

A top-down view of a Thanksgiving table setting. The table is covered with a white cloth and decorated with several pumpkins of various sizes and colors (orange, white, and striped). There are also autumn leaves, greenery, and small candles. Plates, bowls, and cups are arranged on the table, some with green and white linens. The overall theme is warm and festive.

Westminster Chimes

Thanksgiving 2025

Happy October!

It seems more and more that September has become a “transition” month. Our fall activities begin again, but it still feels like summer. It feels like it takes at least a month to really get into the swing of things again.

Camino is no different. We’ve had a bit of a slow start as we all adjust to being back at school, back to sports and theatre school. I thought that as we really dig into our fall routines, it would be a good time to provide an update on what is happening with Kids Camino.

We began the program in Advent with 3 children. We now have 9 regular attenders. Most of these children have been invited by the original 3. Without ever hearing the word “evangelism” the children’s natural enthusiasm has spread the news of the program far better than we could have dreamed.

Each Wednesday we gather at 6pm and we share a light meal as we catch up with one another. Then we transition to sitting on a carpet at the feet of the Chancel steps. We ask questions and consider big questions like “Why did God make us?” and “Who does God love?” Much of our time is spent learning about God’s love!

This year, we are experimenting with splitting the group up so that both the older and younger children can hear and engage with the stories of our faith in age-appropriate ways. We do a lot of arts and crafts!

Everyone regathers after the crafts to play a game together, usually with the older children paired with or helping the younger ones as we put what we have learned into action. This is where things get loud! There is nothing like hearing the sound of raucous laughter in the church.

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St. James Westminster Anglican Church

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As our time together draws to a close, we regather at the steps and consider if we have new information to help us answer our question of the day. We add our new thoughts to the question sheet. Finally, we bring all that we have done together before God in prayer and song.

This fall, we are working our way through some of the major stories of the Old Testament to prepare for Advent.

If your children would like to join us, please feel free to reach out! We'd love to have more friends join us.

Rev. Ann Webber

All Souls Day Candle Lighting for the Departed

We will hold a special All Souls Day service on Sunday, November 2 at 7pm where we will again remember our loved ones that we see no longer. If you have someone that you grieve and would like us to remember, please let the parish office know. The departed do not have to be members of St. James and can have passed away at any time.

Prayer Corner

(Submitted by Karen Henkel)

May the blessing of light be on you,
light without and light within.

May the blessed sunshine shine on you and warm
your heart till it glows like a great peat fire, so that
the stranger may come and warm themselves at
it, and also a friend.

Traditional Irish Blessing

Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones who are divided
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather, Sacred One,
Teach us Love, Compassion, and Honour
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other.

From the Ojibway People

evergreen 2025



Under the trees we worshipped, worked, prayed, and played. Like trees, we rooted ourselves in our faith as we grew in God's fresh, evergreening, gracious, love. We opened our arms like branches spread wide, stretching out towards one another in Jesus' name, here in this place... and beyond!

Please enjoy this peek into another wonder-filled summer at Camp Huron and thanks to everyone at St. James for your support!

With deep gratitude, Gerry Adam



Thanksgiving Decorations

Thanksgiving is just around the corner and we could use your help to decorate our worship space. Donations of fruits, vegetables, squashes, pumpkins, flowering mums, and other harvest themed items would be most welcome. Please stop by with your donations on Saturday, October 11th at 9:30 am. That's when we will be arranging the decorations. Thanks for your help!

From the Wardens and Rector

Dear Friends in Christ,

We hope this letter finds you well and that you are experiencing the peace and grace of God in your daily life.

As we continue to serve Christ together at St. James Westminster, we want to take a moment to speak to you about our shared ministry and the vital role your financial giving plays in sustaining and growing it.

Like many of you, the church has been feeling the impact of inflation and rising costs. Utilities, supplies, insurance, and day-to-day operational expenses have all increased significantly. This isn't a challenge unique to us—it's something affecting individuals, families, and communities across the country. In light of this, we're asking everyone to prayerfully consider whether they are able to increase their financial commitment to the parish.

This request comes not out of crisis, but out of a desire to be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Your giving isn't simply about keeping the lights on or covering bills—it's about enabling ministry to happen. It's about supporting the work of outreach, worship, pastoral care, children's and youth programs, music, and so much more.

Thanks to your generosity:

- We've been able to maintain a vibrant Sunday worship life, complete with beautiful music and a welcoming space.
- Our parish continues to support local outreach efforts, offering assistance to those most in need in our community.
- We're growing in programs that nourish faith across generations, from baptisms to memorials, and everything in between.

If you are already giving regularly, thank you. Your faithfulness is deeply appreciated. If you haven't reviewed your giving in some time, or if you are in a position to increase it—even by a small amount—please consider doing so. If you give through Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR), making a change is as simple as sending an email to Rebekah in the parish office.

Above all, thank you for being part of this parish family. Your prayers, presence, and support are all signs of the life of Christ in our midst.

With gratitude and hope,

The Rev. Michael Bruce, Elaine Jones, & Jim Mays

Plainsong: An Ancient Song for Today

If you've worshipped at St. James Westminster recently, you may have noticed something that sounds both simple and timeless in our liturgy: the way we sing the psalms has changed. We have started using **plainsong**. But what exactly is plainsong, and why have we begun to use it?

Plainsong is one of the oldest forms of Christian music. It developed in the early centuries of the Church, long before harmony and complex musical structures were common. Its beauty lies in its simplicity: a single, unaccompanied melodic line, flowing naturally with the rhythm of the words. In the Western Church, plainsong became closely associated with the chanting of psalms and prayers, particularly in monastic communities where daily worship was ordered around the recitation of the Divine Office.

For centuries, plainsong was the universal sound of Christian worship. When we hear it, we are quite literally listening to the prayers of our ancestors in faith. Though it may sound austere compared to later hymns or choral works, plainsong has a remarkable power to draw us into prayer. Its free rhythm mirrors the cadence of spoken language, allowing scripture to be sung in a way that feels meditative rather than performative.

You might wonder, though: *how do I actually sing it?*

At St. James Westminster, the chanting is led by a cantor who sets the tone and pace with the first verse. The congregation joins in on the alternating verses. There's no need to worry about "getting it right"—plainsong is forgiving and natural. The idea is to let the melody carry the words, not to perform a polished piece of music.

Plainsong also inspired nearly every tradition of church music that followed. The great polyphonic works of the Renaissance, the chorales of the Reformation, and even the hymns we sing today all trace some of their DNA back to this ancient practice. Plainsong is, in a real sense, the "taproot" of Anglican musical tradition.

When we chant the psalms together, we are not aiming for musical perfection but for prayerful participation. The alternating pattern of cantor and congregation allows the whole assembly to find its voice together. In this way, plainsong is not only a link with the earliest centuries of Christian worship but also a living practice that draws us into prayer here and now.

So next time you see a psalm marked for plainsong, don't be shy. Listen for the cantor, join in on your verses, and let the steady rhythm of chant settle you into prayer. You may discover that this ancient form of music has a surprising way of opening your heart to God's presence among us.

My Best Thanksgiving Gift Ever

by Mary Lou Anderson

One of my favourite prayers from the BAS happens at the end of the Communion Service when we say "Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or image." This summer, those words so often repeated, took on extra meaning for me.

I am fortunate to be a healthy person. I have never been truly ill. And I've never heard my name read out in Church as one of the people being prayed for. Until this summer.

I thought that my lethargy was because I hadn't spent enough time working out at the gym; or maybe it was just something attributable to age. I had lots of explanations to justify my tiredness but never once did I consider that I might be carrying a life-threatening bacteria that was slowly invading my body.

When my overwhelming need for sleep was combined with fever, violent shaking and chills, my daughter and husband insisted on contacting Telehealth. The online nurse instructed them to get me to the nearest hospital immediately! God's power was working in them to do infinitely more than I could have imagined.

Blood samples, scans and the wise diagnoses of the skilled medical team identified that I had a particularly nasty form of an e-coli bacteria in which

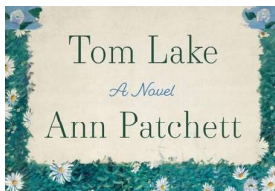
my immune system went into overdrive. It was a dangerous complication leading to sepsis that was resistant to almost all antibiotics. This was a particularly frightening time for my family and me as we faced the exceptionally high mortality rate caused by this infection. In fact, one of our darkest times involved the teary planning of my possibly imminent funeral. Thankfully, there was gradual improvement during my eighteen days of hospitalization. This was followed by six weeks of intravenous antibiotics administered lovingly by my husband at home.

On one Sunday while still in hospital, I listened to the online broadcast of the worship service from St. James Westminster. The depth of that experience for me in my very vulnerable state was truly more than I could have imagined. I listened to the words of the Gospel hymn, "We are Standing on Holy Ground", knowing that at that moment, my hospital bed was Holy Ground. More than I could have asked or imagined.

Several days later when my doctor informed me of the unexpected plan for my hospital discharge, those words echoed in my thoughts once again: "Glory to God – more than I could have asked or imagined." Not only was I leaving the exemplary care of the hospital but I was going home!

If I had a different outcome from my illness, would I still be praising God in thanksgiving for the prayers and medical care that sustained me? I don't know. I'm very fortunate and I don't want to minimize the tragedy of those whose lives have been needlessly taken due to poisoning by sepsis. But, this Thanksgiving, I have a level of gratitude that is way more, infinitely more, than I could ask or imagine. Thanks be to God.

Book Club



The Book Club meets monthly (usually the third Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.) to discuss a variety of books selected by the members -

current fiction and non-fiction. In addition, there are suggestions and conversations concerning books we have enjoyed.

Our choice for October is TOM LAKE by Ann Patchett, a prize-winning and favourite author. It is a family story, taking place during the pandemic, when three sisters join their parents in picking cherries on the family farm. It is all about relationships, and the lives our parents led before they were our parents.

Gradually, the girls hear their mother's story of her romance with a famous actor who has recently died, and of her long ago acting career in a summer stock theatre called Tom Lake.

For more information, please contact Barbara Thamer at fdbthamer@gmail.com or 519-672-1016.

Food Pantry Outreach

We continue to support Church of the Epiphany's Outreach Work with food donations.

Please leave donations by the Bruce Street door. Items most needed:

- cans of tuna, chicken or ham flakes, corned beef, ham, salmon
- Cheese Whiz
- peanut butter, smooth or crunchy
- chunky soup
- jam
- pasta - elbows, penne, rigatoni

