

Summer Newsletter

June 2026



A Summer Blessing for the Journey

Minister's Message

As summer arrives, many of us find ourselves moving into a different rhythm. The days are longer, schedules often become lighter, and there may be opportunities for travel, family gatherings, time outdoors, or simply a slower pace. Summer invites us to notice things we can easily overlook during the busier seasons of the year.

This time of year I too move into a different pace. I love taking longer walks, gardening, getting out on the water in our sailboat, family BBQs, long drives and road trips around our province, fun at Gambo Pond, listening to the birds in my garden with the warm summer breeze encompassing the stories beneath the pages. I especially love this time of year!

In the Gospels, we often find Jesus stepping away from the crowds to pray, rest, and reconnect with God. He understood that faithful living is not only about doing; it is also about being. Times of rest, reflection, and renewal are not interruptions to our spiritual lives—they are part of them.

This summer, I invite you to pay attention to the signs of God's presence around you. Listen for the laughter of children at play, watch the beauty of a sunset, enjoy a conversation with a friend, or sit quietly in a garden. These ordinary moments can become sacred moments when we open our hearts to the Spirit.

Summer can also be a season of reconnection. As we gather with family, neighbours, and friends, may we remember the importance of community. At Gower Street United Church, we are blessed by the many relationships that sustain us through every season. Whether you are travelling far from home or remaining close by, you remain part of this community of faith, held together by God's love and our shared commitment to one another.

For some, however, summer may not feel restful. It may bring loneliness, grief, uncertainty, or challenges that continue regardless of the season. Know that God's presence does not depend on sunshine or circumstances. The God who walks with us in times of joy also walks with us through difficulty, offering comfort, strength, and hope.

As we move through these summer months, may we find opportunities to rest deeply, love generously, and notice God's grace in unexpected places. May we return in the fall refreshed in spirit and renewed in our commitment to follow Jesus' way of compassion, justice, and peace.

May God's blessing accompany you wherever this season takes you.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Pamela

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Mission and Service

Gower Street United Church, Summer 2026

“For God so loved the world ...”

Make a “world” of difference – give to Mission and Service

We all have our favourite charities. A quick review, and I count 15 charities to which I give. If my budget permitted, I, no doubt, would include others.

Mission and Service of Gower Street United and of The United Church of Canada tops my list by far. I give minimally to 14 charities and maximally to Mission and Service. Why? I give maximally to Mission and Service because all other charities have a large constituency of the whole community (including businesses and corporations) as their donor base. Mission and Service has only **you** and **me**, and those others who are members, adherents and/or friends of The United Church of Canada.

Unfortunately, less than half of us who are named as “givers” to the United Church give to Mission and Service. That is the part I do not understand! Through Mission and Service, The United Church of Canada makes a “world of difference” locally, nationally and globally.

Locally, Mission and Service supports Stella’s Circle, Bridges to Hope and the Jimmy Pratt Centre. Every dish at the Hungry Heart Café, Stella’s Circle, tells a story. Behind the scenes (and sometimes as servers) are persons, with mental health challenges, trauma, emerging out of poverty and/or homelessness, and minimal education, re-building their lives through real work experience in hands-on training in restaurant skills and, equally important, gaining confidence, developing independence and seeking a future where they can thrive. Stories such as this are re-told throughout Canada, in projects/programs supported by Mission and Service. Gower Street United has benefitted from Mission and Service; my theological education, and that of our Ministers, received funding from Mission and Service (even though our personal costs were also high).

Globally, I have had the profound privilege of visiting countries such as Angola, the Philippines, Hong Kong and the Middle East where, working with our partner churches and organizations on-site, Mission and

Service provides access to clean water, food and medical care, peace-keeping, farming skills, disaster relief, such as in the Ukraine. We work ecumenically, inasmuch as possible, with some 69 partners in 24 countries around the world.

75 plus years ago, I learned to “make a ‘world’ of difference” because God so loved the world:

- through World Friends magazine for children in the church;
- through my staunch, Methodist grandmother. I can still see her putting 25 cents in the black side of her envelope. “That’s for us”, she would say, and, then 25 cents in the red side of her envelope with “That’s for others” (Mission and Service, today). That was a generous amount of money for one with little money. Several years earlier, she sent my mother, at the age of 14, out “in service” because they couldn’t afford to feed her!

My Mission and Service dollars go where I and we cannot go and where I would not go. (I am not as brave as some, willing to live and work in situations of high risk.) My single donation to Mission and Service doesn’t go very far but, collectively, I and we “**Make a World of Difference**” in our world God loves and we are called to love.

As a Postscript, this is a reminder to me, and to all of us, to consider an increase (as we are able) to the operating fund of Gower. Gower needs our money in order to continue to be a visible sign of God’s presence in the community and world as well as to Mission and Service (an increase and/or an initial and continuing donation).

Marion Pardy (Very Rev. Dr.)
Member and Minister Emeritus,
Gower Street United Church

VISITING PALESTINE

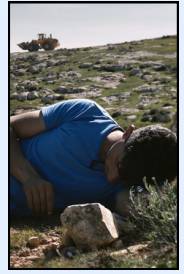
Patricia Mercer, November 2025

"Because the global church didn't listen..."

By Esther Epp-Tiessen, [Canadian Friends of Sabeel](#) Board Member

"We didn't want to write this document," insisted Palestinian pastor Munther Isaac at the November 14 release of the historic [Kairos Palestine II](#). "But we had to write it. Because the global church didn't listen and didn't act in 2009."

No Other Land



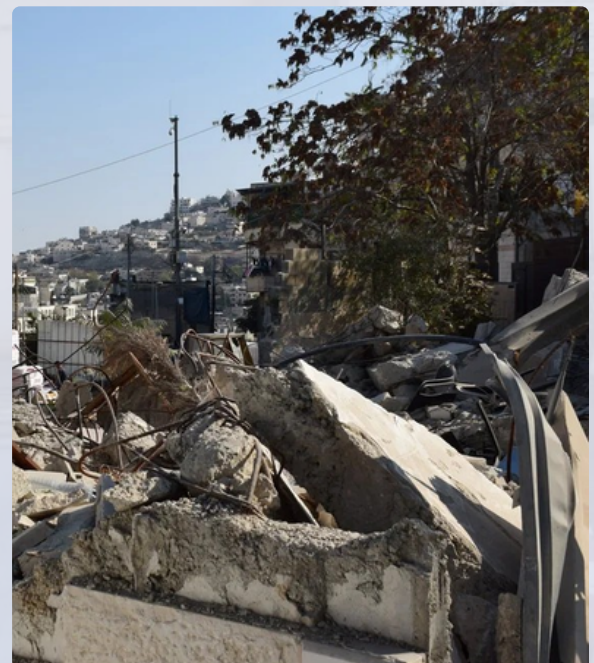
Isaac was speaking to an international gathering held in Bethlehem in mid-November. Two hundred and fifty people were present, including 80 guests from 23 countries. I and six other Canadians were among those privileged to attend.

Kairos Palestine is a movement of Palestinian churches, groups, and individuals which emerged in 2009 around the release of [Kairos Palestine I](#). That document urged the global church and the international community to come alongside Palestinians and demand an end to the illegal Israeli military occupation that was suffocating them.

Kairos Palestine II describes the catastrophic new realities that Israel has inflicted on Palestine since October 7, 2023: outright genocide in Gaza, a "[silent genocide](#)" in the West Bank, ethnic cleansing and apartheid throughout Palestine/Israel. It asserts that Israel has turned "Palestinian existence into an unbearable hell."

In the days prior to and after the conference, we saw devastating evidence of this hell in the West Bank. We heard from a dozen women, men and youth made homeless, when Israel's military levelled three large refugee camps in the northern West Bank, displacing 32,000. We talked to young adults in the Silwan area of East Jerusalem whose community centre, along with 150 homes housing about 1000 people, have been systematically demolished by Israeli bulldozers in the past two years.....

Full article: www.friendsofsabeel.ca/because-the-church-didnt-listen



Green's Harbour's Teaching Yields Life Changing Results

By Marie-Beth Wright

In September 1963, Carl Wright, newly graduated from Memorial University, was raring to go back to outport Newfoundland and Labrador to teach. He had been educated in Greenspond, so life in smaller communities felt comfortable and familiar.

In the brand new Central High School in Green's Harbour he met Clifford George, a student in his homeroom. Clifford, from the nearby town of Whiteway stood out for his sketches could be found in the school corridors and teachers sought him out to draw illustrations in subjects like biology.

But Clifford needed to bring color to his art and the brand-new townie teacher could deliver the goods – real paint from St. John's to help him express himself with vibrancy!

Years passed, Carl moved on to Carbonear and later to St. John's, still positively impacting students' education. Clifford's career arc took him to the Health Sciences Centre where he helped medical personnel illustrate textbooks and enhance their lectures and conferences. Simultaneously, he developed a very successful career as a landscape artist with customers, colleagues and art students admiring his every creation. He also received huge admiration for saving countless Newfoundland ponies from slaughter, plus preserving them in art form.

More years passed until Carl, and I went to one of Clifford's expositions at Christina Parker Gallery. We chatted; the story of Carl's help so long ago came out and fast forward a few years, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association was looking for a fresh story for its Teachers Change Lives campaign! It was a deal made for television and social media. In the dramatized section of the ad, well established actor, Justin Nurse, plays a young Carl while an adorable child actor shows Clifford's child-like delight in being provided with paints.

Seeds of success go a long way, for as Clifford says, "If someone believes in you, it can last a lifetime. Thank you Mr. Wright." Just as telling is Carl's response in the longer interview: "I did something very important in getting him started ... I am so happy for that."

Carl and Clifford's story arrived on NTV, during Survivor, in Facebook posts, on YouTube, and in Cineplex theatres. It can only raise the profile of the teaching profession and gain healthy respect for the work teachers perform with each new generation of students in our schools.

Carl and Clifford's Story is produced in conjunction with the fine talented folks of M5 Advertising and Wavelength Productions.



Remembering Dr. Roy West

Summer at their Salt Harbour, NL (Herring Neck) home was a special time for Pat and Roy. A time when they hosted many socials with their neighbours and friends in the area.

My cottage in Twillingate, NL was easy driving distance and I hosted Pat and Roy on special occasions. Each summer (except for the 'milestone' celebrations) I hosted a dinner to celebrate Roy's birthday in July and, then, in August, Pat's birthday, Pat and Roy's wedding anniversary and Shirley and Henry Andrews' (friends of mine and Pat and Roy) wedding anniversary.

I have this photo, courtesy of Shirley (former Gower Office Manager) and Henry (former President of Gower Men's Club plus many other Gower positions). It was our last August celebration at the cottage in August 2024: Pat's 88th birthday; Roy and Pat's 28th wedding anniversary; Shirley and Henry's 52nd wedding anniversary. Last summer, I treated Pat and Roy to luncheon at Sansome's restaurant on Roy's birthday and, unfortunately, an August celebration did not occur because of my condo fire and because Roy needed to return to St. John's prematurely and urgently because of his back problem. Roy was planning to host a milestone celebration this summer: Pat's 90th birthday and their 30th wedding anniversary, a 90/30.

Gower members and congregation have their own good memories of Roy – this highlights their more leisurely days of summer, where they also participated actively at Newville United Church.

Marion Parry, Friend



Office Staff Birthday Celebrations



Felyn's Birthday Lunch with Office Staff in May 2026



Rev. Rebecca's Birthday Celebration with Family in May 2026



Financial Update

At the 2026 AGM, the congregation made a number of budget commitments for our continued ministry, programming and building operations at Gower. To meet these expense commitments, we anticipated revenue levels would be similar to 2025. Our revenue sources are budgeted as follows:

- \$175k tithe/giving (37%)
- \$148k bequests and other (31%)
- \$155k rental income (32%)

Our budgeted expenses are made up of:

- 62% Salaries and Benefits
- 27% Property (utilities, insurance, repairs)
- 6% Admin and Programs
- 4% UC Assessments

In spring 2026, the church was faced with some unanticipated major oil fuel cost spikes as well as some other additional expense that have caused our 2026 forecast to be a deficit position of approximately -\$50,000. The board is exploring short term options to address this forecasted operating deficit for 2026, as well as potential longer term solutions to help improve the forecast for 2027.

As of May 2026, the generated revenue side is at 35% of our annual budget. Congregational givings are at \$57k at the end of May 2026. This is \$7.5k lower than at same time in 2025. To meet our 2026 budget commitments, we therefore invite members and supporters of Gower Street United Church to consider increasing or participating in financial needs of the church. Please reach out to the office (709-753-7286) if you wish to discuss giving or, to donate online, please follow website link or QR code below. We look forward to seeing you over the summer or in the fall!

Brian Butt, Chair of Finance

[Email us about giving](#)

DONATE 



Appeal For Ushers Summer 2026

Ashley and Jordan Wright volunteer with our ushering Team Seven.

Gower is in need of additional ushers to welcome attendees to our services!

If this interests you, please contact Carl Wright carlw@nl.rogers.com



Spring Downtown Pops Concert

Gower Community Band



The Gower Community Band presented its 11th Downtown Pops Concert on May 24. The first in this series was in Fall 2018 under the direction of Dr. Bonnell, who created the series. This year's MC was Chris Panting. The band was joined by musical guests, Rocky Isle Singers – Carraig Ensemble. Together they shared in supporting their partner charity, the Single Parents Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (SPANL).





Rainbow Melodies and Kickoff to Summer Worship Service June 14, 2026



Faith Family Everyday



Childcare for Families at Gower

We are looking for 2-4 capable persons who would become a rotating team of child caregivers for the smallest members of our church. We are planning to have childcare in place by mid-September. Do you know someone connected to Gower who would be great for this role? Please let them know and share their name with us! Funding will be provided as part of a grant received through Faith Families Every Day initiative. During the summer we are also making improvements so that we have welcoming, comfortable and well-equipped rooms for children and parents too. We will be receiving the names of interested persons during the summer months, interviewing in August and introducing those who will be taking on this role on Welcome Back Sunday, Sept. 20th. For more details please email rev.karen@nl.rogers.com or call the church office (709-753-7286) or speak with a member of the Children Education and Families Committee, Co-Chairs, Grace Dunsmore and Meghan McKibbon.

FAMILY FAITH EVERY DAY PROGRAM

During the summer we will be reaching out to Gower's younger families to share information about a great upcoming opportunity in the Fall. We are inviting families with younger children (especially 5 years and younger) to be part of a program especially designed for them!

- Once a month on Sundays: September 20th, October 18th, and December 20th
- Breakfast provided for families
- Adult conversations on focus themes
- Childcare provided in an adjoining space.

We will finish in time for a child- and family-friendly worship at 11 a.m. on these Sundays.

Families will be provided resources and opportunities to share with one another about where spirituality and faith can fit into their very busy lives. Choosing from options provided or creating simple rituals or prayers such as a goodnight prayer or a simple moment to give thanks for food before eating can help to remind everyone how precious life is and how every day is a blessing. The ideas can also encourage a sense of spiritual connection and balance for the adults too.

Over the summer, please look for an information table set up in the vestibule before church for more details. We look forward to joining you in this great opportunity!

Rev. Karen Thorne,
Interim Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults

Youth Group

Do YOU know how many cannons are at the Queen's Battery? Do YOU know why Tom Rose was ordered not to shoot off the noon day gun on a Sunday in 1906? Ask one of our teens!

Gower Youth Group members, including Grade 6 and up – accompanied by some parents, and doggies too – had a great "Final Hurrah!" on Saturday, June 20th before the summer break. We all did an extended version of the Ladies Lookout Hike, played a kind of Signal Hill Trivia/Scavenger Hunt along the way, and concluded with a picnic of homemade sub sandwiches and drinks by the Signal Hill Interpretation Centre. See some of the pics taken along the way. It was fun learning a bit more about our local history as well as sharing a beautiful day and a hike together! We look forward to gathering again in September! New members are always welcome!

Rev. Karen Thorne,
Interim Minister for Children, Youth and
Young Adults

YOUTH GROUP CO-LEADERS or HELPERS NEEDED

We will be hoping to have one or two new co-leaders or group helpers in September. We meet during the year once every two weeks for both fun and reflective activities and sharing a meal.

Please be in touch if you might like more details, or to volunteer for this role. Please give Rev. Karen a call at the church office (709)753-7286 or email Rev.Karen@nl.rogers.com. Happy summer days, everyone!



Summer Dates

Pride Parade

July 19 at 12:00 p.m.

Following worship at 10:00 a.m.

Summer Worship Services

Worship starts at **10:00 a.m.**
this summer. We hope you
can join us, in person or
online!

Films-on-the-Go: St. John's

Women's Film Festival

Monday evenings

in August 2026

Hosted by Gower Affirm

Welcome Back Sunday

September 20 at 11 a.m.

Block Party Sunday

September 13 at 11 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday and Thursday,

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Doors Open

Summer 2026

Tours available

Every day from June 29th to August 31st
from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
(exception of wedding and other event days)

Every Saturday from July 4th to August 29th
(same times)

Sunday, August 30 th	12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Monday, August 31 st	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 2 nd	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, September 3 rd	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Monday, September 7 th	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 8 th	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 15 th	10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 19 th	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 22 nd	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 30 th	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

2026 Memorial Services

Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Hamilton Avenue Extension
Monday, **July 6, 2026** at 7 p.m.

General Protestant Cemetery, Topsail Road
Monday, **July 20, 2026** at 7 p.m.

Memorial Gardens Cemetery, 25 Beaumont Hamel Way
Monday, **July 27, 2026** at 7 p.m.

Please note: In the event of
inclement weather, the
services will move ahead to
7pm the next evening.