



GOWER STREET UNITED CHURCH  
**LENTEN NEWSLETTER**

Traditionally, the season of Lent invites us to a journey of stripping down — letting go of distractions, shedding what weighs us down, and focusing on what truly matters. It is a time of reflection, simplicity, and renewal. In a world that often calls us to accumulate more, Lent whispers a different invitation: What if less is more? What if, in surrender, we find clarity? What if, in the wilderness, we discover what truly sustains us?

Jesus himself was led into the wilderness—a place of barrenness, quiet, and challenge. He was stripped of comforts and confronted with temptation, and yet, through it all, he leaned into love. Not power. Not possession. Not status. Love. The love of God that held him, strengthened him, and guided him forward.

As we step into this season, we ask:

**What if love is the thing that carries us through the wilderness?**

Not our achievements or our striving. Not our certainty or control. But love —the deep, abiding love of God that walks with us in every season. Love that reminds us we are not alone. Love that holds space for transformation. Love that leads us toward hope.

Perhaps this Lent is not about giving up, but about giving in—to love, to grace, to the possibility of renewal. Perhaps it is about simplifying, about noticing, about trusting that even in the wilderness, God is present. And that is enough.

May this Lenten season be a time of returning—to what matters most, to the heart of our faith, to the love that carries us always.

Rev. Pamela & Rev. Rebecca



# SHROVE TUESDAY AT GOWER

On Tuesday, March 4, Gower was the place to be for pancakes! The day started with a 20th Annual Stella's Circle Pancake Breakfast fundraiser event for their housing department. This event saw not only Gower and Stella's Circle working together but also other volunteers from the community coming to help serve the meal. There was also special performance from the Stella's Circle inclusion choir. The breakfast was cooked by the staff of Stella's Brasserie.



Media from CBC and NTV joined us for the breakfast as well. If you would like to see more you can watch the NTV news story [here](#) and the CBC news story can be seen here [here](#).



The fun continued with our Pancake Supper hosted by the Children, Education and Families team along with the Gower UCW and members of Gower Service and Social Club. It was a wonderful evening for all ages with activities, community and delicious food!



# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS LENTEN EVENTS



## *Bless This Lent*

WEEKLY DISCUSSION GROUP  
THURSDAYS AT 7:00 P.M.  
ON ZOOM



Join Rev. Rebecca on Zoom for our weekly discussion group during Lent.

We are using *The Hardest Part* from *The Everything Happens Project*.

Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.  
Dates: March 6, March 13, March 20,  
March 27, April 3, April 10

Journey to the Cross

## Lenten Pause



Join the Gower Ministry Team online weekly for a time scripture, music, and prayer.  
Fridays throughout Lent at 10:00 a.m.

Dates: March 14, March 21, March 28, April 4, April 11



# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS WORSHIP SERVICES



**March 9**  
First Sunday in Lent  
Communion  
Coffee Discussions: Visions and Dreams Continued

**March 16**  
Second Sunday in Lent  
Pie Day Worship



**March 23**  
Third Sunday in Lent  
Annual Congregational Meeting

**March 30**  
Fourth Sunday in Lent

**April 6**  
Fifth Sunday in Lent



**April 13**  
Palm Sunday with Gower Community Band



## Holy Week Worship Services

Maundy Thursday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m.  
Cowan Heights United Church

Good Friday Worship, April 18 at 1:00 p.m.  
Gower Street United Church

Good Friday Prayer Walk, April 18 at 2:00 p.m.  
Gower Street United Church

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil, April 19 at 8:00 p.m.  
St. James' United Church

# ARE YOU ENGAGED? WHOSE TEAM ARE YOU ON?

Your Stewardship team, for once, is not asking for money! Instead, we are asking you to increase your engagement with our faith community, by volunteering for at least one of Gower's teams. The current team members have been serving faithfully and tirelessly, sometimes for decades, but we need other church members to engage in this work.

We are changing the names of the groups that help run Gower Street United Church. Instead of "committee", we will now use the term "team". We feel this better describes the work that is being done in that rather than having formal Committees we see groups of people working together on various projects at times that suit you. So, becoming a part of a team won't necessarily mean you will be attending regular monthly meetings, but that you will work with others, as it suits your schedule, to accomplish the goals of each Team.

We are still using the same titles, at least for now, e.g. Stewardship and Worship and Sacraments. Each team will have a lead who is elected and will be on, or report to, the Church Board. However, how you engage with these teams is up to you.

On Sunday March 16th we will be holding an "Engagement Expo"! Each of the Team leads will be set up in the Lecture Hall and have information on their work and you may ask questions and see where you may be able to offer your time and talents. You may want to be a full-time participant or sign up to help with specific events.

The teams and their current leads are:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Finance                        | Ken Peters                      |
| • Stewardship                    | Lorne LeDrew                    |
| • Property                       | Gerry Pippy                     |
| • Worship and Sacraments         | Ken Slaney                      |
| • Ministry and Personnel         | Marie-Beth Wright, Roberta Gill |
| • Communications                 | David Robbins                   |
| • Service and Social Club        | Bert Riggs                      |
| • United Church Women            | Linda Nickerson                 |
| • Outreach                       | Linda Nickerson                 |
| • Pastoral Care                  | Tony Chadwick                   |
| • Affirm                         | Gail Wideman                    |
| • Children, Family and Education | Meghan McKibbon, Grace Dunsmore |
| • Heritage and Archives          | Rob Pitt                        |
| • Nominations                    | Gail Wideman                    |

Which team appeals to you? Would you like more information? Contact either of the Leads listed above and come to the Engagement Expo after the service on the 16th of March!

# LUNCH AND LEARN: VISIONS AND DREAMS

On Sunday, February 16th we hosted a Lunch and Learn “Exploring Visions and Dreams” for our faith community and national church, following a webinar offered in January by the national church.

The Moderator, The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, offered a New Year’s address and town hall built around the theme of visions, dreams, and growth as a sign of hope in the webinar. She was joined by the Growth team leadership, and the new church plant leads. It also included a pastoral welcome to the new and the Centennial year. The session was a national introduction to Growth and emerging Communities of Faith, offering the opportunity to learn more about the three streams of work underway to revitalize and activate growth in the denomination: Renew; Create; Invite.

We watched part of this webinar in our lunch and learn, but if you want to watch the whole video, [it is viewable here.](#)

We then had some time to reflect and share on the following questions: included below are the thoughts shared in our time together.

## **1. How has the church been productive in the past?**

- a. Original idea of uniting the denominations – the fundamental basis
- b. We become unproductive. We used to be productive, but we haven’t adapted to society's changes.
- c. Stuck in our ways – stuck in our buildings
- d. Mission & Service
- e. Speaking out on world issues (locally, nationally)
- f. Outreach, advocacy
- g. Worldwide/Palestine
- h. Uniting not dividing
  - i. Helps with connection to God
  - j. Place of solace from stressors of the world
  - k. Reaches out to the world with help and support
  - l. Prayers ring down through the ages
- m. Bringing groups together
- n. Collaboration with other churches (uniting), both within UCC and outside.
- o. Support for those in need. Give a sense of belonging.

## 2. How can the church be productive in the future?

- a. Doing more Outreach
- b. More working together with younger people and engagement of younger people with activities in the church. (sewing, egg painting, tradition sharing, knitting)
- c. More collaboration and activities that the people in the community are interested in.
- d. Living out the teachings of Jesus through community service – working together to make a difference
- e. Community and intergenerational community
- f. Regional creation of Pastoral Units for more collaboration in geographical units.
- g. Work together to share the skills of each congregation, rather than competing with each other.
- h. Need to make church more attractive to youth/children – they ARE future.
- i. Needs to be more unity (Pastoral units?)
- j. Focus on Youth
- k. Develop a focused outreach plan for the Downtown, “Stay relevant”
- l. Being aware and helpful to the wrong in the world
- m. Support people in the reading/explaining of scripture
- n. Continue to be a place of worship/faith/solace and support
- o. Do what the community is interested in
- p. Unite with other churches
- q. Outreach
- r. Make teachings meaningful to children and youth.
- s. Political but not fundamental
- t. Larger need, like never before, to address aggression and fill bellies. Educate the younger generation to step up.

## 3. What is the church being born into, in the next 100 years?

- a. Not so tied to our buildings
- b. Not so tied to Sundays
- c. Chaos politically, needs of increasing numbers of displaced poor, increased need to serve.
- d. Disinterest
- e. Non secular world
- f. Breaching earthly ties
- g. Service at different time/space
- h. Chaos in the world
- i. People being drawn away
- j. People feeling that God is NOT in control
- k. The church needs to be an anchor to hold people to their faith
- l. Gower is a downtown church – so demographics alone mean lower numbers whether we like it or not.

#### **4. How is Gower Street United Church being made new?**

- a. Recognizing that we need to change internally. (Gower Men's Club → Gower Service and Social Club – not just a gender switch but denomination as well)
- b. Open to everyone – strong base – GSSC, GCB, Gower Seniors Club
- c. New members
- d. Youth involvement
- e. Music for all
- f. Youth ministry
- g. Supportive activities
- h. Bands and Choirs
- i. Continuing to focus on tradition while embracing new ideas.
- j. Children are coming
- k. We need to change internally
  - l. Repurposing of building
- m. Financially, merging the spiritually and the practical.
- n. Programming to reach out to the broader community

#### **5. What is your vision for Gower Street United Church this year? 10 years?**

- a. Get off of Fossil Fuel
- b. Repair the stoves so they won't burn the soup
- c. Get financially level
- d. Stretch again – take a chance on what the community needs, that relevant
- e. Need to relevant
- f. Balance between finance and ministry
- g. For every dollar put into the building, an equal dollar to outreach
- h. Anti-Racist, inter-Cultural Church – great connection to what already exists in these areas
- i. Go out and see who we are partnering with – Stella's Circle, Bridges to Hope – work with the agencies that are already doing the work
- j. Place for all generations—there are practical ways to do that. Options for worship can be diversified, which may be more attractive to young people. The goal is not to change what you have but to have more options.
- k. Social Media
  - l. Collective community effort with Ministry team support
- m. To be a leader and co-operative partner for interdenominational downtown churches
- n. Look for additional growth strategies
- o. Other churches in St. John's
- p. Youth/families/older
- q. People want to be part of Gower and want to come in
- r. Community involvement



- s. Happiness, acceptance, welcoming, gardens, faith
- t. Remain connected to community
- u. Be strong as a leading church
- v. Dream new things
- w. Becoming financially sound
- x. More outreach, inter-generational, attractive to youth
- y. Strengthen our existing connections.

**6. What is your dream for our faith community? How can we make this happen?**

- a. Like the church services
- b. More Stella's Circle programming here
- c. Debt Free
- d. Are there ways that part of our outreach could be helping the rural churches around the province?
- e. The church continues
- f. To home the homeless
- g. To showcase the organ
- h. Families should share faith
- i. UCC
- j. Confront fake Christianity or self-serving Christianity (Nationally)
- k. Adopt a rural church

The ministry team welcomes any thoughts you may have on these topics. Also join us for a coffee time discussion with board members on March 9th following worship.

**Celebrating**  
**100 Years**  
of Deep • Bold • Daring

**100<sup>TH</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY  
The United Church of Canada • L'Église Unie du Canada

**Join Us!**  
Centennial Worship Service  
June 8, 2025 • 7:00 p.m. NT  
Gower Street United Church • St. John's, NL

# ANNUAL GOWER DESSERT AUCTION

Mark the evening of Saturday, April 12th on your calendar. The annual Gower Dessert Auction is happening again this spring.

We are doing things a little differently this year. The event will take place in the Lecture Hall and there will be entertainment provided by the very talented **Peter Halley and Shelly Neville**.

Please put together a group or come alone for a fun evening of great entertainment and delicious desserts. The tickets will be \$30 each and will be available at the church office starting on Monday March 17th.



## EASTER Worships

*9:30 AM Contemplative Worship with soft music, the Sacrament of Holy Communion and prayer*

*10:00 a.m. - Easter Sunday Coffee hosted by the Worship and Sacraments Committee in the Lecture Hall.*

*11:00 AM Easter Celebration Worship*



Open Hearts • Open Minds • Open Arms

Join us in person or online on Sunday April 20, 2025

# SAVE THE DATES

## Centennial Celebrations at Gower



**TUESDAY, MAY 6**  
GAME NIGHT AT GOWER «

**THURSDAY, MAY 15**  
COFFEE HOUSE WITH LIVE MUSIC AT GOWER «

**TUESDAY, MAY 20**  
GOWER SERVICE AND SOCIAL CLUB DINNER MEETING AT 6:00 P.M. «

**SUNDAY, MAY 25**  
GOWER COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT AT 3:00 P.M. «

**TUESDAY, MAY 27**  
100TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET AT GOWER «

**SUNDAY, JUNE 1**  
RAINBOW MELODIES WORSHIP AND LUNCH AT 11:00 A.M. WITH STELLA'S  
CIRCLE INCLUSION CHOIR AND CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH «

**SUNDAY, JUNE 8**  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION WORSHIP AT 7:00 P.M. «

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26**  
WORSHIP AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE LUNCH AND LEARN AT 11:00 A.M. «

**OCTOBER 2025**  
BOOK STUDY ON *HOW WE LEARN TO BE BRAVE: DECISIVE  
MOMENTS IN LIFE AND FAITH* BY MARIANN EDGAR BUDDER «

