February 18, 2023 Issue 1



## **Joyful Noise**

## **Getting There ...**

Written By: The Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz

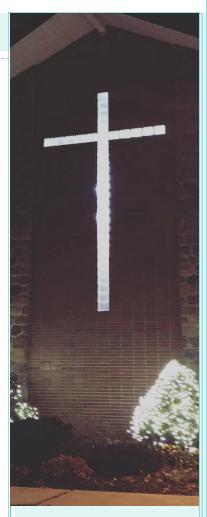
Dear Friends,

About a week ago, I had this mild moment of almost -rebellion in a grocery store. Sounding a bit melodramatic? It was. In fact, it was something as innocuous as a candy box that had me thinking about some black marker correction.

Imagine, if you will, all the endless displays of Easter chocolate that have made their way, already, to end-cap displays. To each their own for when and how they indulge. You all know I love chocolate, too. But, there was one little box that had some very big letters, announcing "Easter Is Here!" And, of course, I wanted to insert NOT, or maybe a quieter, bracketed (not yet) – or maybe even a small but legible explanation that Easter is still con't on pg. 2

### **Welcome to Joyful Noise!**

After a nearly 2 year hiatus, Christ First is reviving the quarterly newsletter. With a new look, and a new name, the hope is to bring this congregation together in a new way. With news of joyful happenings around the church and the broader community, we aim to shed light on the good work this church community does in the Clarkson and Port Credit neighbourhoods and beyond. •



#### **Inside This Issue**

Getting There2
Family Zone3
February Calendar3
A Different Church4
Lenten Bible Study4
Being Church6
March Calendar6
Looking Back8
April Calendar8
Non-Profit Networking9
May Calendar9
Come and Sit Down10
Lenten Prayer Group11
What's With The Screen .12
Pegister 12

### **Getting There—Continued**

meant to be a long way off with the spiritual preparation of Lent between now and then – but there I go, in all of the above, inserting my expectations in a world of great diversity. Theological imposition just isn't on, or welcome, and definitely not fair.

What's a Christian minister to do, when there's a centuries-old jostling for space, between 'the church' and the array of culture? I can't get all defensive and stereotypically preachy, that's for sure. Easter means many things to many people, even within a congregation of Jesus-followers. Jesus himself had no trouble in welcoming all, unconditionally, and I need to keep my arms wide and gracious, like his; to remember that, in that great space, Jesus always and ever found a way to speak his truth, but with understanding and humility, and endless room for questions.

How wonderful and timely that this year, this Lent, as I walk the road to Jerusalem on my way to Easter, I can not only have your company (please check out the Calendar of Events here and all our online listings), but also some beautiful new resources to guide and support every step. You can read more about some of them on these pages, and you can also mark your calendar for all the Sundays

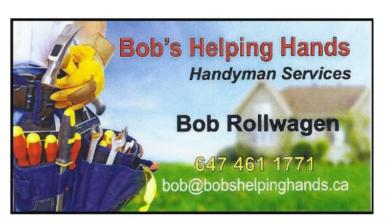
### Jesus always and ever found a way to speak his truth

in Lent. Accompanied by the brilliant creators at A Sanctified Art, our worship will gather in and under the theme of 'Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith'. For every age and stage, with daily devotionals and social media options to get us through the weekdays, too, we'll spend time thinking, praying, and singing our way through some of what confounds us.

We'll come alongside people who encountered Jesus, with or without expectation – and see how new perspectives emerged, time and again. From restoration to challenge, hopefilled to curious, we too can meet questions with confidence... not so much in our absolute knowing, but in

trusting that God's great love chooses to meet us, still today: in all the mystery, and even in the certainty, with the safety of unconditional welcome and the promise of life, remarkably renewed.

Easter is not here... not quite yet. Thank God, it's on its way, again. •



## **Family Zone**

Congratulations to Cosette and the Lee-Guide family for a beautiful baptism which they shared with us in January! The grace and joy of baptism serve as a gentle reminder of all that we have to celebrate within our children's ministry. This February, we saw the beginning of a new initiative - Sunday School Senior. On the first Sunday of every month, kids aged 10+ will break off from our regular Sunday School programming to engage in a thoughtful and more mature dive into our understanding of the bible and God's beautiful creation. We continue following the GO Project's curriculum in our allages Sunday School room during the 9:02 service, and gather for relationship-building activities at Explorers, our group for ages 5-12 that meets on Wednesdays after school. Looking ahead, we are excited for our annual Easter Scavenger Hunt, which will take place on Easter Sunday (April 9th) after the 9:02 service! **†** 



## Calendar Highlights

February 20<sup>th</sup> Family Day

21<sup>st</sup> Pancake Supper

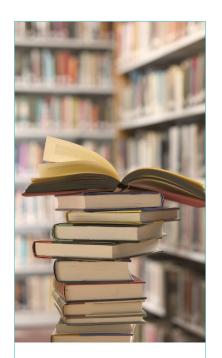
22<sup>nd</sup>
Ash Wednesday

26<sup>th</sup>
First Sunday of
Lent
Communion

27<sup>th</sup> Lenten Bible Study Begins

28<sup>th</sup> Lenten Prayer Group Begins

For the most upto-date calendar of events, please visit the website at <u>christfirst.ca</u>



## Lenten Bible Study

The Sayings of Jesus study will resume this winter/spring.

The plan is to resume sessions on **February 27, 2023**, and continue for six weeks until April 3, at the beginning of Easter week.

These six weeks still will not complete our study, so you can anticipate yet one more series of sessions during Lent of 2024

For more information, please contact the office at: office@christfirst.ca

### **A Different Kind of Church**

Written By:
Margaret &
John Anderson

For the past twenty years we have spent the winter months with our youngest son and family in Hout



Bay, South Africa. Originally a fishing village and now a tourist area, it is situated just south of Cape Town on the road to the Cape of Good Hope.

For many years we attended the evangelical Valley Church in Hout Bay close to where we live. It met in a large rented auditorium above the local Checkers supermarket and had a congregation of close to a hundred. Sunday morning services were led by an enthusiastic youth band and choir, with charismatic Pastor Ken giving resounding sermons (and occasionally joining the youth group to play his guitar). Lots of happy clapping and joyful amens.

The focus of the church was to minister to the youth of the area, including the local black township. An Alpha bible study program of ten weeks was eventually started on Wednesday evenings for young people. It was held in the room above Checkers and the aim was to cover the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. Each session began with a meal prepared and served by church members - which brought in youngsters from everywhere.

We helped in this work which was very rewarding, given the forty odd young people who attended each and every week. The course ended with a camping weekend by the ocean led by Pastor Ken - lots of music, prayers and counselling - a great success. Three years later a member of the congregation passed away and bequeathed a huge

#### A Different Kind of Church — Continued

sum of money to the church. The elders debated what to do with the funds, and finally decided to buy some land and build a church. Pastor Ken was totally opposed given the poverty in the area. He thought the money could be put to much better use and threatened to leave the Valley Church. The end result was he left for a new parish up north and today, many years later, the Valley Church is still waiting for plan

ning permission for the land they purchased.

With several others we sadly left that church as we agreed with Pastor Ken and could not see putting time and energy into a building project rather than helping those in need. After all the church is not about bricks and mortar, isn't it about its people, their endeavors and good works. •

Hout Bay at Sunset

### The course ended with a camping weekend by the ocean



### **Lawn Sale**

May 6th, 2023

This year's Lawn Sale will be held on Saturday May 6th, 2023.

More details to follow.

## Calendar Highlights

March 5<sup>th</sup> Senior Sunday School

13<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> March Break

15<sup>th</sup> No Explorers This Week

20<sup>th</sup> Outreach Breakfast

For the most upto-date calendar of events, please visit the website at christfirst.ca

### On Being Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living the Christian Ethos

Written By: Mike Giguere

"Least of these brothers and sisters" (Matthew 25:40) pertains to those in our sphere that are vulnerable and require some help. Vulnerabilities may be rooted in mental or physical trauma, health problems (mental or physical), a lack of financial resources or any permutation of all of these. William epitomized vulnerability. We were blessed to have been able to provide him with some help at The Compass, but it was not enough.

It may seem ironic to launch the first edition of Joyful News with the photo of William on the next page, but there is good news in the following.

As I reflect on being church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century I consider the "Three Pillars" that are front and center on our web page (Spiritually Engaged, Community Focused, Caring and Connected). There is a lot of substance in those three pillars. Arguably, these pillars have informed a lot of ongoing evolution in our church.

Since our last major congregational visioning session of 2019, a lot has happened. While the pandemic created some upheaval it does not seem to have stalled our progression. Like Newton's law of motion (an object remains in motion....), our church body was set in motion and has continued in motion.

Considering the reading from Matthew, and our 3 pillars, I believe a review of the major groups of activities that define us as church today will indicate we are heading in the right direction.

Our Sunday worship activities. These activities underscore being spiritually engaged, caring, and connected. From this lens we provide visitations to the sick and vulnerable in our faith community, Sunday worship, with beautiful music, youth ministry and Sunday school. Emanating directly from our internal workshop activities are set committees such as "Welcoming and Fellowship (caring and connected); Christian Community Outreach (community focused). Both committees act in step to form the overlap piece that is synergistic with the following activity.

### **Being Church — Continued**

Community Hub Ministry: At a very pedestrian level this activity is involved in generating rental revenue. This elicits the question: "Are we a church or a property management firm?" Fair question. It must be recognized that we enable a lot of social entities, NFPs, and for-profit start ups, with a community focus, to thrive with affordable space. This is "Ministry" in a true Christian spirit. One need not look too far past our most recent member, Inn From the Cold administered by Clarkson Community Church, to confirm that this is Ministry.

Intertwined with the Community Hub Ministry is the Community Network Ministry. This Ministry further epitomizes the Ministry aspect of the Community Hub. Via this Ministry we engage with our own Community members (renters) as well as other not for profits in the Community to help them help others.



William.
Compass Client of no fixed address,
killed while crossing the Lakeshore
in Port Credit in the Fall of 2022.

Matthew 25:40
Truly I tell you whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me

Hub and Spoke Ministry: A natural evolution to arrive after the pandemic as the use of physical church space and attendance shifted to an online viable reality. This is a marriage of our regular worship activities and our Community Hub, using modern technology. A perfect fit for the capacities of Christ First. Conceived by the Future Planning Committee it is now a fledgling reality. I do hope we can make it work as we iron out early organizational bugs. Out first member is a church that does not own a building and gives 75% of its revenue to the community. We must be facilitating more of this type of connection and community building.

Revenue garnered from Stewardship and the Community Hub Ministry enables us to support the UCC Mission and Service Fund and to support our Christian Community Outreach priorities including such entities as The Compass and the Open Door and much more.

All in all, not bad. As we humbly use our gifts to support "the least of these" in society, let's not get too complacent with our efforts.

Are we efficient at all the above? Are we using the resources we are responsible for as effectively as we ought to be? Can we do more for the greater good in the direction we are already headed with the foregoing? These questions are left as food for thought. In future articles I intend to offer visions to deepen our collective musings as to where we head as we ponder our physical space requirements and our potential amalgamation with SSOTH. •

## Calendar Highlights

April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Palm Sunday, Senior Sunday School & Communion

6<sup>th</sup>

Maundy Thursday

7<sup>th</sup>

**Good Friday** 

9<sup>th</sup>

Easter Service & Scavenger Hunt

24<sup>th</sup>

Outreach Breakfast

30<sup>th</sup>

Mississauga Half Marathon

# **Looking Back Only to See How Far You've Come**

Written By: Marg Shaver

Let's look back ...

In March of 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID a global pandemic.

Over the course of the next many months, schools, gyms, most stores and businesses, parks and, yes, churches, were closed, opened, reclosed and reopened.

The military was called to assist in Long-term Care residences.

There were no vaccines.

We met in the tiniest of 'bubbles', often masked and outside.

ZOOM became the word of the day.

We lived by a lengthy, confusing and ever-changing list of 'dos and don'ts'.

Christ First sat empty as online services took over our Sunday mornings.

Now in February of 2023, we can contemplate just how far we have come.

Five vaccines are available.

Christ First is open for inperson services.

People are travelling again (with or without their luggage, it seems).

We can frequent stores, restaurants, 'coffee hour', theatres, classes, gyms, offices.

The church calendar is filling up as Committees, Church Council, Explorers, groups, 9:02 Church School, renters and various events are pencilled in.

While we must stay the 'cautious COVID course' still, we can acknowledge with gratitude how far we have come.

Thanks to all. 🕆

## **Calendar Highlights**

May 7<sup>th</sup> Senior Sunday

14<sup>th</sup> **Mothers Day** 

School

22<sup>nd</sup> Victoria Day

28<sup>th</sup> Day of Pentecost & Communion

June 4<sup>th</sup> Semi-Annual Meeting & **Senior Sunday** School

For the most upto-date calendar of events, please visit the website at christfirst.ca

## **Non-Profit Networking**

Christ First has a long history of work with non -profits in our Clarkson and Port Credit communities. Community Roundtables have been an ongoing component of our ministry for many years, and through these discussions, the need emerged in our community for a network of support. From this generated an idea which was launched in spring of 2022: South Mississauaa Non-profit Networking. To-date, our Outreach committee has hosted three networking breakfasts at our Port Credit Campus, where staff and volunteers of local nonprofit organizations came together to share a meal, network with one another, and enjoy presentations geared towards educating others on the im-

portant work that is being done in our own backyard. Shortly after the launch of this initiative, we received the good news that Christ First was a recipient of a **New Ministries Grant** through Embracing the Spirit, an innovation fund supported by the Mission & Service of the United Church of Canada. We look forward to our next breakfast on March 20th with a presentation from Epilepsy South Central Ontario, as well as April 24th where we will receive a presentation from Access 2 Accessibility. All are welcome at these events, and we are looking to expand our team of volunteers to help grow this new initiative. For more info or to get involved, please contact Victoria. 🕆



# Come and Sit Down, You Are Part of the Family

Written By: Andy Choles

It's not my favourite hymn, but the words, I think, do hold true. We are very fortunate at Christ First to have a large and varied church family. We are blessed with two, quite different, worship services every Sunday. Something for everyone, so to speak. And then, once a month or so, we gather as one big family. There's always a good reason for scheduling a blended service, be it to celebrate a sacrament or review a budget, it's a time when the "whole family" needs to be there. I can assure you; blended services are not scheduled for frivolous reasons or just to make life difficult – although there seem to be some members who remain unconvinced on that point.

Speaking of family, I was able to celebrate Chinese New Year a few weeks back with my family. It was wonderful to gather as a family again after too many years of separation due to COVID. Still, as with most big family gatherings, there's a collection of characters that you love and you welcome into your home but, at the same time, realize some have very divergent views and "interesting" personalities. You love them and are glad they are there but you're also glad you don't live with them everyday. In my case, I have in-laws that are part of a rather severe branch of Christianity that seems more interested in preparing themselves because "the end is near" rather than hearing the Good News of Jesus.

### There is always a good reason for a blended service.

Political discussions can also be a bit of a minefield. Nevertheless, we carefully choose the steppingstones of "safe" topics and stick to those for the most part. They are a warm and loving family and they quite like me and that's the important part. They think my wife found herself a fine husband and that's one topic that there's no argument from me.

The menu for Chinese New Year is always the same – Hot Pot. This involves the entire family sitting around a central pot of boiling broth and dumping in various items to cook in the broth – in a similar style to a fondue. It is an individual effort, so you cook your own pork ball or shrimp and then you eat it. I really enjoy these gatherings and would never dream of suggesting roast beef and Yorkshire pudding be served instead. Roast beef has its place but not at a Chinese New Year dinner.

In addition to Hot Pot, Susan and her family introduced me to a variety of foods that I never really sampled prior to meeting my wife. One dining adventure I experienced, early on, was Dim Sum. I've enjoyed Dim Sum on many occasions in our 26-year marriage, but I have to admit, in all those years I've never been *entirely* 

### **Come and Sit Down — Continued**

sure what I've been eating. All I know is that it has always tasted very good. One common Dim Sum item that was introduced to my palate early on was "Har Gow" (shrimp dumpling). I must have remarked the first time I had Har Gow that it looked something like an eyeball, and that name has stuck with my family ever since. Once the food arrives at the table it will often be referred to an "an eyeball". "Eyeballs" are a favourite menu item of my kids as well. Har Gow was the first, but I've enjoyed many wonderful foods ever since (although I do draw the line at Fish Eyes and Goose Feet). My experience of Chinese food earlier in my life was pretty much limited to Egg Rolls (in plum sauce) and Chicken Balls (in some sort of sweet red sauce). Susan, very early on, informed me that these constituted "White person Chinese food". I must say, the culinary adventure has been a wonderful one and I clean my plate every time (as I was taught from an early age by my parents), but is sometimes a source of embarrassment, for Susan, when we're in a restaurant. Clearly, I'm an amateur when it comes to



parable writing, but this is a long-winded way of expressing the hope that all would keep their minds open to new things – new foods, new adventures and new forms of worship. A once monthly blended service might not be your favourite service of the month, but surely you can find something in the worship service that

speaks to you – your "Holy Har Gow", so to speak. There may be some "characters" in your church family, but they are family after all – your church family. I invite you to "Come in and sit down" at all our blended services because "you are a part of OUR family". I urge all of you to keep an open mind during the service and then, for a change, try going for Dim Sum with your friends later in the week.

### The Lives We <u>Actually</u> Have:

100 Blessings for Imperfect Days

All are welcome to gather in with Rev. Heather for a weekly, drop-in Lenten group, on Zoom: Tuesdays at 2pm, for about one hour of your week, built on Kate Bowler & Jessica Richie's newest release. If you read the book through Lent, great. If you don't, no problem. Come as you are, when you can. We'll be there to think and pray, support and encourage. It's another stopping place for community on this long but life-giving road to Jerusalem. See you there?

Tuesdays starting on **February 28** through April 4 at 2pm over Zoom.

Contact the office for the recurring Zoom link. &

### What's With the Screen?

Written By: Andy Choles

There was a question brought to my attention about the screen in the sanctuary and why it is down during the service.

The screen started to be feature when we started our 2½ year "run" of online worship services. We needed to include slides into the worship service to show words of prayers, hymns and readings since the paper bulletin wasn't available. On one hand, we were deprived of being able to meet in person, but we were able to achieve significant decrease the amount of paper required to present a service not to mention saving wear and tear on the photocopier. This meant our service was now creating less waste which is all part of environmental stewardship. As things continued with online worship, it was useful to show appropriate images to help illustrate a point in a sermon or some other part of the service. We incorporated videos for the Offering as well as other parts of the service.

When we returned to in person worship, we really liked the idea of including these images and videos in the service. We really didn't want to start printing all the bulletins again, so we presented the order of service via the slides that are projected on the screen. Even the hymn lyrics are displayed on the screen. The position of the screen directly behind the speaker is the best placement. One can watch/listen to the speaker and see whatever they might be referring on the screen behind them. Alternately, an image can provide an appropriate backdrop to the worship service. Of course, with the screen down, the choir had to move from their usual seats to the front pews, but now we get to see Heather's face instead of Morar's back.

Our exciting new project with Faith United connecting via Rural Connect also makes the use of the screen a necessary part of our Worship service. There certainly has been change in the Worship service, but I'm hoping all would agree that it has been positive change for the most part. •



## **Christ First Register**

### November 1 2022 through February 1, 2023

As is true for any family, this chosen bond we call a church is forever changing in who we see and know. Missing those who have left before us in death, and welcoming those who have just started their journey here, we give great thanks to God for the gift, the honour, to be in this life, together.

'In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not alone. Thanks be to God.'

### **Baptisms**

Cosette Lee-Guide – January 8, 2023

#### Deaths

Peter Wood – November 12, 2022
Penny Simmons – December 3, 2022
John Fargey – December 7, 2022
David Jay – December 9, 2022
Nancy Clark—December 17, 2022
Edward "Ted" Gittings—January 14, 2023

Joan Kerr—January 17, 2023

### **Christ First**

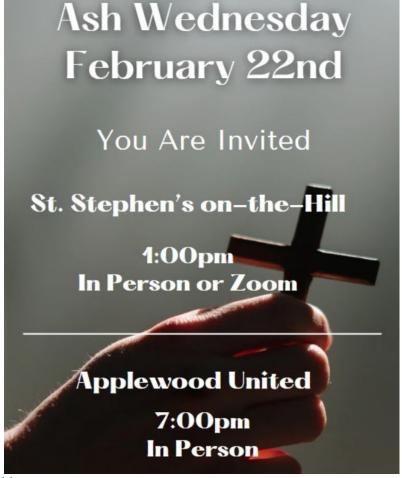
### **Office Hours**

Monday 9am—3pm
Tuesday 9am—3pm
Wednesday 9am—12pm
Thursday 9am—3pm
Friday 9am—12pm
Saturday closed
Sunday closed

### **Room Usage**

All room usage must be approved by the office. For available dates, and to book your event or meeting, please call or email.





For more information on Ash Wednesday services, as well as the Zoom link for the St. Stephen's on-the-Hill Ash Wednesday service, please contact the Christ First office.

## **Fun At Church!**



A huge thank you to Elliott Kerr, owner of the Mississauga Steelheads for generously donating tickets to a Steelheads game this past January. 63 friends of the church came out to support our local team, which ended up being a real nail-biter down to the end! Fun was had by all! Go Steel Go! •



### Lent - Themed Wordsearch

RMYCSFULC Τ SU RRE С Ι Η J LΟ ΑJ C Ρ LLLBP Ν W CJOYEYJW CGSVXNN Z K Τ РУТ R S ΝVΗ OKLHOPRA PASSOV  $\mathbf{E}$ R W ELRJPMMAU IKJPUO F W

1. prayer 2. resurrection 3. lent 4. easter 5. passover 6. love



### **Article Submission**

The next submission deadline is **Monday May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. If you are interested in writing an article for Joyful Noise, please contact the office.

## Advertising

Advertising costs will help keep Joyful Noise publications coming! If you are interested in advertising your business in Joyful Noise, please contact the office for details.

### **Christ First**

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