

**College Street United Church
Winter NEWSLETTER 2023**

*Welcome! We are looking forward to seeing you in the church,
at one of our services and other events.*

Please check our website: www.collegstreetuc.com

Facebook: **CollegeSTUnited**



**Advent and Christmas at
College Street United Church**

This year, 2023, Advent begins this Sunday, December 3rd.
Once more you are welcome to experience the good news of the coming of Christ in
word, music, and sacrament.

**Sunday, December 3, 10.30 a.m. Advent One,
Communion Sunday** with guest Preacher *Kim Uyede-Kai*

HOPE

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Please stay for a potluck lunch and decorate our Christmas tree with us.

Sunday, December 10th, 10.30 a.m. Advent Two

PEACE

White gift Sunday, please bring in donations for the FYFB

Sunday, December 17th, 10.30 a.m. Advent Three

Choir Sunday

JOY

Join us for our annual turkey dinner and Carol singing after the service.

Sunday, December 24th, Advent Four & Christmas Eve

LOVE

4:30 PM sing carols before the service

5:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 31st, 10.30 a.m. Last Sunday of the year

**Christmas Dinner
Sunday December 17th @ 12 pm**

Mark your calendars and bring your
friends and family to our annual
Christmas dinner after the church service.
Carol singing throughout the event.



The cost is \$25.00 each. Kids 5 and under are free.
Children up to 10 years are half price.

*To reserve a seat please call (416)-929-3019 or
email secretarycsu@gmail.com
We will take reservations until **Monday
December 11th, 3PM.***



Pop-up Christmas Choir —
all are welcome at College Street United Church

Please join us for a vigorous interlude of singing and enjoyment of the season:
December 3rd- 17th, Sundays at noon.

We'll explore traditional carols, old and new, some of them surprises from long ago, newly re-surfaced. Our choir will form itself in the grand traditions of community singing the world over, from West-Gallery singing in England, to South Africa, Canada, and the Caribbean. Choir director Alan Gasser has led singing in many of our city's lovely places, both indoors and out, working especially with the Echo Women's Choir, WorldSongs and Village Harmony (of Vermont).



Please invite your friends, as you wish. It's casual.

RSVP: argasser@gmail.com with "Compassion Choir" in the subject line.

Tell us when you'll be available:

- 3 Sundays after church from noon to 1:00, Dec 3rd, 10", 17", plus the following church services**
- Sunday 10 December (9:30 am rehearsal for 10:30) - optional Sunday choir; who's in?**
- Sunday 17 December (9:30 am rehearsal for 10:30) - Carol Singing followed by lunch**
- Sunday 24 December (3:30 pm rehearsal for carols at 4:30 and worship at 5)**

If we're on time, and prepare ahead by listening, we can accomplish wonderful things. I recognize how hard it is to establish real choral attendance and work habits, especially after the pandemic loneliness. Please don't assume it will happen on its own, but make a personal commitment, and you'll see: our singing AND our community can flourish.



Opera by Request continues to perform in our Sanctuary throughout the year. Please check our website for upcoming performances.

Phone 416 455-2365 for reservations and information.

William Shookhoff, director. Opera by Request

Tomorrow's Voices is a barrier-free choir for children between the ages of 8 and 18.

Our Toronto chapter launched in 2019 and we are excited to be holding our rehearsals at College Street United Church. We meet every Wednesday from 5:30-6:45 from now until the end of May 2023. The program is free to join, and we don't have any audition nor previous choir experience required. In previous seasons, our choirs have sung for over 45,000 audience members and have performed with Grammy-nominated and Juno-winning artists including Serena Ryder, Chantal Kreviuzak, Scott Helman, and Dan Mangan. The kids have also sung at junior, collegiate, and professional sporting events including the Toronto Marlies and Harlem Globetrotters.

Our program provides a creative outlet and a supportive environment for kids who love to sing, and we can't wait to build something great with you all.

For more details and to register directly, please visit our website here: <https://tomorrowsvoices.ca/our-programs/>



Update on Cuba:

(report from special guests Ary and Beidy pastors at the Presbyterian church in Matanzas)

Ary - Since Covid the situation in Cuba

is dire. The economy has worsened, its tourism has dropped from 4 million/year to 1 million (most Canadian tourists to Cuba are going to Dominican Republic now). Likewise, due to the Russian war in Ukraine fewer Russian tourists visit Cuba. Russia is recruiting Cubans to fight in Ukraine although there is no official support or recognition of this by Cuba.

As well as the embargo restricting trade, recent financial and economic reforms in Cuba are having a negative effect on daily life. Cuba once huge exporter of sugar now imports **all** of its sugar. Russia has sent economic advisors to Cuba to assist in transforming the economy. Ary noted that rather than promoting the growing of food stuffs the government has chosen to sell off some of its land for industrial development to Russian interests in anticipation of an emerging capitalist society. There are over 80,000 small private businesses in Cuba but only a few with connections to government officials seem to be successful.

There is high inflation, a shortage of food, water and both cooking and heating oil. There is no diesel fuel for public transportation and electrical power generation. Without fuel widespread and prolonged power outages are common everywhere, including hospitals, and transportation systems have collapsed.

The US and other countries (Haiti, Venezuela and Nicaragua) participate in a "Parole" program (Cuban Family Reunification Parole) that allows Cuban families to be sponsored by citizens of another country while they wait for their visa. Currently more than 300,000 people are waiting for visas under this program.

Last year, over 250,000 left Cuba, mostly young professionals and their families, to date this year over 50,000 have left.

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Beidy spoke regarding the women in Cuba and their changing role. Domestic violence against women has increased. Women's responsibilities have increased with the departure of so many of the men to other counties seeking work. The women are left to cope in a survival mode. As their pastor, Beidy sees the raw reality to which women are exposed in trying to care for their families including procuring food and supplies. Beidy has no rest, receiving calls at all hours for help. It is extremely difficult.

Education of the youth is suffering on many fronts. They lack the basic supplies, and the few teachers left are distracted by their conflicting roles, teaching and looking out for family. They are on the phone constantly seeking out food, cooking oil, etc., and leave the school at a moment's notice to find these supplies when they become available. The elderly line up in the streets overnight waiting for the government shops to open in the morning in hopes that they might be able to buy much needed but scarce supplies.

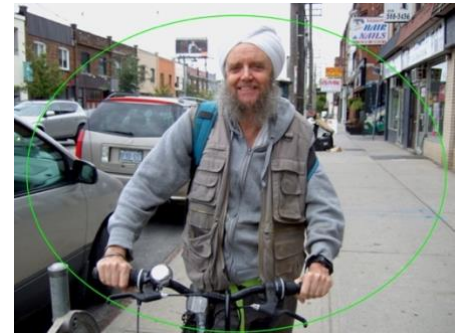
There is a general sense of hopelessness and despair, making it difficult for churches to offer hope. Recently, 6 Presbyterian pastors have left Cuba for the USA but those that remain are very committed to their work. As Ary put it, "the good news is we are still alive". He also said that although our gifts and money help, what would be appreciated even more is for us to visit Cuba to show solidarity with them. They long for our hugs and presence. Both Ary and Beidy said for those thinking of visiting not to be concerned about consuming food that would better serve our Cuban friends; they will manage and share what they have, just please come. Note: Chris Levan is leading a group to Matanzas, March 6 – 13, 2024. Details to follow.

**Kundalini Yoga
in The Sanctuary
lead by Simran Singh Khalsa**

Mondays: 9:45 – 10:45am

Thursdays: 12 – 1pm

- Please bring a mat
- Classes are pay-what-you-can



Finding Change Therapy

Hello College Street, United Church community! I am a registered social worker and I have been renting space at the church for the past few months—I was so happy to find an affordable and comfortable space in my neighborhood.

I recently started a business with a colleague, and we are excited to spread the word. We provide psychotherapy (a fancy word for mental health counselling) and are accepting new clients. We are experienced with treating trauma, depression, anxiety, and many other issues. We know that everything from negative childhood experiences to regular daily stress can make it hard to get things done, enjoy life to the fullest, and be fully present with our loved ones.

If you or anyone you know could benefit from help with mental health concerns, please reach out—our services are strictly confidential. We offer a free 15-minute consultation and have evening, weekend, and weekday appointments available. We accept major credit cards and offer insurance direct billing.

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If you are a health care provider, you can easily send referrals to our secure fax number: 289-732-2014. We also accept self-referrals. A flyer is available on our website to post in your office or send to patients. We provide service in English, Spanish, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi.

Check out our website and book today! <https://findingchangetherapy.ca/>

Rachel Ginsberg, MSW, RSW
Finding Change Stress and Trauma Psychotherapy

J. Kumar and R. Ginsberg Social Work Professional Corporation

Cubano Kings is joining our community and producing its sandwiches in our kitchen for their catering orders



Request

Please call me if you have any questions or if you would simply like to talk.

Please let me know if you or a family member would like a visit or if anybody is in the hospital.

Please let me know if you have time to volunteer.

Please don't forget, to let us know when you move.
We want to stay in touch with one another.

Please also let me know if you want us to pray for you or a family member or friend during our Sunday services.

Wishing you and your family a blessed Advent and Christmas season!

Silke C. Dorego
416 929 3019
Church Administrator

