

CEDAR PARK UNITED

Welcome!

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We're delighted that you have this Welcome booklet in your hand, and that you have found us. If you are seeking meaning, seeking learning opportunities, seeking community—maybe even seeking God, we hope that you'll find what you're looking for at Cedar Park United. Here, you'll find a progressive, welcoming community that is truly open to the outside world: We mean it when we say that our doors are open to all ages, races, denominations and sexual orientations. Together, we explore questions of faith and spirituality in and beyond the Christian tradition, and we are spurred on by our life and faith together to act on our shared concerns for social justice and caring for the earth.

We meet for Sunday morning worship every week at 10 AM, and you seriously don't need to know anything about church to attend and participate. Come, enjoy our outstanding choir, hear sermons and join in prayers that make connections between God and our everyday world, or simply experience a time for reflection and peace while your children join in the KidZone activities which happen while you are in worship. Stay around after the service for a hot cup of coffee or tea...and warm conversation.

On the next page you'll find Cedar Park's "Identity and Values Statement" which is a good starting point for getting to know who we are, what we value and why we do things the way we do. The following pages then outline some of our ministries and activities. If you like to find out by joining in, you can certainly get to know us by attending one of the many community-oriented activities which take place during the week. You'll see that there is something for everyone, no matter your age, stage or walk of life. Have a look around our website www.cedarparkunited.org for more about our programming.

Welcome is about getting to know one another, so I would be more than happy to meet with you personally, or by phone to get to know you. I can be reached by email at erjones@bellnet.ca or by phone at the Church Office 514 695 3337.

We hope you'll be able to feed your spirit, find your purpose and feel at home at Cedar Park United.

Welcome!

Rev. Elisabeth Jones, Minister



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WELCOME TO CEDAR PARK UNITED

Identity and Values Statement

We are an open faith community seeking to keep Jesus' message relevant and real in our complex world—a message of an abundant life for all.

We value a contemporary Christian theology that works through our lives.

We are a place for people to seek and find God.

We value worship that connects with real life.

We share inspiring messages and music that challenge us to live in God's way.

We value spiritual growth.

We are seekers of understanding and provide a safe environment for exploring faith and spirituality together.

We value inclusivity and harmony, honesty and respect in our relationships.

We are an affirming ministry that values diversity of all kinds, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

We value the balance and wholeness that comes through healing.

We promote healing and wholeness in many ways, including through our Healing Pathways and pastoral care ministries.

We value being a community without borders, a church without walls.

Nurturing talents and gifts, we make connections through outreach to the wider community by means of our programmes, music, and ministries.

We value social and global justice.

We strive to connect faith with action, recognizing that partnerships make a difference in engaging the world.

We value the God-given gift of our home, the Earth.

We recognize the need to adapt our thinking and our actions in order to restore and sustain our environment.

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Worship

Everyone is welcome to attend and experience our weekly Worship service. It doesn't matter if you have no religion, or if you've never been to church before. We will welcome you, respect your dignity and privacy, and no-one will try to 'convert' you to Christianity or to our particular form of it. We simply want to share our experience of God with you.

Worship is a time to gather together to connect spiritually with God and with one another. It's a time when we are uplifted by music, song, spoken word, prayer and exploration of Scripture, seeking to make sense of God's message of abundant life for all. After this weekly worship experience, we are renewed and inspired to live our faith in action in our daily lives, caring for one another, for the wider community and for the earth.

What happens in worship? Everyone – young and older – gathers for the first 10 minutes or so for family friendly worship. Our children then leave us for their own KidZone programme, which takes place while adults remain to participate in creative worship experiences which include music, drama, meditation and prayer.

Cedar Park United has a vibrant, growing music ministry under the direction of Douglas Knight. We invite you to be part of it. Our goal is to use music to enhance the worship experience for all. We have a large, active adult choir, and a young vibrant junior choir. These choirs are often supplemented by the contributions of other musicians. There is a place for all of us in this music ministry, as congregants or choir members.

Special seasons of the year – Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter – are occasions for us to create special worship services which are especially welcoming to visitors and neighbours, and many of these are "all-ages" worship so that families can enjoy the experience together.

Nursery care for infants is provided at all our worship services, and KidZone provides welcome space for children over 18 months.

WELCOME TO CEDAR PARK UNITED

Young Family Ministries

At Cedar Park United, we don't try to keep the kids quiet and out of sight—we celebrate their presence with us! From intergenerational worship services designed around, and actively including, our young ones, to our Nursery care and active KidZone program, our church welcomes young families and rejoices as they keep our congregation active, vibrant and forward-thinking. There are so many ways in which parents and children can plug into the Cedar Park community—both on Sundays and throughout the week. Just take a look!

- KidZone
- F4: Food, Fun and a Film with your Family (monthly)
- Tot Time Play Group (weekly)
- Youth in Action (A group for teens and young adults, focussing on social justice)
- Kids Camps (summer, day time)
- Junior Choir (weekly)

All Ages/Seniors Ministries /Young at Heart

Cedar Park United is blessed with a multi-generational community which includes people at all life-stages, including active Seniors. Many activities are 'multi-generational', and some are more geared to folk who are at home but active during the day. We hope you'll find some that mesh with your interests, needs and talents. Here are just a few examples:

- Morning Connections
- Coffee House
- Women's Group (monthly)
- Man-to-Man
- Church Choir
- Voices for Hope 70 voice community choir
- Day-time discussion/study groups
- Social Justice and community outreach groups



Social Justice Ministry

Cedar Park United is well known for its longstanding tradition of reaching out to the community and the world through the work of its Outreach and Social Justice Ministries. A committed group of people coordinate educational events and assist the community in its support of a wide range of initiatives both locally and globally that serve God's people in the world. There is a place for all of us in this vital part of who we are at Cedar Park United. Contact the Church office to find out where you can join in.

Ministries directly supported include

- Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada.
- St. Columba House.
- Montreal City Mission.
- (West Island) Family Life Centre.

Other initiatives supported by the congregation include

- West Island LGBTQ Youth Centre
- Christian Action Chretienne
- Dix Mille Village Pointe Claire
- C.A.R.E. Apartment
- Plan Canada (formerly Foster Plan Canada).
- Cedar Park's Youth in Action Group
- Montreal Community Loan Fund/ ACEM
- Grandmothers to Grandmothers
- Montreal Diet Dispensary.

Cedar Park United is also concerned about the environment and will be taking steps to educate and act on programmes that will make God's creation a safe and healthy place for all.

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Christian Growing and Learning

At Cedar Park United, we are keen to make connections between the Gospel (the message of Jesus) and today's world. It's part of our identity to be an 'open', questioning, seeking, growing community of faith, that takes the Bible seriously (but not literally, in case you were wondering!), and treats everyone's spiritual questions with deep respect. We tend to be more interested in exploring possibilities than in finding answers, and this is reflected in the types of programmes we offer to all ages.

Children receive inspiration for their journey of faith through KidZone, Youth in Action Group, and other family activities where we share our values in action.

Adults have numerous opportunities to explore faith in action through our Social Justice Ministries (see above), and in our LiveWell Programme which explores issues of health and wellbeing for all ages and stages. We also continue to offer Bible studies, "Exploration" series on prayer, spirituality, Christian faith and practice. Many of these programmes are offered both during the daytime and evening, and on our Minister's "Beyond Wood and Stone" Blog.

Caring and Healing Ministries

Cedar Park United is a deeply caring community. Looking out for one another happens at all sorts of levels, whether just a friendly smile and listening ear at one of our gatherings, or visiting those in hospital or who cannot get out and about. While caring is everyone's responsibility, Cedar Park United has a "Pastoral Care Team Ministry" with 21 trained lay pastoral care visitors who work with our Minister to ensure that those who need a visit, or special care during a crisis or tough time, get it.

If you want to become involved in this Pastoral Care Ministry team, do let Rev. Elisabeth know, or Margaret Vost, who is team leader.

And if you ever need the support of this ministry, don't hesitate! Just call the Church Office at 514 695 3337, and you'll be connected with help as soon as possible.



Cedar Park United also has an active **Healing Pathway** Ministry which is a non-invasive procedure practised by trained team members, using "healing touch" techniques adapted for this United Church sponsored healing programme. The practitioners act as conduits through which God's grace passes to restore balance and wholeness of Body, Mind, and Spirit. The most common effect is a sense of profound peace and relaxation that may alleviate the pain of muscle tension from the temporary and even long-time stresses of life. Check out the website or the bulletin boards to find out more, or to book an appointment. This ministry is available to anyone who needs it.

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Giving and Supporting our Programmes and Ministries

Giving is a natural human response to the blessings that we have received from God and from one another. It is also how we make happen the things that we value. In particular, our Cedar Park United community and its ministries exist because we support them in many ways.

People give to God's work through our community in many ways. Some offer their experience and gifts of time, talent, expertise, and creativity. It's these people who help to provide programming for KidZone, Social Justice, Christian growing and learning programmes, administration, volunteers for special events, or through leadership on the Church Board.

Financial gifts are also vitally important to maintain the health of our community and its ministries. Cedar Park United is totally self funding and is dependent upon the financial support of individuals and families. Giving can be done through weekly offering envelopes which are collected each week during worship, through Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR), or through cheques. All gifts made directly to the church are tax-deductible. We also receive bequests and special gifts to support particular projects.

Giving allows us to empower the work that we believe in, and to support work in places where we cannot be physically.

Our Church Leaders

Cedar Park is blessed with a wonderful, talented ministry leadership team (staff), and a great number of dedicated lay leaders, most of whom can't be named here, but we're sure you'll meet them!

- Rev. Elisabeth Jones, Minister
Since August 2011, Rev. Elisabeth has been our Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. She comes to us after 14 years teaching pastoral studies in United Church seminaries, and is well-known to us as a former member (and Bible study facilitator), at Cedar Park United since 2004.
- Douglas Knight, Music Director
Douglas is well known on the music and choral scene in Montreal. He is the animator par excellence of our Adult and Junior Choirs, and the Voices for Hope Choir, making music such a vital part of our life at Cedar Park.
- Elizabeth Chown Lafrenière, Church Administrator
Elizabeth brings administrative experience from years working with Air Canada to her ministry of administration at Cedar Park, which she's been doing for over a decade. Her "institutional memory" is invaluable to the staff team.
- Christie Smith-Favit, KidZone Coordinator
Christie is a "Manse Kid" who brings her three children, her musical talent and her passion for creative work with Children's ministry to her work with the Sunday programme called "KidZone"
- Congregational Board, led by Sabra Ledent, Chair
The Board is populated by long-timers and newcomers, younger and older, who bring a wealth and breadth of perspective and experience to lay-leadership at Cedar Park United.

Any of the above can be contacted through the church office 514 695 3337 or via cedaparkunited@bellnet.ca