Joyful Noise

WELCOME CHRISTMAS ... WELCOME HOME

Written By: Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz

Dear Friends,

I think I just attended my first Christmas party of the season. I try to hold to poppies before poinsettias (all in time, yes?), yet some things just come upon us anyway, at exactly the right time.

Technically, it was a book club gathering: the latest of the Book & Bake series so beautifully designed and led by Jen, coordinated by Victoria, attended by grateful folks like me. We read a book in advance (or we finish it after), we talk about it for a while, and then we do some themed baking to remind us of a salient thread. This time, most of the delicious results were set aside for sale at Treats & Treasures. Minus some essential quality control tasting, it was the perfect ending to a perfect gathering.



How was that a Christmas party?

It had all the essential inaredients. pun entirelu intended. There was a mix of people, some meeting for the first time but all friends by the time it was over. There was good food, good conversation, lots of laughter, and more quiet moments with a collective attempt to answer questions. Most of all, there deep joy in another's continued...



IN THIS ISSUE
Welcome Christmas1
Family Christmas2
40 Years of Christmas3
Advent Schedule4
Calendar Highlights5
German Christmas Traditions6
Office News7
Save the Date!8
A Christmas Memory9
Nonprofit Networking10
Affirming Ministries11
Family Zone12
Children's Advent Calendar13
Advent Wordsearch14
Advent Events15
Church Life16
Joy and Celebration18
Surviving Christmas19
Children's Advent Events20
Adult Study21
Answering Questions22
At Gramma's and Grampy's23
Christmas Cookie Baking24
Register25
Announcing: New Website26



WELCOME CHRISTMAS ... CONTINUED

company. It was the gift that carried us home and into the next day of facing this complicated world. It all happened to be built on a book about Christmas, and relationships, and a beautiful ideal that we pray to know someday, for real. In retrospect, we were missing a background playlist, with those favourite seasonal songs and hymns. If you weren't there, then we missed you, too.

Maybe what I'm really describing is a worship service, just like those we are preparing for Advent and Christmas and beyond. Add in music and the essential ingredients have so much in common: good, ever-growing company; intentional connection and welcome laughter; quiet moments where we seek wisdom and sit with big emotions, big wonderings. Through it all, there is joy in our diversity, and hope for tomorrow.

When it comes to worship, the centre of it all, of course, is God. This Advent, again, we centre our hearts and our lives on God who comes among us, in every gathering, reminding us that we can begin again; wrapping us in the pure gift of Love, eternal and unconditional, shining bright in the story of a family at their tender beginning in Bethlehem.

What a gift it will be to worship with you this coming season. Let's not miss the chance to be together, to welcome Christmas together. Let's not miss this moment, to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

With love to you all

Heather 🕆

FAMILY CHRISTMAS The Macdonald Family

Christmas is a time for us to get together with our family, near and far, in person or through the magic of technology. We enjoy reading 'Twas The Night Before Christmas, and watching the anticipation of the youngsters. It's a time to enjoy traditional Christmas fare – turkey with all the trimmings and yummy desserts. It's a time to celebrate the birth of Christ, enjoy the Christmas music, the Christmas message and Christmas Eve worship.





40 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS TRADITION The Black and Hammill Families

On a Friday evening in mid-December in the '70s the Hammill family joined the Blacks for a pre-Christmas dinner (with nine children 12 and under). After dinner several other families arrived, each bringing some Christmas baking or other treats to be shared as dessert later in the evening.

Some welcoming punch was enjoyed and soon, accompanied by Gertrude on the piano and Jim strumming his guitar, everyone joined in singing familiar carols. Once the carol sheets - and the carolers - were exhausted it was time to visit the heavily laden dessert table. Coffee, tea and good fellowship completed the evening.



And so a tradition was born! For more than four decades the two families took turns hosting this carol sing, enriching the Christmas season for many - until Covid threatened to become an unwelcome guest. Joyful noise, indeed!

Each movement forward in faith brings us closer to where we truly belong.

— KAYLA (RAIG @sanctifiedart

BREATH PRAYER

Inhale: Each twist and turn

Exhale: Invites me to follow you



Adapted from A Sanctified Art @sanctifiedart ~ sanctifiedart.org

CHRIST FIRST







SUN DEC 1 Advent I, 9:02am and 10:30am Services*

SAT DEC 7 Children's Advent Day 10am - 1pm

SUN DEC 8 Advent II, 10am Service, lunch after

SUN DEC 8 Candlelight Service, 7pm, Port Credit

SAT DEC 14 Magic Show, 3pm

SUN DEC 15 Advent III,9:02am and 10:30am Services

SAT DEC 21 The Longest Night Service, 7pm

SUN DEC 22 Advent IV, 9:02am and 10:30am Services

TUES DEC 24 Christmas Eve, 7:02pm and 9pm Services*



*Communion at both services on December 1 and at 9pm on Christmas Eve

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2024

Sun Nov 24 - Blended Service, Anniversary Sunday, Stewardship Lunch Wed Nov 27 - NOWW Meeting Merigold room

DECEMBER 2024

Tues December 3 - Advent Study: Longing, 3 sessions begin
Office Closed - December 25 2024, opens again January 2, 2025
Sun Dec 29 - 10am Combined Service
Tues Dec 31 - Noon Years Eve party 11am-1pm

JANUARY 2025

Sun Jan 5 - 9:02am and 10:30am Services - Epiphany Sunday
Sun Jan 12 - 10am Combined Service, Baptism of Jesus - Communion
Wed Jan 15 - Seekers meeting in Merigold Room

FEBRUARY 2025

Saturday Feb 15 - Euchre Event Wed February 19 - Seekers Meeting in the Merigold Room



GERMAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS The Stangenberg Family

On Christmas Eve, my father decorated the Christmas tree but we were only allowed to see it once we got home from the 5 p.m. evening church service. It was an exciting moment when he opened the door to the living room and we stood in awe of the beautiful, lit Christmas tree. It was decorated with tinsel, gold and red bulbs and beeswax candles. The

smell of the burning candles was wonderful.

Sitting around the tree, we sang the traditional Christmas carols and then we were allowed to open our gifts. We now could enjoy the "bunte Teller" (colourful plates) with all the wonderful treats: one apple, one orange, figs, dates, cookies, marzipan and chocolates.

On Christmas Day we enjoyed a perfectly cooked goose with red cabbage, mashed potatoes and apple and cranberry sauce. We fondly remember these wonderful Christmases and tried to copy them here in Canada. The only exception we made was to put up the Christmas tree early in the season. 🕆



BREATH PRAYER

Inhale: Each twist and turn

Exhale: Invites me to follow you

BLESSING

Beloved, you are not alone on this winding journey. May the companionship of fellow sojourners reflect the love of the One who - in becoming flesh - chose to journey alongside us. May the quilt of life warm you from the chill of isolation, and may the Spirit move you to compassion as you cultivate community, even in times of uncertainty.

Life often unfolds in ways that surprise us, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Have you felt God's presence when your life took an unexpected turn?

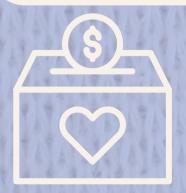
@sanctifiedart



OFFICE NEWS

The Christ First office will be closed for Christmas starting December 25, 2024 and reopen on January 2, 2025

Happy New Year!



The final day for donations to be added to your 2024 tax receipt is:

Monday December 23





SAVE THE DATE! DECEMBER 8 - CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Written by: Andy Choles

The much-valued tradition continues. The annual Candlelight Service will be held this year on Sunday, December 8 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Christ First Port Credit Campus 151 Lakeshore Road. "Christmas Reflections" will combine music with scripture and reflections by the main characters who were witnesses to the birth of Christ. The choir will be joined by the Bell Canto to provide musical reflections with plenty of opportunity for congregational singing of Christmas Carols, including Silent Night by candlelight to end the presentation. Of course, no Christmas celebration is complete without festive refreshments provided by Welcoming & Fellowship. All are welcome. A donation bin will be provided to collect non-perishable food items for the Compass.





A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Leslie shared a cherished memory:

"One of my favorite Christmas memories is teaching Sean, then 4 years old, a verse from the Advent hymn "In the Bleak Midwinter". His Sunday school class was going to sing the verse "what can I bring Him..." Of course, all the prep was in vain - he just stood with his class and grinned.

It's been over 40 years, but I remember it as if it was last year."





PRAYER

Dear God, you made each of us special. Thank you for the gifts and talents you've given us. Help us to use those gifts to make this world a better place and do the good that is our to do. Amen.

REFLECTION

What is something you've done to help other people recently?

Adapted from A Sanctified Art - Children's Bulletin for the 3rd Sunday of Advent.

@sanctifiedart ~ sanctifiedart.org



South Mississauga

NONPROFIT NETWORKING (



Written by: Victoria Keane

After a quiet summer, our Nonprofit Network got back into the swing of things this past October with our first gathering of the season! We were joined by nearly 30 attendees from a dozen organizations as we shared a delicious breakfast, accompanied by an inspiring workshop from Carolyn Smith. Carolyn may be familiar to some, as she currently works at St. Paul's United in Oakville, and was recently ordained in the United Church of Canada. She also provides coaching to a range of audiences, from couples to professional leaders. Using M&M's, Carolyn inspired us to have Mindful Moments - addressing the struggle patterns that leaders and changemakers fall into, and how to trust ourselves more to overcome them with integrity and confidence.





South Mississauga Nonprofit Networking was established as a result of grant funding that Christ First received from The United Church of Canada Foundation. We have recently submitted our two-year report, and eagerly await to receive news of the status of our third and final year of grant funding.

Joyful Noise Advent 2024

AFFIRMING MINISTRIES

Christina Georgina Rossetti was a 19thcentury English poet whose work ranged from Christmas carols to lesbian love poetry. A devout Christian who never married (though she called off two engagements with two different men on religious grounds and rejected a third man's proposal for unclear reasons), it is widely believed that Christina Rossetti had lesbian inclinations. She is considered by many to be one of Britain's greatest Victorian poets. Born in London into an artistic family, she was encouraged when she began writing poems at 12 years old. She began experiencing bouts of illness when she was 14, and spent the rest of her life managing prolonged illness. In 1872, she wrote the words to "In the Bleak Midwinter" which was published posthumously after Gustav Holst set it to music in 1906. Her poem "Love Came Down at Christmas" also became a well known carol. She passed just days after Christmas, on Dec. 29, 1894 at the age of 64.

"In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago."



The Affirming Study Group of Christ First is proud to have hosted a Bible Study this past November based on Donald Schmidt's resource.

"The Bible and Homosexuality for Progressive Christians." Stay tuned for more study opportunities in the new year.

........................



We kicked off the Christmas season with our latest Book and Bake! All those who registered were invited to

read Rachel Spangler's "Christmas Mouse" a sweet romance of two women falling in love over their love of Christmas. We then joined together to bake a tasty treat inspired by the novel!



"Peace on earth and goodwill to all" — and all means all! For questions regarding the Affirming Process, please reach out to affirming@christfirst.ca



FAMILY







I am always amazed and impressed with the energy and enthusiasm that is present on a Sunday morning as our youngest members run down the aisle to join me for Children's Time. No amount of planning can ever prepare me for the wondrous statements that are shared during this time, and the fun and curiosity always carry over into our Sunday School classroom. This past fall, we've tackled big questions like, "what is Communion all about?" "how can I be a peacekeeper" and "do you prefer dogs or cats??" It's the little things that turn into the big things!

This school year, we began offering a new program called PA Play Days - while the public school board is on a PA Day, we are hosting a full day of programming that focuses on friendship building and feeling at home within the church walls. This has been a great way for the kids to spend the day, and a help to parents who don't get those days off work. We plan on continuing this program into the new year.

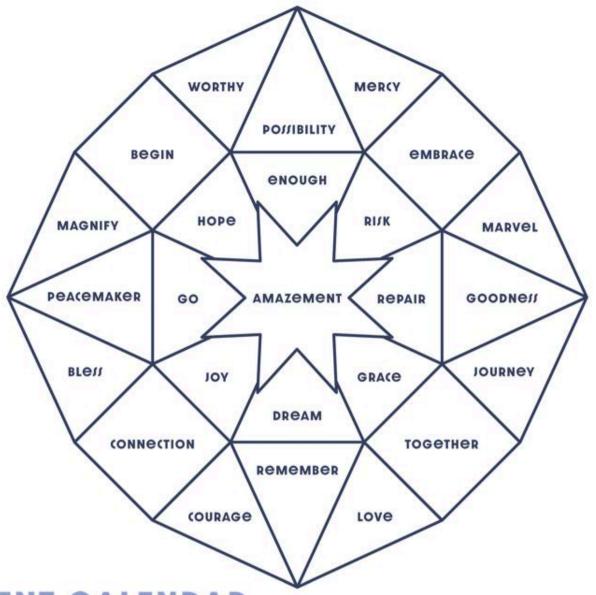
Looking into December, we have a few extra special events coming up for kids and families, so please make sure to check the Advent Calendar. My favourite is always our Children's Advent Day - on the first Saturday of Advent, we will learn and share and re-tell the Christmas story through books, songs, crafts, and food!

Finally, we will bring the year to a close with our annual Noon Years Eve party! On Tuesday, December 31, all are welcome to join us from 11am-1pm where we will ring in the New Year at noon! A great way to celebrate without having to wait up until midnight. This event is open to all.









ADVENT CALENDAR

Find the daily word in the quilt design. When you find it, color in that shape. With an adult, talk about what the word means and try to use it throughout your day!

DOC.1/1	BEGIN	DOC.1414	GOODNESS
Dec.2ND	Brett	Dec.15**	WORTHY
Dec.300	COURAGE	Dec.1618	REPAIR
Dec.4TH	POSSIBILITY	Dec.17**	MAGNIFY
Dec.518	пемемвер	Dec.18**	MERCY
DGC.678	MARVEL	Dec.19**	DREAM
Dec.7TH	GO	Dec.2011	норе
DOC.8111	тобетнев	Dec.21/7	RIJK
Dec.918	емврасе	DGC.22HD	GRACE
Dec.10**	JOURNEY	DGC.2380	JOY
DOC.1118	реасемакея	DOC.241H	Love
Dec.12**	CONNECTION	Dec.25**	AMAZEMENT
Dec.13 TH	емоивн		





ADVENT WORDSEARCH

M	R	1	S	Ζ	Ζ	J	G	В	S	L	L		Н	Ν
L	Е	Е	F	1	Е	L	D	W	U	Κ	Υ	J	Т	
G	Н	Р	Ν	F	U	J	F	0	1	C	Е		Υ	F
N	Т	Е	D	L		U	В	R	U	Χ	M	S	Κ	Н
	Α	Е	Q	D	Ν	D	Ν	Н	G	Е	W	S	V	Χ
Τ	G	K	F	D	Κ	R	S	Т	Ν	F	D	Е	Ν	В
S	Υ	Ο	J	F	U	W	В	R	M	Ν	J	R	Е	D
Α	Ζ	Q	Р	C	Χ	Ζ	Ο	Н	Α	Р	W	Р	V	٧
L	D	G	Κ	Т	Κ	В	G	Н	Е	Υ	Р	Υ	Α	N
R	Н	G	Т	Α	C	U	C	Е	G	Α	Е	C	Е	Е
Е	W	Z	Е	L	Α	0	Χ	J	Р	W	Α	Ο	Н	C
V	Е	R	Α	L	M	Е	Q	Т	В	Α	С	U	J	Ν
Е	В	Р	R	Е	C	Α	R	В	M	Е	Е	С	G	Α
Р	G	Ν	1	Н	Т	Υ	R	Е	V	Е	S	R	В	D
Μ	Χ	D	U	Χ	Ζ	F	W	L	Α	Е	Н	D	Q	J

AWAY
BORN
BROAK
BUILD
CLAP
COMO

CYPROSS
DANCO
OMBRACO
OVORLASTING
OVORYTHING
FIOLD

GATHOR
HANDS
HOAL
HOAVON
HILLS
JOY

KOOP LAUGH POACO THROW TIMO

Taken from A Sanctified Art - Children's Bulletin for the 1st Sunday After Christmas

This word search was generated using dictionary.com

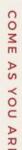


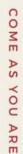
YOU ARE INVITED TO:

Christ First Advent Lunch

SUNDAY DECEMBER 8

After the Blended Service Auditorium ~ 1700 Mazo Crescent Pizza, Snacks, Cookies and Fruit







CANDLELIGHT

151 Lakeshore Rd. West Port Credit -Christ First

> December 8 7pm





Fruitcake, shortcake and festive drinks will be served after the service

Joyful Noise



Advent 2024

CHURCH LIFE





















CHURCH LIFE























JOY AND CELEBRATION



You are a blessing.

If you hear nothing else,

if the wind howls,

if your brain runs amok,

if rebuttals and denials line up like little toy soldiers,

then hear this—

you are a blessing.

I knew it the first moment I met you heard your name learned there are 7 billion of us on this planet.

I knew it in my bones, the way my feet know the way home. You are a blessing.

For our creating God
breathed life into your being.
And there is simply no way that,
along with that life,
some of God's goodness
didn't slip right in.

So tell the rebuttals to rest.

Tell the toy soldiers to find another hill,
because this one is reserved for joy and celebration.

You are a blessing.

Breathe it in.



POEMS
FOR ADVENT-EPIPHANY

Written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed



BREATH PRAYER

Inhale: Time after

time,

Exhale: You call me

by name.

BLESSING

God knows you completely and loves you fully. As you draw near to Jesus, rest assured that you are not a mere face in the crowd but a beloved child of God, known and called by name. In light of this glorious truth, may you be a bearer of peace and harbinger of love today and forevermore.

Adapted from A Sanctified Art

@sanctifiedart ~ sanctifiedart.org

IS SURVIVING CHRISTMAS MY NEW CHRISTMAS TRADITION? The Simpson Family

With three young boys, twins age six and the eldest age eight, I spend a lot of my energy surviving, just getting through the days. The Christmas season, as wonderful as it can be, adds a lot to my plate. Whether it be running from one event to another, family dinners, get togethers, Christmas shopping, holiday concerts, decorating the Christmas tree, stringing the outside lights, baking and decoration Christmas cookies, it's a lot! I sometimes need to remember to enjoy the moments, embrace the chaos, that these are the good times. I plan, plan, plan and then let go, turn up the music and lean into the joy. So yes, we are surviving. Joyfully, loudly, chaotically surviving and creating tons of fun along the way.





CHILDREN'S ADVENT EVENTS

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

CHILDREN'S ADVENT DAY

SAT. DECEMBER 7 10AM-1PM 1700 MAZO CRES.

Learn the Christmas story through crafts, games, music, and more! Children 3 and under require an adult to stay with them.

FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER: VICTORIAKEANE@CHRISTFIRST.CA



JOIN US FOR A
MAGICAL AFTERNOON!

- · Sat. Dec. 14TH
- 3-4PM
- 1700 Mazo CRes.

This event is free and fun for the whole family!

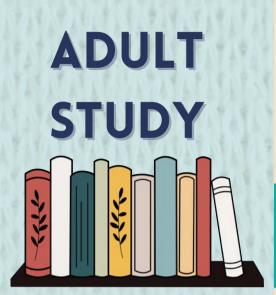
Nonperishable food donations will be collected for

The Compass Foodbank. Registration required,

please email: victoriakeane@christfirst.ca









What are you longing for?
Join us for a three week Advent
Small Group Study about how we
can use Longing as a spiritual gift
and bring Hope, Peace, Joy, and
Love to the world in practical ways.



In-person: Tuesday at 2pm Zoom: Tuesday at 7pm Beginning Tuesday, December 3rd

Register through Sunergo Connect

Questions? Contact the Office

Good Grief: A Christian Tourney of Hope SMALL GROUP STUDY

The presence of grief is more palpable than usual in so many lives, in our congregation, and far beyond.

Join us in person for a 6-week journey based on Francis Weller's "The Wild Edge of Sorrow" and the video series "Grace in Grief: Hope After Loss"

Tuesday's at 2pm 1700 Mazo Cres. Beginning Tuesday, March 11th

Register through Sunergo Connect

Questions? Contact the Office





ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP

WHY DON'T WE HAVE BULLETINS ANYMORE?

Written by: Rev. Heather Weaver Orosz

I will begin my answer with a story... about growing up in Central United Church, Port Colborne, in the 1970s and 80s, and some of the standard parts of our Sunday morning experience. There would be teams of two standing as greeters, at both the Delhi and Catharine Street doors. There would be choir rehearsal downstairs until just before 10, at which point they would assemble in the narthex. There would be great silence, facing forward, to listen to the sung introit; and there would be printed bulletins – an outline of the service - in every worshipper's hand.

Worship there is very different now. Time and circumstances brought many changes. I expect a similar narrative could be named here. I arrived in 2022, at the slow end of the pandemic, so I only know things from this side of that threshold, but I hear now and again that question about change, specifically about bulletins.

I understand the sentiment. I remember the ways we could participate in prayers, and read community announcements. The biggest difference between then and now is summed up in economy and technology. For example, we have adopted and adapted to beautiful ways that allow for much better, more efficient sharing, to offer news, participate in the service, and so much more. The screen (on which we rely for live-streaming to reach many more, in the moment at home and long after, at long distances) holds every element of worship. The visual accessibility is enormously improved and, to help with hearing access especially, we have some full text copies available in hard copy. The service outline is also sent out in email and posted, for all to access, anytime; and yes, there are limited copies of each outline, but they are primarily for service leaders and participants, to know when they're up. Preparing anything more is an enormous commitment of time and resources, and doubles up on everything else we are doing already.

Through it all – the time, the changes, the ever-widening scope of our care – we are blessed when we worship together. We are keeping our eyes on Jesus and his example; doing our best to hold the doors open wide, building a house and a faith family, that stretches and grows with every new opportunity.

See you Sunday morning!



CHRISTMAS AT GRAMMA'S AND GRAMPY'S HOUSE



The Watters Family

For the past several years, it has become our tradition that Christmas is at Gramma's and Grampy's house, at least for our Ontario families and sometimes our New Brunswick family. We look forward to a full house for at least two or three days and many helping hands! Last Christmas Eve I looked around and saw some pretty tired people so I suggested that we attend the Christmas Eve service virtually in our family room. We dressed in our pj's, assembled our candles and water and crackers, and sat ourselves down in front of the big screen TV. It was a meaningful experience for us, especially the candlelight and Silent Night. Is this a new tradition? I'm not sure, but if it is, this time we will have milk and cookies!



PRAY

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image to the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How to you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent of spoken prayer to God.

Adapted from A Sanctified Art @sanctifiedart ~ sanctifiedart.org



HARVEST

Maybe none of it matters.

Maybe you can't make a difference

Or maybe that watermelon see you spit out over the summer will grow into a green orb, full of sticky sweet fruit. Maybe the rain will nourish it. Maybe your mother's hands will pull it from the vine, slice it into wedges, and place it on the dining room table. Maybe the neighbors will come over and chomp into that soft pink fruit, juicy water running down their chins. Maybe you will laugh at the shared experience, at this garden-grown communion, and maybe the stars will shine brighter that night.

People say the problems of the world are too big to make a difference,

but surely those people have forgotten the fruit that grows from one little seed.



Poem by: Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed @sanctifiedart ~ sanctifiedart.org

Adapted from A Sanctified Art



The Cowie Family

When my daughters were teenagers, I decided to enlist their help with Christmas cookie baking. We would bake at least seven different varieties in one day. Everyone got to pick a favourite kind. We formed quite an assembly line – mixing, shaping, baking and decorating. Once they moved out, it was a good excuse to spend a day together and they got to fill cookie tins to take with them. Our tradition continues with my seven year old granddaughter Alexis. Decorating is her favourite part!



CHRIST FIRST REGISTER

September 6, through November 8, 2024

With death comes grief and heartache for our church family. May we hold each other in prayer through this process: remembering and honouring each life, precious to God, and to us; forever in God's keeping.

To celebrate weddings is another sacred part of our congregational story. Thanks be to God, for the gift of love, in all the ways we are surrounded and blessed. Thanks be to God, for the great gift of Christian community.



Deaths

October 28 - Connie Young

Marriages

October 26 - Eric Saffrey and Virginia Bradburne



ANNOUNCING: THE NEW CHRIST FIRST WEBSITE

Written By: Ashley Fanourgiakis

A small team has been working diligently to create a welcoming online experience for not only current members, but also the broader community and anybody looking for a new church. Along with a new database and membership portal, we have worked with Sunergo to create a new website to showcase the people of Christ First, our events, and ethos in a modern way. On our new website you will find a calendar of events, a Sunergo Connect link for easy login access, links to important information about us as a congregation, and

access to a payment portal for event payments

and donations.

The website can be found at www.christfirst.ca

Check out the new website today!



Click on the link, or scan this QR code for direct access to the new Christ First website.



905-822-9834



office@christfirst.ca



www.christfirst.ca





Mailing Address and Services: 1700 Mazo Crescent Mississauga ON L5J 1Y8



Port Credit Location: 151 Lakeshore Rd W Mississauga ON L5H 1G3