



### Our FOURTH Letter from Rev. David

Heads Up! HyeRan and David safely returned to Toronto on Nov. 3rd with feet once again on Canadian soil. Rev. David says "It feels good". I'm sure they will be very busy writing reports and sorting through all they did and achieved on this journey.

Dear saints of St. Matthew's,

I have just completed the final leg of my journey. The last weeks have been in Korea, an intense mix of family and friends, gatherings and church visits. Let me try to give you a brief account of a very few of the many highlights.

On the family end, I had a lot of catching up to do. My oldest nephew married three years ago and became a father in August. In Canada, I would be the great uncle of my nephew's son. But in Korea the title of one in my position is grandfather. So my first meeting with baby DoYun (my nephew's son's name) was also the first time I have been called "grandpa!" The meeting was a very joyful one. My nephew and his partner are very happy. And it was a poignant and personal reminder to me of the passage of time. (see the picture of baby DoYun and I)



I was able to connect with my sisters- and brother-in-law as well. HyeRan and I met her sisters and their partners for the first time on this trip when we visited HyeRan's parents' grave, a beautiful site on the side of a mountain with a view of the mountains beyond. Later we met her brother



and his wife all together in a big shopping centre, on the top floor where there were some good restaurants. This was the kind of place we always used to go with HyeRan's mom when she was well. My mother-in-law loved those shopping-mall restaurants. Gathering there was a nice way to honour her memory. (see picture of HyeRan and family with view from grave site)

HyeRan has a close group of friends that she met as a young person in church. This group has always congregated to welcome us when we return to Korea. This time we met at one of the friends' homes, not far from the border with North Korea. There was a lovely park where we took a walk and took a picture of us together by a field purple flow-

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ers. I was reminded again of the strange tension of life in Korea, living so close to the North Koreans who are at the same time family and mortal enemies, people tied to one another by blood and language but separated by a seemingly unpassable chasm of political, ideological and geopolitical madness. When will God's kingdom prevail over these all-powerful forces of hatred and fear? (see picture of friends and flowers)



During our time in Korea, we stayed mostly with one couple from the group of friends mentioned above. SunHwa and JongCheol and their daughter YeJin opened their home to us. We spent many hours in happy conversation and took the occasional trip together. One trip was to a high mountain where napa cabbages are grown. The farming community that tends these fields lives at a higher altitude than any other in South Korea. Wind turbines combine



with alpine cabbage fields for some dramatic views. (see picture of cabbage fields and friends)

I was asked to give a lecture at Hanshin University on the topic of my book. While in Korea I received news that the book had won a special award from the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion given to an outstanding first monograph by an author in the field of religious studies. It was a joy to be able to celebrate that accomplishment with people in Korea who had helped me so much with my research. (see picture of the



poster advertising my lecture)



On the last day before returning home, HyeRan and I attended a beautiful little church in the country about one and a half hours south of Seoul. The minister there is a long-time friend and mentor. When I told him I wanted to visit he insisted that I give the sermon. I preached on the Trees of the Bible. There

was a wonderful connection to that sermon and the church itself. The long pine beams used in its



construction had come from Canada, something I told the congregation would always remind me of the special way we are connected across the Pacific Ocean.



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During the sermon, a woodpecker landed on the outside of the church and started to tap on the wall. It was a wonderful moment of levity that reminded us of all our relations in the web of life. (see picture of me in the pulpit and picture of the church from outside)

As I write this I am back in my chair in my house in Toronto. My great trip is now but a memory. But the gifts of insight and heart-felt connections made on the journey promise to support me personally and my ministry for years to come. I am so grateful for the time I've had and now will eagerly turn my mind to preparations for my return to the pulpit and to our journey together in faith as the family of St. Matthew's United.

Peace like a river,  
Rev. David

Added by Doreen for humour.  
Photo by Chantal Castel-Branco



## CHRISTMAS DINNER: December 13th. 5:30pm. Tickets: \$25.

Tickets are available soon for our Christmas feast. Turkey, Ham, Stuffing, Salad, Mashed potatoes, Gravy, Buns, and pies for dessert — likely with ice cream. No taxes. No tips. Yet delicious. This is an eat-in dinner with take-out available as needed. Join your friends and family for this wonderful meal. Thanks to Bill Hurdman and his elves for all they do to provide this wonderful evening.



Photo by Gabriel Wilson as shown on delishably.com

### Missed a service—Here are links to recent services:

- ♦ Nov. 16. [Video replay](#). This service titled “When the Ground Shakes” reminds us that when we have problems or illness in our lives, God will hold us steady in His love.
- ♦ Nov. 23. [Video replay](#). This service spoke on the Reign of Christ.
- ♦ Nov. 30. [Video replay](#). This service was titled “What Waiting Is Like”. The topic for this first service of Advent discussed as waiting for what is to come while hoping for what is coming.

### Upcoming Church Events and Services:

- ♦ **Bible Study: Tapestry of Advent** (4 Wednesdays starting Nov. 26) Each week we will focus on one of the four themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Rev. Joy Abdul-Mohan will lead the first session and Rev. Robert Hayashi will lead the remaining three sessions. Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Miles Hall, 11 to noon, followed by a potluck lunch. You're welcome to join even if you've missed some sessions.
- ♦ Nov. 30: Advent 1. Advent Sunday is the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. This is Rev. Hoon's last service as our leader during Rev. David's Sabbatical.
- ♦ Dec. 07. Advent 2. Rev. David returns on this White Gift Sunday. Please place your Food Bank gifts in our Grocery cart. There is no need to wrap the gifts.
- ♦ Dec. 13. Congregational Dinner. 5:30 pm.
- ♦ Dec. 14. Advent 3. Carol Service 10:30 am.
- ♦ Dec. 21. Advent 4.
- ♦ Monday, Dec. 22 at 7pm we are hosting a Blue Christmas service.
- ♦ Dec. 24. Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m.



### **The Passing of Jean Waugh**

(March 12, 1936 -  
November 20, 2025)

Jean was an active member of the St. Matthew's choir for many years. She had a life-long passion for music and singing. Her service took place last Friday, November 28 at Marshall's. To learn more about Jean and her life, her obituary is posted on the Marshall Funeral Home site [using this url](#).

### *Merry Christmas to All*

Jayne and Glen Philip are hosting an Empty Nester Christmas Dinner at their home on Christmas Day at 5:30pm. Phone 905-884-4269 to tell them you're coming.



## **Bible Study Tapestry of Advent**

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starting Nov. 26**

Each week we will focus on one of the four themes of Advent: **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love** in preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Rev. Robert Hayashi will lead the next three sessions.

**Richmond Hill Presbyterian  
Miles Hall (basement)**

**11:00 – Noon**

**Followed by a potluck lunch**



## **Blue Christmas Service**

**Monday, December 22 at 7pm**

**St. Matthew's United Church**  
333 Crosby Ave., Richmond Hill  
905-882-3606