

THE VISITOR



**The thankful
heart opens
our eyes to a
multitude of
blessings that
continually
surround us.**

James E. Faust

This issue:

MINISTRY MESSAGE

Page 03

MUSIC NOTES

Page 04

CHURCH RETREAT

Page 05

CONNECTING

Page 07

YOSEMITE VISIT

Page 09

BELONG, GROW, SERVE

Page 10

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Page 14



Welcome.

Fall is a season of beginnings. School starts up for young and older. We get into a regular routine after taking a break over the summer. This also includes the regular routine of the church. Committee meetings have started. The choir is getting back for rehearsals. The building is bustling with groups and events.

St. James wouldn't be where it is today without its community. Community inside and outside the church create a unique opportunity to foster friendships and new bonds.

This fall season, connect with your community and try something new. Join a new group, talk with a new person, or renew your commitment to make St. James a vibrant, outgoing church.

Sincerely,
Glen Warren, Editor

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Minister:
Rev. James Ravenscroft



@StJamesUnited



st.JamesUC



StJamesUCNL

Worship with us!
Sunday, 11:00 AM
Sunday, 7:00 PM



Ministry Message

James Ravenscroft

Each June, as the weather warms, many members of St. James head out around the bay for weekend getaways or leave the island for summer excursions. But then September comes and temperatures cool, and we regroup as a community. Over the years, I have come to appreciate this regular rhythm of Canadian church life. For one, the slower pace gives me needed time to recharge after the busy-ness of the ministry year (September through June). It's also an annual reminder to me of the gift we share as a congregation. Over the summer, I notice who is away and wonder how they are doing, hoping they too are getting a needed break. And then they return with tales of what they did, where they went and who they saw.

That moment also gives me a boost. Seeing everyone together, renewing connections and making new ones (our location near the university meaning a regular uptick of newcomers each fall), reminds me why I entered ministry all those years ago. For me, it has always been about relationships, being there for each other, sharing a laugh and as likely sharing a cry, providing each other an opportunity to grow in faith, coming together in worship as diverse voices blend into one, serving in the community, all of it done in Jesus' name, a reflection of the world he invited us to nurture, an embodiment of the beloved community he called the kingdom of God. Helping nurture that is what brings my heart joy. And each fall we do that with renewed energy after much-needed time away for many, me included.

I suspect that I am not alone in the experience I just shared. And so I pray that we hold onto that feeling as fall shifts into winter and the busy-ness of the ministry year revs up. It is easy to lose sight of why we do what we do when commitments start to build and perhaps we've left some needed preparation for an event to the last minute (guilty as charged). So when we start to feel tired, even a bit overwhelmed, may we recall the joy we felt as September returned and brought with it faces both familiar and new, and brought with it: the gift of renewed community. I certainly will. After all, community is a big part of who we are, of why we keep returning each fall, ready to nurture the love, the faith, the relationships we share, in Jesus' name.

Be present in
all things and
thankful for
all things.

Maya Angelou





Music Notes

Greetings from St. James' Music Team!

Fall is a season rich with musical inspiration, as themes of creation, harvest, and the beauty of nature beautifully complement faith-filled music. It is also a time to embrace new beginnings. In this spirit, St. James is embarking on a season of services centered around the theme of community. Music has the power to foster and deepen our sense of belonging, and we are excited to uplift and strengthen our worship through the unifying gift of song.

Our music program is deeply rooted in the desire to strengthen our sense of community, and one of the ways we are achieving this is through the exploration of world music. With many beautiful selections available in our current hymnals, Voices United and More Voices, we are eager to enrich our congregational repertoire. By incorporating a broader variety of musical expressions, we hope to create a more inclusive and diverse worship experience that resonates with everyone in our community.

Our Senior Choir has restarted, and we are excited to journey through a new season of music, including both familiar, well-loved anthems and new, challenging selections. The Senior Choir will typically lead music on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Soloists, ensembles, the St. James Guitar Group and guest choirs will fill in the remaining services, and we offer our gratitude to all of these generous musicians!

As we look ahead, we are also exploring the possibility of featuring more instrumental talents from within the congregation. Our church is home to dozens of woodwind, brass, and percussive instruments, and we hope to begin some small instrumental ensembles this fall.

Our music community is always eager to grow, and we welcome new members! If you have any questions or are interested in getting involved, please reach out to Amy or Bob. Let's continue to make music that unites and strengthens our sense of community!

Amy Dalziel



CHURCH RETREAT



On Saturday, September 14, members of our council, committees, UCW, AOTS and choir, along with several members of our congregation, met for a planning retreat at Queen's College on the MUN campus. Facilitated by Rev. James with assistance from Michelle Skinner, chair of council, and Jean Thompson, our treasurer, the day began with some fun as the group split into small groups and answered random questions like "If your life was a movie, what genre would it be?" and "Who is your favourite Disney villain?"

The next exercise helped the group focus on the purpose of the day, as they were asked to suggest items and messages about St. James to put in a time capsule. The answers spoke to the heart of what makes St. James special as people suggested items like sheet music, a list of charter members, recipes, a wine bottle with grape juice in it, the birthday church, our Affirming Vision statement, and "The Visitor". One suggestion captured what everyone was trying to say when someone said we should include symbols for peace, hope and love.

That suggestion helped the group stay focused on why we were there. What is a church for if not to seek God's peace, extend Christ's love, and live in the hope we share in the Spirit. This is, of course, rooted in our particular congregational context, or as one participant put it in "what is our purpose, what we are trying to sell?" After some discussion the group thought the congregational motto, "Belonging, Growth, Service" listed in the 2023 Mission Articulation Plan, captured it, St. James being a community where everyone belongs, where everyone has opportunity to grow in faith, and can make a difference in their community.

It is important to name who we are as we face the financial challenge of a \$40,000 deficit by the end of the year, a reality that the group spent time looking at and discerning how to move forward. An important principle of congregational stewardship is that "money follows mission", or put another way, people contribute to organizations they believe in, to aims that they value. This principle invites us to be clear about who we are and what we are called to do. To this end many ideas were suggested, many focused on the importance of music at St. James, along with worship and pastoral care, priorities named in the 2023 MAP. In addition, there was enthusiasm about connecting with two main groups: reaching out to families who have stopped coming to St. James but are still affiliated with the congregation, and reaching out to our neighbours, perhaps hosting a block party on our parking lot.

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The idea sharing was very energizing, but with a caveat: we need to address our deficit and so place ourselves on a sustainable footing. To this end, the group named these actions:

1. Form a strategic plan committee that will look at ways we can grow our revenues, and seek to be on a sustainable footing moving forward;

2. Launch a time specific financial campaign to help us address our deficit and give us needed breathing room to put growth strategies into effect;

3. Set up a fundraising committee that is separate from the Stewardship Committee, including representatives from AOTS and UCW, focused on events across the year;

4. Look at ways to renew our worship services, including how we engage with visitors;

5. Invigorate how we help members and adherents share their time and their talents.

Overall, the meeting was well worth the full day, with most people leaving Queens feeling energised and hopeful. There is much to do for St. James to get back onto a firm footing, but if the time capsule exercise was anything to go by, St. James is a congregation that is worth the leadership and labour it will take for us to keep being a community where we all can seek peace, share love and live in hope.



Connecting the Nones

In a recent article published in Broadview, Julie McGonegal reflects on the “nones” of society: those who have chosen not to have any religious affiliation. These are the people who check the box “no religion” when asked on the census form which denomination or religion they belong to. Statistics Canada’s 2021 census found that almost 35 percent of Canadians filled out the census that way, up from just four percent in 1971.

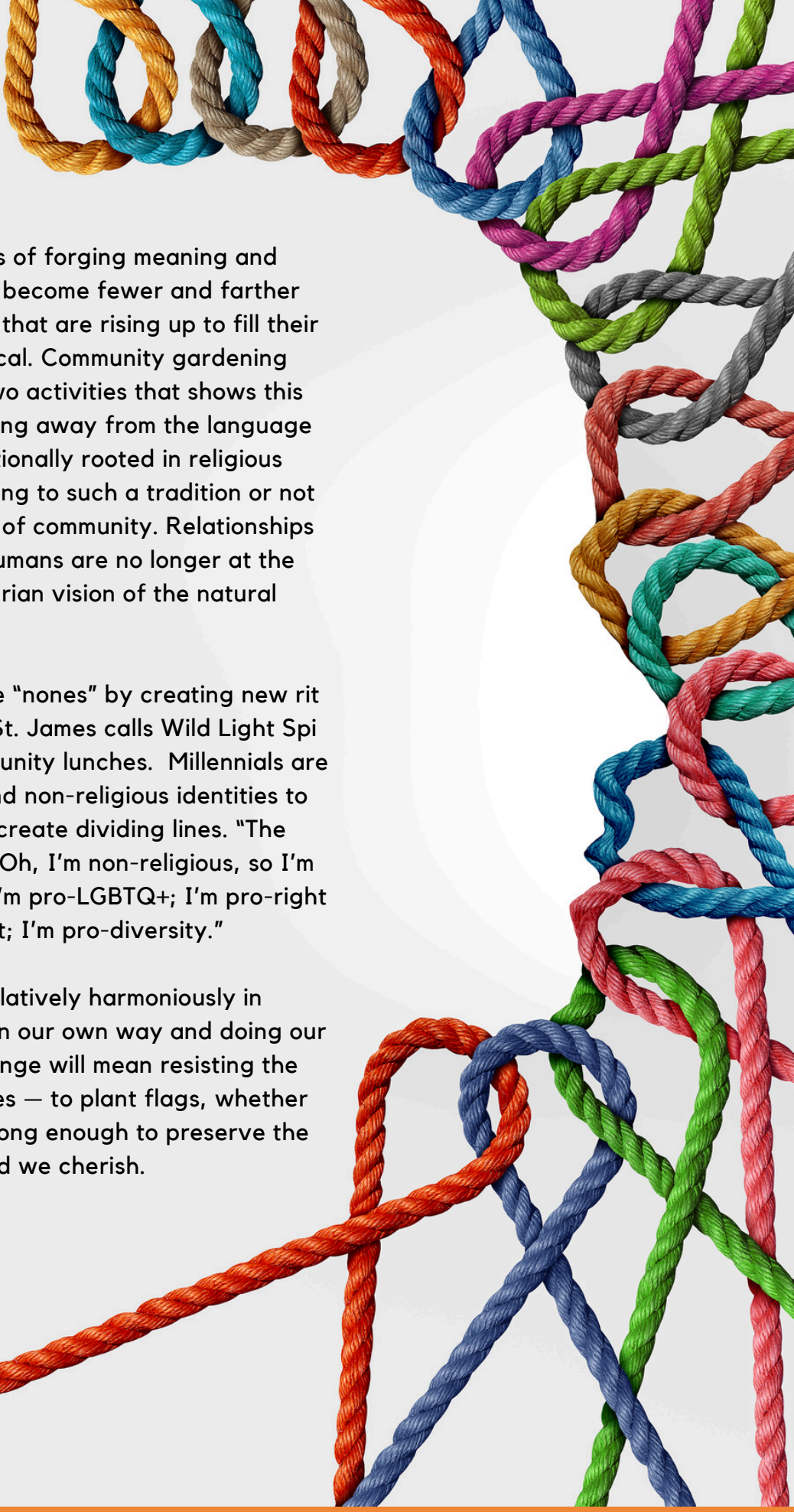
By tradition, and even by name, this group has been defined by what its members don’t believe and don’t do. “The stereotype persists — that *nones* don’t believe anything, that their unwillingness to affiliate means they don’t contribute to society, that their spirituality is a do-it-yourself hodgepodge designed for their individual satisfaction,” Barbara Brown Taylor, public theologian and bestselling author of *Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith*. But who are they?

Millennials are major players. Roughly half of this generation, those born between the mid-1980s and the early 2000s, have no religious affiliation, according to Statistics Canada’s 2019 General Social Survey. These are the children and grandchildren of the baby boomers. Why have they opted out of religion? It’s the epic saga of modernity. For example, Canadians born in the 1930s to parents who weren’t religious — and yes, they did exist — were likely to adopt a religion as adults. At that time, most non-religious people would meet and marry people who went to church and who would insist that their partners go with them. But for Canadians born in the 1980s, it’s precisely the reverse. If they are raised with religion, they’re likely to reject it once they leave home.

So what do nones stand for? Well, there are the myths. Some of them contradict each other. One is that all nones are atheists while another is that they are all deeply spiritual, having been liberated from the burden of organized religion. In fact, the label is shorthand for a large swath of people some who identify as atheists, others as agnostics, some as spiritual but not religious and others as indifferent.

How non-religious people make meaning clearly sets them apart from religious affiliates. It’s one of the striking, and statistically significant, differences according to the latest findings. Many nones and non-religious folks do not see any inherent purpose in life or believe there is a deeper meaning to existence. They do create purpose and meaning, but they recognize that they have created it. Religious individuals are much more likely to believe that they have a task in life, for example, and to feel that their life has a deeper meaning. But non-religious folks are no less likely to feel that good relationships are the stuff of a happy life.

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People are inventing new ways of forging meaning and connection as religious spaces become fewer and farther between. And the new spaces that are rising up to fill their place tend to be less hierarchical. Community gardening and nature trekking are just two activities that shows this shift in action. People are moving away from the language of human stewardship conventionally rooted in religious traditions — whether they belong to such a tradition or not — while expanding their sense of community. Relationships are turning more horizontal. Humans are no longer at the top, and there's a more egalitarian vision of the natural world.

St. James can connect with the “nones” by creating new rituals like Forest Church (what St. James calls Wild Light Spiritual Oasis) and holding community lunches. Millennials are already using their religious and non-religious identities to define who they are — and to create dividing lines. “The non-religious millennial is like, ‘Oh, I’m non-religious, so I’m not like that religious person. I’m pro-LGBTQ+; I’m pro-right to choose; I’m pro-environment; I’m pro-diversity.’”

Can we continue to co-exist relatively harmoniously in Canada, each of us believing in our own way and doing our own thing? Rising to the challenge will mean resisting the urge to throw up the barricades — to plant flags, whether religious or secular-striped — long enough to preserve the complexity and common ground we cherish.

Glen Warren

A VISIT TO YOSEMITE

Bob and I have visited many remarkable countries and places, yet I'd have to say that most places pale in comparison with our recent trip to California and most especially our time spent in Yosemite Park!

This park is famous for its outstanding scenery. It averages over 4 million visitors each year, making it one of the most visited park in the US. The natural beauty of Yosemite is so incredible that it inspired one of America's first conservation movements.

The geography of California is very different from the other places we have visited. The mountain peaks of Yosemite are mind-boggling - a wonderland of glacially carved granite.

The incredible scenery and vistas leave one searching for words: amazing vertical cliffs, some of these well over half a mile of vertical granite, and some of the highest waterfalls in the world plunging into the valleys below.

It is a struggle to describe the magnificent great sequoia trees that grow there and the spectacular wilderness! In this park there is a true merging of natural beauty and divine nature!

The landscape is truly unique. The grandeur and beauty are hard to describe. The word 'awesome' comes to mind, but even that seems sadly inadequate!

The Park is a truly sacred place. Images can never truly depict what we saw and 'felt' while we were there.

Visiting Yosemite was for us a truly spiritual experience, We will always treasure our time there since it is not just the physical attributes that make Yosemite revered around the world. It is indeed the spirit of the place!

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.” (Rachel Carson)

Jean Rose



Yosemite

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT AND BELONG

This congregational men's fellowship group meets from 12:30 to 2:30 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month for a cooked dinner, talk, and just get together. The AOTS also hosts two fish suppers a year as a fundraiser for the congregation.

AOTS

UCW

Often considered the "hands and feet of the church," the UCW is open to any woman wanting to contribute her time and energy for the work of the local and wider church. The UCW meet on the 2nd Monday of the month starting at 12:30pm. They host fundraising teas each fall and spring.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND GROW

Are you in your mid to late teens? Did you want to learn more about what we believe in the United Church? Then join other teens in confirmation classes this fall. Contact Rev. James (james@stjamesuc.org) for more information.

Confirmation Classes

Pub Theology

Do you want to explore questions of faith, spirituality or ethics in a safe space? Then join Pub Theology, an informal discussion group which meets at Guvnor Pub from 7:00 to 9:00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

St. James hosts a variety of worship styles each Sunday at 7:00 pm (or 3:00 pm on the 3rd Sunday). These include an informal worship with secular music, a vesper service with Celtic music and outdoor events to connect with God in nature, and more. Check the website (www.stjamesuc.org) to learn more.

Eventide Worship

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND GROW

Worship

In addition to 11am Sunday worship, St. James hosts a variety of worship services. These include an informal worship with secular music, a reflective service with Celtic and Newfoundland music, and outdoor services to connect us with God in nature. Check the website (www.stjamesuc.org) to learn where and when.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CARE AND SERVE

The congregation hosts a soup lunch following worship on the 3rd Sunday of each month. If you are interested in bringing a pot of soup, rolls or some sweets, you are invited to sign the sheet in the vestibule or call the church office.

Soup Lunches

Guitar Group

If you like to play guitar, accordion or other traditional instruments, why not join the Guitar Group. This group meets at 10:30 am on Thursdays to rehearse in preparation to play at seniors homes and Sunday worship services.

If you like to sing, consider sharing your gift in the Senior Choir. Generally leading music in worship every other Sunday, this SATB choir rehearse weekly on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:00 pm

Senior Choir



QUADRANGLE CLOTHING NIGHT

We're teaming up with Choices for Youth's @myneighbourhoodnl to present a clothing night!

How does this work?

Come on down to Quadrangle NL (330 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's) to pick up your punch card. On Friday, September 27, head to Neighbourhood (38 Pearson Street, St. John's) from 5pm-7pm to pick up 10 items of your choosing for free!

Please note, you must have a punch card to participate in this event!

Harvest

TEA AND BAKE STALL

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 2, 2024**

2:00-4:00 PM

\$**8**



330 ELIZABETH AVENUE, ST. JOHN'S, NL

SPONSORED BY THE
UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Trunk 'N Treat

We're back and ready for
another day of fun!

Sunday, October 27, 2024
2:30 — 4:00 pm (or until shelled
out, whichever comes first)

St. James United Church
330 Elizabeth Avenue

No costume required

Hope to see you all there!!!

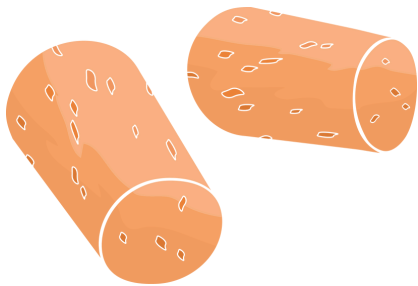


CRAFT WITH KIDS

Cork Squirrel

You will need the following

- Cork
- Two small wiggly eyes
- Cotton Ball
- Tiny brown or black pompom
- Brown paper
- Brown marker
- Scissors
- White glue



Squirrels gather nuts and seeds to store as food during the winter. Read Proverbs 6: 6-8 and learn about being prepared.

1. Stretch the cotton ball out to make the tail of the squirrel. Dab the cotton with the side of the brown marker to add colour. Glue the tail to one side of the cork.
2. Glue two eyes and nose to the top front of the cork on the opposite side of the cotton tail.
3. Cut two pointy ears from the brown paper. Glue to the front of the cork above the eyes.
4. Make a large family of squirrels using corks of various sizes.



Mark your calendars!

DATE	TIME	LITURGICAL THEME /STYLE OF EVENT/IDE	WORSHIP LEADERSHIP	MUSIC LEADERSHIP	SPECIAL INFO	FELLOWSHIP
Sept 8	11:00 am	Caring Sunday	James	Soloist	Communion	Coffee/tea
Sept 8	7:00 pm	Tapestry	James/Young Adults			
Sept. 15	11:00 am	Neighbour Sunday	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
Sept. 22	11:00 am	Welcome Back Sunday	James	Pop-up choir	Committees promote their activities	Luncheon
Sept 22	3:00 pm	Wild Light Spiritual Oasis	James		Autumnal Equinox	
Sept 29	11:00 am	Reconciliation Sunday	James	Senior Choir	everyone encouraged to wear orange	Coffee/tea
Oct 6	11:00 am	World Communion Sun.	James	TBA	Communion	Coffee/tea
Oct 6	7:00 pm	Tapestry	James/Young Adults			
Oct 13	11:00 am	Thanksgiving Sunday	James	Senior Choir	National Coming Out/Mental Health	
No evening service this week.						
Oct 20	11:00 am	Social Action/GLI Sunday	Rev. Marion Parody	TBA	James leading at Gower Street United	Luncheon
Oct 20	7:00 pm	Celtic Vespers	James	Celtic Ensemble		
Oct 27	11:00 am	Reformation Sunday	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
Oct 27	3:00 pm	Wild Light Spiritual Oasis	James			
Nov. 3	11:00 am	Reformation/All Saints	James	TBA	Communion	Coffee/tea
Nov 10	11:00 am	Remembrance Sunday	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
Nov 10	7:00 pm	Tapestry	James/Young Adults			
Nov 17	11:00 am	Anniversary Sunday	Guest preacher?	Guest group?		Luncheon
Nov 17	7:00 pm	Celtic Vespers	James			
Nov 24	11:00 am	Reign of Christ Sunday		Senior Choir	TDOR/Universal Children's Day	Coffee/tea
Nov 24	3:00 pm	Wild Light Spiritual Oasis	James			

