

## GOWER STREET FALL NEWSLETTER

### *Message from Ministry Team*

Thanksgiving is often linked with gratitude. Gratitude is not only a matter of receiving. Generosity also inspires thankfulness in the one who gives. Gratitude then is translated into more generosity. It is cyclical and ongoing!

In Paul's letters to the Corinthians, he uses a particular vocabulary. The words Paul associates with giving generously are words such as:

**Abound  
Increase  
Enlarge  
Overflowing  
Surpassing Grace**

When we abound in generosity, thankfulness is the natural response. We simply can not internalize this truth until generosity is a regular, ongoing, intentional daily practice.

God's grace and love continues to abound as we move from summer to fall and into the season of Thanksgiving. **There are absolutely no conditions on God's generosity and unconditional love.** One only has to open one's heart, mind and life to receive. God's blessings are abundant. God is always generous and good.

A challenge for us this thanksgiving might be to pass on the generosity God has given in our life to others. What can you do in your life and circle of community and friends to express the same love and life God has so generously given to you? How can your thanksgiving be a thanks-giving to others?

May our footsteps this Autumn bring us closer to the Spirit of Life. May our prayers and meditation be filled with God's grace and overflow with God's generosity and love such that we can be the change in God's world.

Blessings for a wonderful Thanksgiving,  
Rev. Pamela  
Rev. Rebecca



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# Reflections of Pride 2023

The Pride Parade is the culmination of the annual St. John's Pride Festival and this year it was celebrated on Sunday, July 23, 2023. At Gower, the day began with a Pride themed church service, Rainbows and Flags, followed by a luncheon prior to joining other United Churches and thousands of jubilant participants in the Pride Parade.

This year took on special meaning as the two St. John's Affirming United Churches, Gower Street United Church and St. James United Church held a joint service at Gower. The service was officiated by Rev. Rebecca Pike and Rev. James Ravenscroft and began with congregants from Gower and St. James draping the rainbow colors over the pulpit as the congregation verbally acknowledged the meaning of each color.

A selection of LGBTQIA2S+ flags were highlighted and discussed in response to inquiries about flags seen at the previous Pride Parade.

The Reflection for this service spoke to God's covenant with all of creation and invited all of us to be active partners in seeking justice and tolerance, while highlighting the wrongs and the hurts that have and continue to fall upon those in the LGBTQIA2S+ community, especially the trans community.

Music selections included Let us Build a House, All the Colors of the Rainbow and Draw the Circle Wide. The Ministry of Music selection, In the Sweet By and By was performed by Megan Barnes from Etcetera Productions.

A fabulous luncheon of sandwiches, tea, coffee and sweets was generously provided by Gail Wideman and Daryl Pullman in the Lecture Hall. Following lunch, the largest contingent of Gower participants to date headed to City Hall to find our space in the parade. As the parade proceeded along the route, Gower was positively acknowledged numerous times by onlookers. It was an affirming experience for all.

Larry Kelly,  
Member of Gower Affirm Committee





# Our New Musical Director

On behalf of Gower Street congregation, the Ministry and Personnel Committee welcome Carl Goulding as he serves us now as Senior Choir Director in addition to his role of Organist extraordinaire!

This year, Carl has introduced many new members to our senior choir who strengthen the choral renditions selected from the rich store of beloved church anthems.

Thank you, Carl, and family, for your commitment to the continuation of the rich tradition of church music at Gower Street United.

Roberta Gill,  
Co-Chair, M& P Committee

# Landmark Church Designation



This summer Gower Street United was named as one of the United Church of Canada's first designated Landmark Churches, along with St. James United in downtown Montreal. This designation recognizes and celebrates the significance of our congregation's history and heritage, our living spiritual and social values, and our continuing openness and commitment within our community and beyond.

You may have seen our new banner from the United Church of Canada Foundation marking Gower's Landmark designation.

Visit <https://landmarkchurches.ca/>



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# *Our Summer Personnel*

We were blessed with a very capable and dedicated group of students who performed essential service over the summer period.

Hayley Collins, our returning post secondary student, fulfilled a variety of tasks related to public engagement and office efficiency, along with welcoming tourists. Once school ended, we engaged the services of high school student, Calab Butt, who, with his interest in church history and his handyman skills, was a great asset to David and to Rob Pitt during the summer regular church tours in the Downtown and once cruise ships started to arrive.

Ministry and Personnel Committee applaud them both and are extremely happy with their contributions to Gower United.

Due to Archive Chair, Rob Pitt's successful bid to obtain national funding to showcase the historical significance of Gower's sanctuary and its position in the Ecclesiastical District of the city, we have expanded our church tour schedule to include a weekend Open Doors program and extra tours during times when cruise ships are in port. To these ends, we have acquired the services of experienced student tour guides, Anna Mercer, and Heather Guiney and, more recently, Nick (Kong Sun Lim). They had been employed in our neighboring churches that form the 4-point Ecclesiastical Downtown District.

Things are proceeding well, and it is not uncommon to have upwards to 80 tourists come through Gower Street Church during cruise ship visits.

Ministry and Personnel are immensely grateful for the dedication Rob has provided to our church, as well as training the guides involved to fulfill our role as one of four signature United Churches across the Nation. We also thank Bert Riggs for his volunteer contribution during this period.

Marie-Beth Wright,  
Co-Chair, M& P Committee



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# Chinese Association Flower Service

This August, Rev. Pamela joined the Chinese community again for their Annual Flower Service. It is a pleasure for Gower Clergy to join this community for this gathering each year. This year, there was the unveiling of the Chinese Lions at the Chinese Monument site at Mt Pleasant Cemetery. You can watch a video of the service here: <https://youtu.be/s4qNYpB6bEM>





## 2023 Visitor Open Doors Program

Gower's guided "Open Doors" visitors program is continuing through the fall. It has been operating since August, on many weekdays and weekends. Guides have been hired for the program thanks to a generous grant from the United Church Foundation, which also funded some promotional materials, including the "A"-frame sidewalk sign placed outside the "Open Doors" of the church.

Our main objective has been to be open to visitors at times that, in the past, the church sanctuary would usually be closed. As one objective, the Program targets the many cruise ships that visit the Port of St. John's in late summer and into October, but also many other days for other tourists and local visitors. In the sanctuary, a looped slide presentation about our history is shown on the large screen, accompanied by recordings of Gower choirs and organ music, while the guides – including Gower volunteers – answer questions and show folks around. To date, we have had nearly a thousand visitors through our Open Doors, from more than forty provinces, states or countries.

The availability of the guides has also allowed us to continue our formal Ecclesiastical District tours and other special events undertaken jointly with our neighbouring churches in the National Historic Site (Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican). (See Operation Masonic notice in this Newsletter.)

While some visitors drop in for a brief look around, most stay and watch the repeating slide show, talk with the guides, or stop for a few minutes of meditation. Visitors are invited to climb the stairs to explore the sanctuary's three levels. Nearly all remark – often a "Wow!" – on the building's unique architecture, the warmth of its woodwork and our brilliant stained-glass windows.

The Program is led by Gower's Heritage and Archives Committee.

Rob Pitt,  
Chair, Heritage and Archives Committee



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Open Doors guides Anna Mercer and Nicholas Lim



Cruise ship *Jewel of the Seas* in St. John's, August 2023





# Gower Community Band

It is a most exciting year for the Gower Community Band! We trace our roots back to the much loved Gower Youth Band under the direction of Edsel Bonnell. That group had their very first rehearsal on October 31, 1973, which makes this the 50th Anniversary of the Gower Band Program! We plan to celebrate our anniversary all year long, starting with our Terra Nova Program concert on Saturday, October 14th at 3:00 in the D.F. Cook Hall at MUN School of Music. We will be at the Sunday service on October 29, which is the closest date to the actual 50th anniversary, and it promises to be another one for the history books. Our Downtown Pops Concert series will continue on November 26, with the theme of 50 Christmases of Gower Bands. We conclude our very busy Fall season at the December 17th service with our annual Christmas Musicale.

Our Winter/Spring season will have a less hectic pace as we put all of our efforts into creating a Blockbuster Anniversary Gala Concert on May 11. This concert event will feature incredible musical guests, and a retrospective of the incredible 50 year history of the Gower Youth Band and Gower Community Band combined.

We've been especially happy to see the number of band members increase steadily over the last two years. This year we welcome back several former GYB/GCB band members who had been away from the band for a while, and we've added five brand new members! It may be a year of looking back at our history, but the future also looks very bright for the GCB.

Ron Collins,  
Band Director

**50<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**



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# Coming up at Gower

**October 14**

Movie Time at Gower - The Lorax at 10:00 a.m.

**October 15**

Celebrating Creation Integrational Worship

**October 17**

Piece of Mind Yoga - Weekly on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.

**October 29**

Dessert Auction and Concert

**November 10**

Welcome Dinner for Baptismal Families

**November 18 -25**

Online Auction

**November 28**

Seniors Christmas Dinner

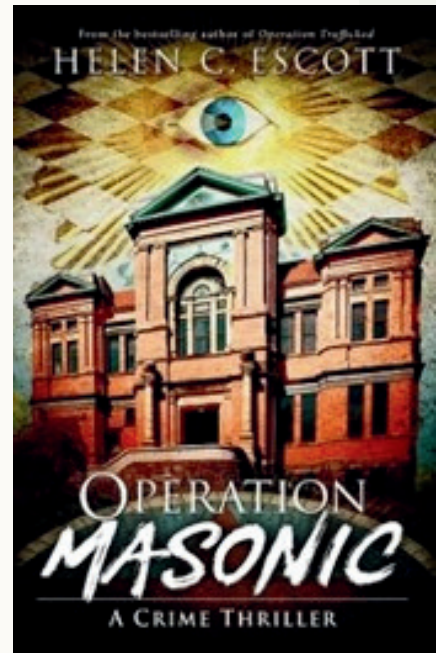
# Operation Masonic Tour at Gower

Gower will be taking part again in the popular Operation Masonic mystery walking tour of the Ecclesiastical District on Sunday, 15 October 2023. It's based on the Operation Masonic crime thriller by best-selling author Helen C Escott, who will be along for the tour. It starts at 3:00 pm in the main foyer of the Basilica on Military Road.

Tickets (\$25) are available through Everbright:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/operation-masonic-walking-tour-tickets-728919175877>.

Proceeds from the tour tickets go to the four District churches.



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