

## Jan's Journal



Happy New Year!

On this first Sunday of 2026, we celebrate Epiphany Sunday.

As we begin a New Year, let's look ahead.

After a brief hiatus over Christmas and New Year, the business of the church resumes this week!

The Coffee and Conversation Group will resume their regular meetings on Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. **New participants are always welcome!** We meet in the Campbell Room. Please bring your own choice of beverage---coffee or tea or juice. We will complete the final session of a series we followed through Advent, titled "Advent Awakenings." We will not meet on January 13<sup>th</sup>, but on January 20<sup>th</sup> we will begin something new. The group has discussed a plan to follow a series of reflections from each book of the Bible, titled "The Long Conversation" and offered through The Prayer Bench. Perhaps we will begin that adventure on January 20<sup>th</sup>, or perhaps we will pursue something else first! The group will decide on January 6th

The Lunch and Lectionary Group will resume meetings on Thursday January 8<sup>th</sup>. We meet on Zoom each Thursday from 12:30 to 2 p.m. The group has decided to have a break from following the Lectionary each week. On January 8<sup>th</sup>, we will begin a discussion of *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine. **All are welcome** to read the book and join the discussion. Please let me know that you are interested so that I can send you the Zoom link.

The various Ministry Teams will resume regular meetings in the coming weeks, and the Official Board will meet on January 27<sup>th</sup>.

2026 promises to be a time of discernment, a time of exploring, a time of renewal for East Plains United Church. The Community Hub Ad Hoc Team (recently re-named The Community Connections Team) will continue to work with Community Development Halton and the Toronto United Church Council in exploring possible partnerships in the community. A Community Round Table discussion is being planned for early in the New Year.

In conjunction with these avenues of inquiry, I strongly believe that we also need to seek God's guidance in determining a way forward for East Plains. To help us to listen for God's nudges, I will offer a day of contemplative prayer on Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup> between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. During this time, you will have an opportunity to learn the technique of "praying with scripture", also known as Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) or Gospel Contemplation. There will also be some education about the history and meaning of the Labyrinth and an opportunity to walk a Labyrinth in Peart Hall.

In addition to Spiritual Saturday, I am also exploring the possibility of offering "A Week of Guided Prayer" in partnership with Appleby United Church. We would also invite members of

all United Churches in the area to join in the week, if they are interested. A “Week of Guided Prayer” requires the commitment of approximately ½ an hour of prayer, in the form of “Praying with Scripture” on your own at home each day, followed by a meeting with a trained Companion to discuss and deepen your prayer experience. The week will follow a particular theme. There are specific scripture passages offered each day from which you will choose one passage to focus upon. It is best to meet with your Companion in person, at the church for your discussion time; however, there will be Companions available to meet on Zoom, for those who find it a challenge to come in person.

The week begins on Sunday afternoon with an Opening Service which includes training in how to “Pray with Scripture,” and pairing with your Companion for the week. The Week finishes with a Closing Service on Saturday.

I will be meeting with the minister at Appleby United, Reverend Carolin MacMillan, this week to discuss plans and dates etc. Stay tuned for more news soon!

Wishing you all good health and much happiness in 2026!

You can reach me at: [revjanmcc@gmail.com](mailto:revjanmcc@gmail.com) or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings,

Pastor Jan