

# ADVENT NEWSLETTER

Dear Gower Friends,

Ten weeks of the Christian Calendar are dedicated to the practice of waiting. In the six weeks of Lent, we anticipate Easter and in this four-week season of Advent we anticipate Christmas. There is much to be learned in waiting. We develop patience; we find joy in expectation that something exceeds the experience itself. And we learn how to best use the in between time so that we are not simply staring at our hands or cell phones until the day comes.

People use the in between time of Advent for decorating, for gathering with family and friends, and for giving to charities like Bridges to Hope and the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada. Our congregation traditionally gives to Stella's Circle Participants by choosing a star from our "Giving Tree" in the vestibule. Most then take the star with them on their shopping adventures, knowing it will provide items necessary for living.

The Church uses this time of worship to reread stories like that of John the Baptist, Isaiah and Mary. We light candles and sing hymns unique to the season. All of this is done so that come Christmas we may have a deeper appreciation of that glorious season itself, of incarnation, of God's presence in the Christ Child.

I find the notion of incarnation increasingly important to me in my life. Incarnation is about embodiment; it is about God being in the flesh. God is more immediate, more tangible, more fully present when I think of God this way. God is in community. God is working in and through each one of us.

Our God is as fragile as an infant, as beautiful as a baby, as peaceful as a newborn in a cradle. Praying to such a God shifts your language a bit. You tend to offer yourself a little more and ask a little less of the divine. You become a little gentler in your prayers.

As we wait and anticipate together may the Holy One's blessings and in turn God's unconditional love and grace be upon you in this season. May the fulfillment of Christmas be deeper because of how you have spent these advent weeks. Wait well!!  
In peace, hope, joy and love,

Pamela (Rev.)



# WELCOME TO REV. KAREN

The Gower Ministry and Personnel Committee are excited to announce that the Rev. Karen Thorne will be joining the worship team at Gower United as Rev. Rebecca prepares to exit on her maternity leave.

Rev. Karen is a very experienced minister within the United Church of Canada. Her qualifications and former placements make her uniquely suited to this church and its responsibilities.

Following completion of degrees in Music and Music Education from Memorial University, she began her studies in Ministry, attaining a Masters in Diaconal Ministry followed by her Masters in Divinity from St. Andrews College, Saskatoon. Her academic list is long, including being a Certified Spiritual Care Practitioner, along with earlier studies in the Ontario Jubilee program and the Centre for Christian Studies.

Rev. Karen is “cradle United Church” as they say in Toronto for her early faith formation, marriage to Stephen Thorne and her children, Jordan and Carson’s baptisms all took place at Gower Street Church. As a congregational volunteer she advocated for the School Lunch Program and led children’s programming here.

Throughout her career she has worked as a minister for Youth and Young Families at Wesley United and ministered in three rural charges on the Avalon Peninsula. Her pastoral care experience includes serving as the United Church Chaplain for the St. John’s hospitals and at His Majesty’s Penitentiary for the past seven years.

She is glad to return to her original church family here at Gower, to continue Rev. Rebecca’s ministry and work alongside Rev. Pamela. She is a wonderful fit to continue the excellent ministry that happens here via music, love and congregational commitment.

## MESSAGE FROM REV. KAREN

Hello!

I am very pleased to begin this new time of serving among you here at Gower Street United! While I have been serving the church for a long time in different places, Gower has held a special place in my heart for many years. As a young person I became involved here and found a sense of belonging and joy in worshipping together. I found a greater purpose as I became part of a small group of church members that worked together researching and advocating for the establishment of school lunch and breakfast programs here in the province. This was also the place where I felt inspired and encouraged to study to become a diaconal minister within the United Church of Canada. Later I was ordained and have continued to be eager to learn and grow in ministry skills and my sense of spirituality. In addition to having served in several congregations, in more recent years I also served as a United Church chaplain in the St. John’s hospitals and prison. I look forward to reconnecting with folks I have known over many years as well as connecting with those of you who are new to me. I am delighted to be able to join with Rev. Pamela during Rev. Rebecca’s maternity leave, eager to support and encourage the ongoing dynamic ministry here at Gower Street United Church.

Sincerely,  
Karen (Rev)



# STAFF HOURS

Rev. Pamela: Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Days off are Friday and Saturday. If you wish to schedule an appointment, please email or call the church office.

Rev. Karen: Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, as well as Sundays for worship and other activities. If you wish to schedule an appointment, please email or call the church office.

Office Administrator (Felyn): Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00am to 4:00 pm, Fridays 10:00am to 1:00pm.

David Noseworthy: Mondays to Thursdays 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Sundays 8:00 am to 1:30 pm.



# STAFF CONTACT

Rev. Pamela: 709-753-7286 ext. 201 or [revpamela@nl.rogers.com](mailto:revpamela@nl.rogers.com)

Rev. Karen: 709-753-7286 ext. 202 or [rev.karen@nl.rogers.com](mailto:rev.karen@nl.rogers.com)

Office Administrator (Felyn): 709-753-7286 ext. 200 or [gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)

David Noseworthy: 709-753-7286 ext. 206

Pastoral Care Emergencies: 709-693-3696



# PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a small but very important part of Gower Street United Church. The work we do, knitting and crocheting in our group, is reaching out, not only to our congregation, but also to other parts of Newfoundland, Canada and the world. In our church we have shawls and prayer bears that have been prayed over, and blessed, available to the congregation and to visitors who come to Gower. We receive comments and thanks from the United States, Canada, and visitors from cruise ships from England, Germany and other countries who leave messages about how grateful they are to be able to take these beautiful shawls and bears for loved ones who are ill or bereaved or who welcome a new baby to their family.

Every three months or so we package up five or six shawls and some bears to send to Toronto to St. Michael's Hospital where Rev. Bill Ford distributes them to patients who need prayers and love. The cards he sends back to us are filled with grateful thanks, and praise for the work of our Ministry.

Just this past summer during the horrific fires and devastation in Conception Bay North, one of our members suggested that, since we had a surplus of shawls and bears, we should bring some of them to the Red Cross at the school in Carbonear where the evacuees were being housed. We did this and they were distributed to seniors there who were in distress over the loss of their homes and property. They were accepted with grateful thanks and tears from those who received the shawls.

We are always in need of wool. We are also wondering if any of you are knitters and would like to knit for us. You wouldn't need to join our group or go to meetings, although we would welcome any new members, but just knit and send them along to the church office. We would be so grateful for both donations of wool or shawls or of course for new members.

Hopefully, the small group of dedicated members in our ministry can keep on knitting and sending God's blessing to those who need it with our love for what we do, for many years to come.



# UPDATE ON GOWER'S FINANCIAL POSITION

Taking this opportunity to provide a brief update on the financial position of the Church operating fund. For the period January to September 2025 there is a shortfall of \$52,922. While this may seem a large number it is much improved from our position at this same time for the previous three years where it has been in excess of \$100,000 in each of those years.

We have had the benefit of extra rental revenues, primarily from Spirit of Newfoundland as well as many successful fundraising events to help pick up the shortfall from declining donation amounts. There have also been some challenges with regards to furnace/steam pipe repairs and kitchen equipment repairs that are adding to the costs. Plus October also brings having the furnace turned back on which usually results in furnace oil usage of around \$7,500 per month.

Our budgeted deficit for the current year was projected to be \$15,000 so it will be dependant upon the normally strong givings of the congregation and the community in the last months of the year to help reduce our current shortfall and maintain the stability of our financial position.

Please help ensure our financial stability by supporting the ongoing fundraising events and through your continued financial support.

Regards  
Fred Earle  
Treasurer

## GIVING TO GOWER

If you wish to help maintain the financial support of Gower during these trying times, there are a few options available.

- Sign up for PAR (Pre Authorized Contributions), or if you are already on PAR, then maybe consider increasing your contribution. This can be done by leaving a message on the office voicemail (709-753-7286) or by email ([gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com))
- You can also go to our Website ([www.gowerunited.com](http://www.gowerunited.com)) and click DONATE or by scanning the QR Code to the right.
- We also accept e-transfer. Just send it to [gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)
- You may also send a cheque via mail or drop it in the dropbox accessible to the right of the office entrance. Our mailing address is 99 Queens Road, St. John's, NL, A1C 6M6.



As always, records of all donations are kept, and acknowledgements are made where required.

If you have questions about how to donate, contact the office via email ([gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)) or call 709-753-7286. Thank you!

# REPORT ON ORIENTATION SESSIONS FOR UPCOMING TRIENNIAL OF THE UCC BOARD OF VOCATION

From October 14 to 18, I was part of approximately 140 United Church members meeting in Toronto to orient to their new or returning committee appointments for the 2025-2028 triennial. Its theme: CHAORDIC, essentially when an organization must combine or deal with a combination of both chaos and order. Of course, in the United Church, we do this all the time!

My tenure with the Board of Vocation goes back to 2018, first with the Standards Committee followed by the last three years on Admissions Board. These two committees work with standards of training for clergy and the admission of candidates coming from outside Canada, respectively. Working with each was a natural and helpful progression to my new appointment from the 45<sup>th</sup> General Council to the Atlantic Candidacy Board, where we determine the suitability of candidates coming almost totally from Atlantic Canada.

The only other current sitting member of this committee from Newfoundland and Labrador is Liz Dawson, who is very active in her church in Happy Valley -Goose Bay. We work under the direction of Vocation Minister Andrew Richardson, who has long been First Dawn-Eastern Edge Regional Council's representative to the Office of Vocation itself.

For those seeking more clarity of the national structure, the Office of Vocation includes the Indigenous Office, and has four national committees. This is supported by the Board of Vocation and its 7 boards, 1 Admissions Board and 6 regional Candidacy Boards.

In Toronto we followed a very busy schedule of plenary sessions, workshops, guest speakers, worship services and small group discussions for four days. I was delighted to reconnect with friends whom I have previously worked with since 2018.

Our new Moderator, Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath, joined us for a day and a half of the proceedings. It was sad to bid farewell to National Office Director, Rev. Marlene Britton, who has served in a variety of executive positions at the Office of Vocation. After nearly seven years with us, she goes on to become the Principal of the Centre for Christian Studies. Incoming Chair of the Board of Vocation, Rev. Etienne Lesage, steered us through issues and especially into aspects of our Strategic Plan, Towards 2035!

In conversations and in meetings of my brand-new committee, I always announce that Gower United, my home church, was the host site for last summer's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the United Church of Canada!

Submitted by Marie-Beth Wright



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **Spirit of Giving Sunday**

Spirit of Giving Sunday is December 7th. The tree is set up in the vestibule. Please take a star or stars and bring those items to worship on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Please note that the items need to be new. The items will be distributed to Stella's Circle this season.

## **The Annual Gower Street United Church Congregational Christmas Dinner**

Sponsored by the Gower Service and Social Club, the event will take place at the Lecture Hall (auditorium) on Tuesday, December 09, 2025. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and dinner will be served starting at 5:30 p.m., followed by a Carol Sing. The meal will include a traditional turkey dinner catered by Spirit of Newfoundland, with Christmas puddings made by a team of volunteers from Gower. Tickets cost \$30.00 per person and can be purchased from Bert Riggs.

## **Etcetera Productions Lessons and Carols - Sunday, December 7, 2025**

On Sunday evening, December 7th, the 42nd Traditional Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols will take place in the sanctuary of Gower Street United Church, at 6:30 pm. The mass choir features singers from the performance groups at the Music Studios of Etcetera Productions: the Junior Show Choir, the Show Choir, and the Ensemble. The performers' families and the music studio teachers, Carl Goulding, Justin Goulding, Megan Barnes, and Rebecca Goulding Arsenault, look forward to another beautiful musical celebration of the Christmas season. Admittance is \$20, paid at the door, and doors open for concert goers at 5:30 pm. The profits of the evening are donated annually to Gower Street United Church. Everyone is welcome to attend on December 7th, and we hope to make this evening a wonderful beginning to the Christmas Season and a significant fundraiser for Gower Street United Church.

## **Stella's Circle Alternative Service**

Everyone is welcome at the Stella's Circle Alternative Service. This is a time of community and holiday reflection taking place in the the Gower sanctuary on Wednesday, December 10 at 4:00 p.m.

## **A Special Worship for a Blue Christmas Online Worship**

On Sunday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m., on [Gower's YouTube Channel](#) the ministry team will be posting a worship video for Blue Christmas.



# CHRISTMAS AT GOWER



CHRISTMAS EVE  
AT GOWER

**Worship at 5:00 P.M.**

with communion and special music from Gower Young  
People's Choir, Gower Senior Choir & Gower Handbell Choir

Worship will be in person and livestreamed on YouTube



Join us **online** for Worship on December 28, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. for the first Sunday After Christmas.

Join us in-person and online for Worship on January 4, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. for the Second Sunday After Christmas.

## IN MEMORIAM OR CELEBRATION DONATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS

During Advent and Christmas, we are accepting donations in memoriam and in celebration of special events in your life. These donations will be acknowledged and published in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

Please donate using any of the methods listed under "Giving to Gower". Ensure you include a note of details to be published in the bulletin. The deadline to have donations published for the bulletin is Wednesday, December 17 at 4 pm. Any donations received after this date will be included in the December 28 bulletin.

If you have questions about how to donate, contact the office via email ([gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)) or call 709-753-7286 during office hours.



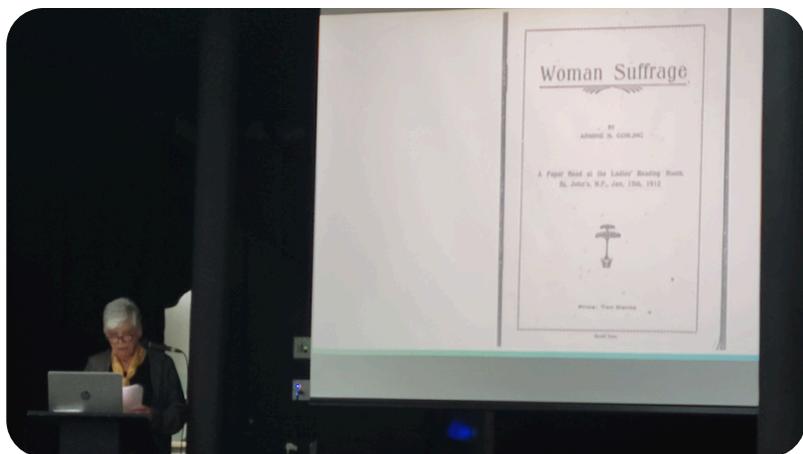
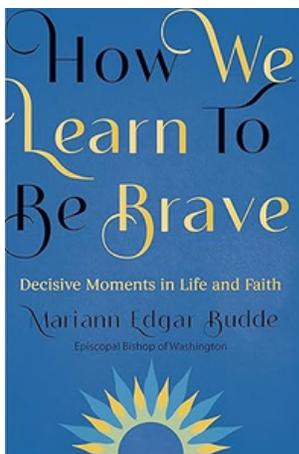
# RECENT EVENTS

We concluded our Centennial Celebration events with two Lunch and Learns along with a Book Study.

On October 26th, we learned about Women's Suffrage from Margot Duley.

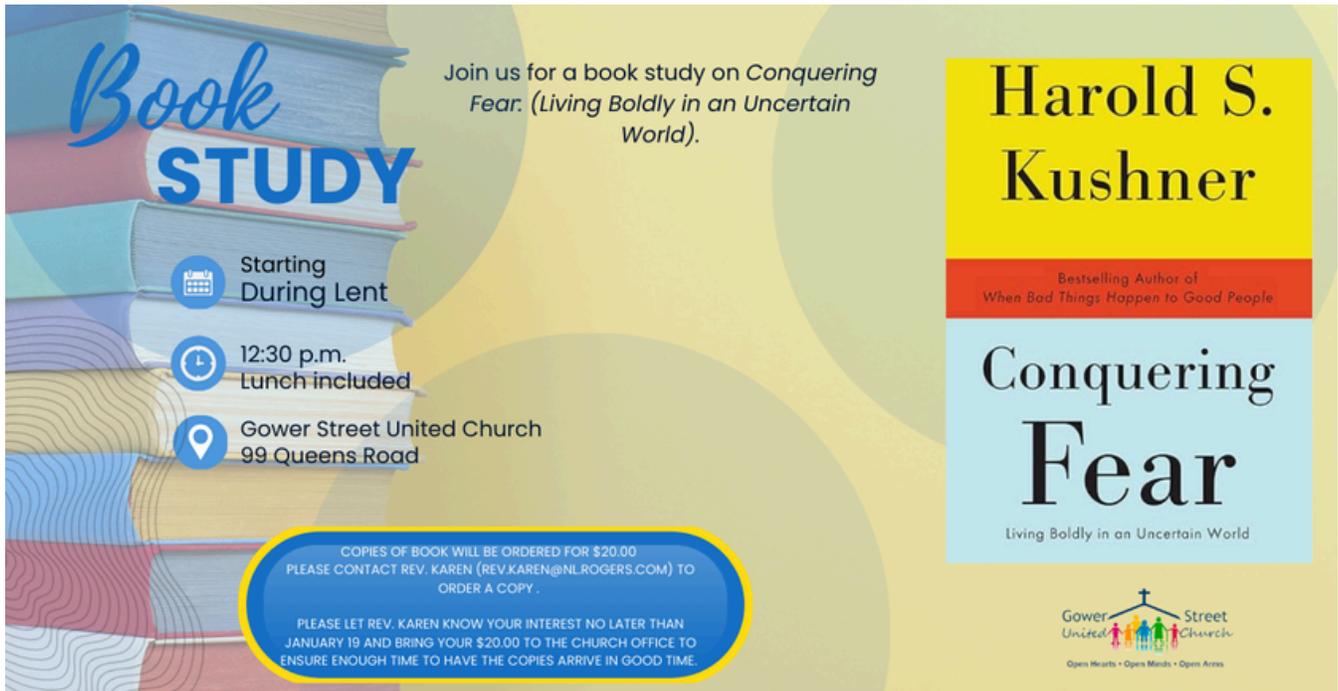
On November 16th, Karl Wells shared with us his life story from parts of his book *Openly Karl*. A group of fifteen gathered for four sessions to explore *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith* by Mariann Edgar Budde.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support from The Centennial Granting Fund at The United Church of Canada Foundation, which helped bring this event to life.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

We live in challenging times, and many of us face fear and uncertainty. How do you cope? This Lent, we will begin a new book study on "Conquering Fear: Living Boldly in an Uncertain World" by Rabbi Harold Kushner. His stories and teachings offer practical ways to face fear and strengthen our spirits. To sign up, please contact Rev. Karen before January 19th.



Book STUDY

Join us for a book study on *Conquering Fear: (Living Boldly in an Uncertain World)*.

- Starting During Lent
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch included
- Gower Street United Church 99 Queens Road

COPIES OF BOOK WILL BE ORDERED FOR \$20.00 PLEASE CONTACT REV. KAREN (REV.KAREN@NLROGERS.COM) TO ORDER A COPY.

PLEASE LET REV. KAREN KNOW YOUR INTEREST NO LATER THAN JANUARY 19 AND BRING YOUR \$20.00 TO THE CHURCH OFFICE TO ENSURE ENOUGH TIME TO HAVE THE COPIES ARRIVE IN GOOD TIME.

Harold S. Kushner

Bestselling Author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

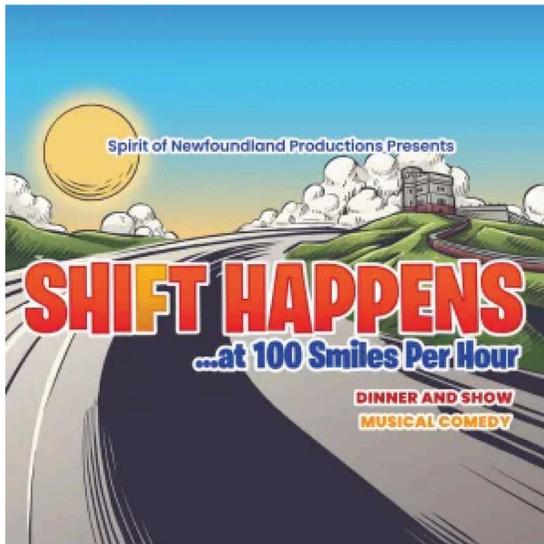
Conquering Fear

Living Boldly in an Uncertain World

Gower Street United Church  
Open Hearts • Open Minds • Open Arms



AT SPIRIT OF NEWFOUNDLAND FOR



Get ready for a delightful trip down memory lane with Spirit of Newfoundland's latest musical comedy, "Shift Happens...at 100 Smiles per Hour"! Join us on February 26, 2026, at Gower Theatre, with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy dinner, a show, and non-stop entertainment—all for just \$120 per person! 🍷

This is your chance to secure a spot for an unforgettable evening filled with laughter, community, and music. Avoid the hassle of downtown parking by parking at St. James and taking advantage of our taxi service to Gower St United Church. We also offer childcare services upon request, and dietary considerations can be accommodated.

Tax receipts (\$50.00 per ticket) will be issued for the charitable portion of the ticket. Tickets are selling fast, so don't miss out—contact the church office by phone or email to purchase yours today. Payment is due at the time of purchase via cheque, e-transfer, or cash.

Hosted by Gower Street United Church, St. James United Church, and Cowan Heights United Church, the proceeds will be shared among the three churches to support their ministries. 🍷

**FEB 26**  
**7:00 PM**

**A THREE-COURSE DINNER THEATRE**  
**GOWER THEATER, 208 GOWER STREET**  
**TICKETS \$120**  
**PLEASE PURCHASE IN ADVANCE**  
709-745-2871 - OFFICE@COWANHEIGHTSUNITED.CA