islamic Institute for Spiritual Formation, and Dr. Ranjini George, Mindfulness Meditation, University of Toronto. Our evening on Movement: Body, Mind and Spirit welcomed Helen Wu, a Tai chi practitioner; Marcia Wilkinson, a yoga practitioner; and Tefvik Aydoner, with a demonstration by a group of Jerrahi Sufi Order of Canada whirling dervishes. The final evening featured Hussein Janomohamed, composer, conductor, singer and music educator, who addressed spiritual harmony through music.



The Interfaith Circle authored two Etobicoke Guardian columns: "Etobicoke church group hopes prayer shawls will bring 'some comfort and healing'" by Carol Wilson in October 2019, and "Islington United interfaith lecture series offers path to spiritual practice" by Barbara

Sheffield in January 2020. We also contributed stories on Interfaith Circle activities to Islington United's publication, The Snapshot.

Once COVID-19 arrived in early 2020, our activities were and remain limited. Plans are still underway for 2020/21. Our offerings are necessarily more limited than usual, as we remain uncertain regarding the role COVID-19 may still be playing as we move ahead. Regardless, we will continue to respond to interfaith issues as they occur in community through consultation and conversation.

## MABELLE FOOD PROGRAM

### Committee Members

Carol Laughton (Co-chair), Dave Laughton (Co-chair), Joan Beaver, Donna Leslie, Fred Leslie, Mollyanna Potter, Brian Struthers, Joy Struthers, Bev Walton

In July 2019 we continued to serve our clients in need within the Mabelle neighborhood. We began the year serving approximately 80 client families every distribution day. This volume continued through to the Christmas season, at which time we experienced a dramatic increase in the number of families we served. From the beginning of 2020 through March, we witnessed a sudden and unexplained increase to our regular client base, jumping up to more than 100 families.

In March, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we had to suddenly suspend our services. Both Islington United Church and the Mabelle gymnasium, our distribution locations, had to be shut down by order of the city. While the restrictions on our distribution services continued, we directed some of our resources to Haven on the Queensway (a community support organization that includes a food bank) as a way to continue to reach our Mabelle neighbours.

Our committee extends its sincere appreciation to all our donors, both individuals and groups, who continue to support this church outreach program. We would additionally like to acknowledge the tremendous support of all our faithful and enthusiastic Mabelle Food Program volunteers. We are hopeful we will be able to meet and greet our clients again soon.



## STATISTICS

**409**

members

**21**

weddings

**207**

adherents

**302**

winter worship attendance  
(average)

**83**

children/youth

**134**

summer worship attendance  
(average)

**19**

baptisms

\*Statistical figures are as of December 31, 2019

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

As we continue to serve our surrounding community, we are grateful to work closely with these partners:

- **433rd Scouting Sections**
- **AA Islington**
- **NA - New Found Life**
- **Nar-Anon**
- **Over-Eaters Anonymous**

# OUT OF THE COLD

Bill Drinnan (Chair)

The Out of the Cold team consists of about 73 members, many of whom have been working with me on this effort since it began in 1995.

On Friday, November 22, 2019 – the opening night for The Out Of The Cold Program at All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church in Etobicoke – our team provided a meal for 100 guests consisting of a meat stew (with a vegetarian option), mashed potatoes, salad, cake and ice cream. That same evening, we also provided bagged lunches, each containing a sandwich, fruit and cookies, for 30 overnight guests to take with them the following Saturday morning upon leaving All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church.

We were scheduled to provide the same meal and bagged lunches for the closing night on Friday, April 3, 2020 but the event had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This marked the first time in 24 years that we were unable to participate in this effort. It was a great disappointment.

With COVID still on our doorstep, we do not yet know what the future holds in store for us. We will stay in touch with All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, in the hopes that we will be able to continue our participation in this valuable program into our 25th year.



# RECESS ISLINGTON

## Committee Members

Michelle Allen (Lead), Heather Childs, Stephanie Collins, Isla Grady

rEcess Islington is a free childcare program for children with special needs and their siblings. We provide four hours of childcare one Saturday night per month so that parents can have a night off and children can have an evening of fun and adventure tailored specifically to their needs and interests.

rEcess Islington started in March 2019 with three events in the FY2019 year. In FY2020 we committed to running 10 events between September 2019 and June 2020. rEcess Islington was able to host six events before the church building was forced to close in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the delivery of these six events we were able to provide child care to over 40 children from 27 different families. This was made possible with the generous support of more than 70 volunteers.



We believe rEcess Islington is a manifestation of God’s call for us to spread love and support to those in our community who need it most. It has been an honour to develop relationships with these children and to provide a fun and safe night out for them. It has been an additional privilege to provide their parents with not only a few hours of respite, but also a reminder that their challenges as parents of children with special needs are valid and supported by our faith community.

## This year

**27**  
children with special needs attended rEcess Islington

**21**  
neurotypical children attended rEcess Islington with their special needs sibling

**100+**  
“nights off” were provided to parents

**78**  
people volunteered with rEcess Islington

**55**  
of our volunteers were teenagers

**2**  
articles about rEcess Islington were published



## REFUGEE SUPPORT

### Committee Members

Dennis Bradley (Chair), Dianne Bradley, Gail Brown, Anne Conway, Bob Conway, Bill Drinnan, James Findlay, Val Greenfield, Barbara Holroyd, Lynn Leblanc, Norman McLeod, Betty Nelson-French, Cindy O'Brien, Laurie-Beth Page, Diane Pollinger, Nora Sanders, Karen Scott, Barbara Sheffield, Sue Wessinger, and Nell Slochowski and Jamye Troy of co-sponsor, Hearts 4 Syria

Welcoming our refugee newcomers at the airport and introducing them to the congregation is always a highlight for our committee members. On Sunday, November 3, 2019, in the presence of current and former committee members and the congregation, Islington United Church warmly welcomed and “reintroduced” almost two-thirds of the dozens of families and individuals sponsored by the church over the past 40 years. It was a moving service followed by a gala luncheon in Stewart East Hall. The event, the highlight of our year, was covered by CBC television for broadcast on its newscasts over the subsequent two days.



On February 6, 2020, we welcomed Sulafa and daughter, Dahab, who are self-funded Syrian refugee newcomers – the first of this kind of sponsorship by our church. In another first, at the request of the United Church of Canada’s refugee program, we agreed to partner with a community sponsorship group, Hearts 4 Syria, who needed both financial and direct assistance in the resettlement of Syrian newcomer, Ashraf, who arrived in early 2020. With the onset of COVID-19, all of our ongoing work with this young man, including securing accommodation, gathering and delivering furnishings, and more has tested our creativity and resilience!

In May 2020, and for the twelfth consecutive year, Islington United Church was accepted as an “Official Charity” and allowed participation in the 2020 Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, scheduled for October 17. As our biggest and only annual fundraiser, the “Running and Walking for Refugees” team is preparing to participate in whatever format the marathon takes place.



In June 2020 our committee was advised by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) that Islington United Church has been approved to sponsor Abdikadir, a Somali refugee now in Kenya. Abdikadir’s arrival date remains unknown, as his travel plans will be dependent upon the easing of current pandemic travel restrictions.



## RIGHT RELATIONS CIRCLE

### Committee Members

Carole Bennett and Jackie Blackwell, Co-leads

The sanctuary was a sea of orange shirts, sweaters, scarves and ribbons for Islington's second annual Orange Shirt Sunday on September 29, 2019. The congregation joined together to honour all Indigenous children who were subjected to Canada's residential schools and to recognize that "Every Child Matters."

Following up the very successful 2019 Lenten study on First Nations culture, a group of over 30 people met to plan more opportunities for following the road to reconciliation. We discussed examining why we acknowledge the land when we gather, how to be an ally to Indigenous people, and ways to learn more about Indigenous culture and heritage. A plan to visit and learn more about the Mohawk Institute, a former residential school in Brantford, had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Right Relations Circle looks forward to reactivating its plans at a future time.

### COMMITTEES

## UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

### Committee Members

Isla Grady (Contact), Lynda Sharpe (Treasurer), Bev Walton, Meredith Whipp

This year, prior to the closing of the church building in March 2020 due to COVID-19, the Outreach Jubilee Unit of United Church Women (UCW) enjoyed regular monthly meetings to learn and laugh. Some highlights of our year included our cookie exchange and Christmas gathering. Bev Walton and Meredith Whipp led the unit, and we are grateful for their generous ongoing, joy-filled leadership.

We join with the Hospitality Team to provide receptions in times of joy and in times of sadness. We continued to serve funeral receptions until February 2020. Our Unit lost a dear and treasured member this year – Gloria Myles. It was our honour to serve and provide a reception in February, following a gathering to celebrate Gloria's life.

The year ended with two online worship services related to the work of the Right Relations Circle. On June 21, Canada's National Indigenous People's Day, Rev. Maya Landell probed the relevance of the last



chapter of **The Story** – the Revelation of John – in confronting the times we live in and the need to eliminate suffering in the here and now.

On June 28, Voluntary Associate Minister Amy Crawford challenged us with the question "How Long?" outlining the work of the United Church in reconciliation and the challenges that remain to reach the place to which God calls us.

It is with gratitude that the UCW has had a history of financially supporting the ongoing work of the upkeep of our church building. In this spirit, the Outreach-Jubilee Unit contributed \$20,000 to the Stewart East Hall kitchen renovation fund.

We give thanks to the Islington United Church leadership, administration, and facility teams for their ongoing support of our work.

### Our Mission

*Our mission is to love God; to foster Christian faithfulness, spirituality, commitment, and devotion; to promote love and respect by living generously and giving joyfully to all God's people; and to affirm and strengthen ourselves creatively.*

## WORSHIP AND MUSIC

### Committee Members

Elsa van Vliet (Chair), Andrew Aitchison, David Allen, Jackie Blackwell, Isla Grady, Jack Grady, May Hutzell, Rev. Maya Landell, Peter Lindsay, Jason Locke, Catherine Manning, Ian McPherson, John Page, Barbara Spearin, Preston Tran

The Worship and Music (W&M) Committee meets five times per year to help plan, evaluate and support worship and music for Sundays and special worship services. The group includes leadership for the Readers' Guild, Communion Committee, Greeters and Ushers, Arts and Environment Team (liturgical decor), Hospitality, Pastoral Care, Senior Choir, music programs and worship by the Lead Minister and Minister of Music.

Summer worship 2019 was very well received with positive comments on "mixing of people" with one service at 10:30 am, the enthusiastic pick-up choir, and the casual, welcoming and uplifting worship services. Jason Locke introduced a successful Band Camp for children and youth, and also led the Resonance Project, offering social Sunday evening gatherings on alternate months to its excellent Sunday night worship services.

In fall 2019 **The Story**, the Bible as a narrative, was introduced and then used for worship through the year, moving to a new chapter each week skillfully led by Rev. Maya Landell. Bulletin covers beautifully matched the chapters. Three Bible study groups offered opportunities for further discussion.

Also in the fall, three special musical events were offered: the lively Fall into Rhythm concert in October; the amazing Sounds of Peace concert in November; and the always popular and excellent Christmas at Islington concert in December. Further, special worship services included celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Islington United's Refugee Support Program, Islington United Church Anniversary Sunday, and the beautiful Colours of Christmas (Advent and Christmas) worship services. Four Christmas Eve services were offered with over 1,000 people attending.



In November the name badges were updated with our current logo. Also in November a small subgroup of W&M developed "Being Prepared: A Guide for Medical Emergency Procedures" to guide decisions and actions during worship as needed.

With the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, our worship leadership team quickly and nimbly arranged for weekly worship services to be offered online. This included creating special services during Holy Week, with Emma Whitla adding elements of dance to Easter Sunday. This pivot to online services was made possible by our gifted ministerial, sound and video (Thom Varey and Robert Picard), and Arts and Environment teams and staff singers. A highlight was the "This Day" virtual choir piece released in June 2020.

In June 2020, the W&M Committee agreed we would continue online worship over the summer and into the fall. The group wholeheartedly endorsed the use of the book **We Make the Road by Walking** as a study guide for worship in the upcoming season.

We are very grateful to all who have supported and acted to create faithful and meaningful worship and music throughout this past year.

*"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105*

## Arts and Environment

### Committee Members

Jackie Blackwell (Chair), Joan Beaver, Kim Blackwell, Lynne Bullock, Sally Cancilla, Isla Grady, Jack Grady, Rev. Maya Landell, Jason Locke

The Arts and Environment Committee (A&E) has had a great year, even though the last four months presented some interesting challenges!

Our goal as a committee is to embellish the themes presented each week in worship with meaningful visuals. This year we focused on the book, **The Story**, which gave us many

opportunities for creativity as we travelled through the Bible stories. Christmas is always a highlight of the church year and we were blessed to have a very large implementation team throughout the season of Advent.

We are prayerful that in the months to come we can slowly begin to resume our normal activities.



*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10*

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Committee Members

Maya Landell (Chair), Don Hunter (Vice-Chair), Ian McPherson (Treasurer), Joan Hunter, Fred Leslie, Laurie-Beth Page, Jill Stewart, Paul Summers, Ted Wilson

The trustees hold and administer all property of the congregation for the use and benefit of the congregation as part of The United Church of Canada.

This past year was one of the most active for the Board of Trustees with the launch of the Stewart East Hall Kitchen renovation and the building preparations for the arrival of the German International School Toronto (GIST). There was a considerable call on the financial resources within the investment portfolio to execute on these projects.

The Kitchen Project begun in March 2020 is estimated to cost approximately \$450,000 upon completion in late summer 2020. A special purpose fund raised from individual donations provided \$230,000, the Memorial Fund contributed \$90,000, the LivingWater campaign contributed \$45,000, the UCW contributed \$20,000 and the Operating Fund contributed the remaining \$65,000. It is the intention of Church Council to have a fundraising campaign to replace the contribution from the Operating Fund. The COVID-19 situation precluded such a campaign during fiscal 2020.

A condition of the GIST lease was for Islington to make some physical changes and upgrades to parts of the building. The major project was the replacement of all the windows in the Stewart East Hall wing, a project Islington was already contemplating based on a professional assessment received in July 2019. The lower level windows needed to be changed to meet building code requirements to be able to open. The total cost to the Memorial Fund was estimated to cost \$267,000, although most of the expense will be incurred in the summer 2020, after the financial year-end.

During the Kitchen Project, our contractor identified the urgent need to replace three major pieces of equipment – an HVAC unit for the kitchen, the air conditioner on the Stewart East Hall roof, and the water heater. In late June, the Trustees agreed to finance their replacement for a combined \$53,700. Some of this amount was paid in fiscal 2020 and some in July after year-end.

The arrival of GIST also resulted in commitments by the Trustees to spend approximately \$84,000 from the Memorial Fund for modifications to the building. This included painting, cabinetry work, security doors and systems, and so on. These expenses will be incurred during the summer of 2020 and in the next fiscal period.

Church Council committed to allocate 50% of the annual GIST rental revenue to the Memorial Fund so that much needed capital repairs and upgrades could be made.\* This will replenish the Memorial Fund that has incurred considerable expenses related to the GIST move-in and other previously deferred capital projects that benefit the congregation. Improved safety and accessibility will be among the benefits.

Trustees would like to acknowledge and thank Paul Summers and Jill Stewart for their leadership and talents in negotiating the rental agreement with GIST on behalf of Church Council and the congregation.

The Memorial Fund also provided funding for some computer equipment and security cameras. The security cameras qualified for a federal tax incentive of \$8,900 and this amount was received during the year.

\*Note: This decision has been paused for one year only in fiscal year 2021. This is to utilize 100% of the GIST income for urgent building repairs and upgrades that have since emerged.

*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge God, and God shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5-6*

The trustees continue to support our two ministry students, James Aitchison and Alana Martin, from the Student Ministers' Fund. James is studying at Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto and Alana is attending the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg.

With the transition of The GO Project to Shining Waters Regional Council on June 1, 2020, the Trustees agreed to some terms regarding the outstanding debt that GO had with the trust funds. The Memorial Fund agreed to write off \$5,000 of the amount owed by The GO Project and a repayment schedule for the remaining \$15,000 over seven years. This was part of a comprehensive financial arrangement between The GO Project and Islington.

The 2020 activity was financed by healthy opening balances in the Memorial Fund and the Kitchen Project special purpose fund. The Memorial Fund received a generous donation from an anonymous donor. The Student Ministers' Fund and the Senior Choir received a bequest from the estate of Gordon Ralph Elliott. The Operating Fund received a bequest from the estate of Elizabeth Saunders in memory of Roy and Betty Saunders. We are grateful for all these gifts.

The investment portfolio generated a return of 0.87% for the fiscal year ending June 30, compared to 0.13% the previous year. The investment portfolio had a considerable component of bonds and fixed income securities, such that it was less impacted by the market volatility experienced between March 2020 and June 2020.

The full financial activity of the Board of Trustees is summarized in the church's financial statements.



The Board of Trustees at Islington United Church is accepting the resignation of Fred Leslie with regret and deep gratitude. Fred has been part of this church family for over 30 years and has served faithfully in many capacities, with a particular passion for

feeding the community through the Mabelle Food Program.

Fred came to Islington because his children were attending Sunday night programs. He began singing in the choir. His children were married at Islington United, and it continues to be the Leslies' church home.

He and his wife Donna are an amazing team, and she has been a constant source of wisdom at his side. Reflecting on the beginning of his ministry 29 years ago, Rev. Mark Aitchison comments: "Fred was a very efficient and effective secretary of the trustees. He is committed to his work, faithful to God and his church, and very generous with his time, talent and treasure. He is the epitome of what it means to be a 'trustee.'"

We honour the many ways that Fred has been a champion for ministry at Islington United: engaging in spiritual growth, marking the seasons of the church year, and sharing a heart of care for those in need. His sense of humour and interest in the world and neighbourhood has been an asset at many a church event and meeting. It is our privilege to name Fred Leslie as an Honorary Trustee as a sign of gratitude and deep respect for his leadership through faith and service.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

On behalf of the Church Council, I would like to thank the members, adherents and friends of Islington United Church for their generous financial support during the 2020 fiscal year. Looking through the Annual Report, you will see that the many projects and accomplishments listed could not be made possible without your substantial contributions.

This has been an interesting year for businesses and other organizations with all the additional financial and other information that needed to be gathered for government subsidies, and new acronyms to be learned, such as CERB, CEWS, TWS and BCAP.

Adams & Miles LLP have reviewed our financial statements and have verified that the operating fund finished the fiscal year with an excess revenue over expenditures of \$155,862. We had a planned deficit for fiscal year end 2020, and it is exciting to report that our cumulative deficit has been eliminated and become a surplus of \$90,307.

We give thanks to the members who contribute faithfully through PAR and envelopes. These revenues account for 72% of the total revenue to the operating fund. Our expenditures were under budget by 16%, and we will be looking ahead at ways to increase revenues and decrease expenses, which is needed for sustainability.

The special purpose funds for our Church have continued to maintain a positive balance and the cumulative total of these funds is \$909,568.

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their hard work in maintaining our financial records:

- Pat Knychka, our bookkeeper, Leslee Armstrong, Carole Bennett, Bill Patrick and Bruce Ure.
- Debra Perkins who has worked diligently in keeping our church databases up to date.
- The many committee treasurers who help to keep our books in order.

Serving as the Treasurer has given me new insight on the background work surrounding the many ministries we support, and I am thankful to have had this opportunity to serve.

I am looking forward to handing over the reins to John Leavitt, who is no stranger to you and who has proven to be an outstanding member and volunteer of Islington United Church. We also welcome our new bookkeeper, Neil Evans, CPA, CMA of Nevcon Accounting Services. I know that with the addition of these two capable individuals to the Finance Team Islington United Church will be in good hands going forward.

I would like to thank all the members for their tireless efforts and support over the last three years, as together we have served our communities, both locally and globally.

**HELEN J. DELANEY**  
TREASURER

*"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7*

# OPERATING FUND SNAPSHOT

**FY 2020 Budget - \$939,210**

**FY 2020 Budget - \$983,688**

<b>Donations:</b>	<b>\$</b>
Individual	790,146
Fundraising Events	52,837
Mission and Service	15,446
Rental Income	45,465
Denominational Fees	6,672
Worship and Music	20,255
Faith Formation	16,717
Pastoral Care	3,503
Hospitality	15,577
Other Income	12,669
Solar Panel Income	2,785
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$982,072</b>

<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>\$</b>
Salaries and Benefits	492,674
Facilities Expenses	112,674
Office and General	66,145
Denominational Fees	32,437
Outreach Expense	3,578
Hospitality	15,529
Worship and Music	46,924
Faith Formation	13,861
Pastoral Care	1,875
Mission and Service	30,000
Communications	4,202
Other Expenses	6,311
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$826,210</b>

Revenue under budget	42,862
Expenses under budget	157,478
<b>Net Excess 2020</b>	<b>\$155,862</b>
Deficit at the beginning of the year	- 63,161
Approved Board Allocation	- 2,394
Excess 2020	155,862
<b>Cumulative Surplus</b>	<b>\$90,307</b>

## IN MEMORIAM

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



Ruth Allen  
Shirley Avery  
Millard Beane  
George Breckenridge  
Geoffrey Brooks  
Mark Everett Doran Coad  
Margaret Guthrie  
Robert Hanson  
Margaret Kerr  
Joyce McIntyre  
Gloria Myles  
Elizabeth (Betty) Saunders  
Ruth Stowe

On the day I die,  
when I am being carried toward the grave,  
don't weep. Don't say, He's gone. He's gone.

Death has nothing to do with going away.  
The sun sets and the moon sets,  
but they're not gone.

Death is a coming together.  
The tomb looks like a prison,  
but it's really release into union.

The human seed goes down into the ground  
like a bucket into the well where Joseph is.

It grows and comes up  
full of some unimagined beauty.

Your mouth closes here  
and immediately opens  
with a shout of joy there.

*Rumi - 13th century*



# Islington United Church

Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors

## **ISLINGTON UNITED CHURCH**

25 Burnhamthorpe Road  
Toronto, Ontario, M9A 1G9



[islingtonunited.org](http://islingtonunited.org)



@islingtonunited



[islingtonunitedorg](https://www.youtube.com/islingtonunitedorg)