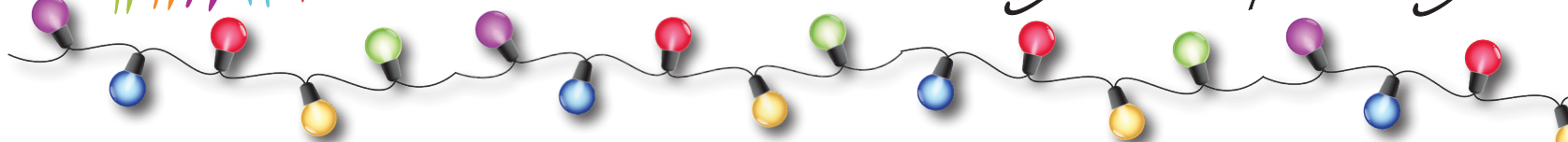




CHRISTMAS 2023



## London Community Chaplaincy



### What if Christmas doesn't come from a store, what if perhaps, Christmas means a little bit more?

One of my favorite Christmas traditions is unboxing our ornament collection. In our home, this is a somewhat random collection of gifts, travel memorabilia, and crafted creations from our kids' childhood years. A small pink lump of clay with random beads, and a small pinecone covered in white paint, are our most treasured decorations, as these are the first ornaments made by each of our girls. From my own childhood memories, my brother's GIANT yellow paper star had to be hung on our family tree front and centre year after year. I tried to move the star to the back of the tree throughout the season, but daily it kept coming back to the front of the tree, disrupting my vision of perfect holiday decor. The theologian in me now laments my lack of love for that star – for its disruption of my vision of a "perfect" Christmas really captured more truth than its presence on our tree intended.

At the Chaplaincy, we love crafting holiday items for the children to share with their parents and we love creating moments of joy for families in need amid life's hardships. We are present in the day-to-day realities of life, as families struggle with the challenges of poverty, and we work to nurture hope. We are so grateful for all of you and your commitment to the Chaplaincy, allowing us to care for families in need in London. The warmth of friendship and relationship, and the open door to a safe space, are blessings that can't be bought from a store but are made possible for so many others because of you.

As our city comes alive with holiday lights, as Christmas movie marathons begin, as festive music floods the radio, and as families and friends gather to celebrate, no doubt, complex emotions will also surround us this holiday season. Our world is broken and grieving. From the warmth and comfort of our homes, we wrestle with these realities. My prayer is that the mystery of the Christmas star that once shone for lowly shepherds and guided the Magi that very first Christmas, will continue to shine for us, pointing us to the timeless message – God is with us. In our joy, in our suffering, in our brokenness, in our weariness, in our best efforts and our mess, in our dreaming and hopes for the future – God has come near and is near to all. The psalmist reminds us: "God is close to the broken hearted". In the harder days of this holiday season, may this truth bring us all comfort and peace.

Star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light...

With gratitude,

Rev. Pam Cullen  
Chaplain/Executive Director



*May you be blessed with the spirit of the season,  
which is peace, the gladness of the season, which is  
hope, and the heart of the season, which is love.*





## Programming Update

**Summer and fall have been wonderful seasons of opportunity at the Chaplaincy, some highlights include:**

- A variety of on-site summer activities including water-play, sports, crafts, literacy mornings, youth outings and trips to the local pools and splash pads were offered, and we welcomed 250 children and youth each week!
- We offered a new summer breakfast program, which fed over 30 children a day, totalling almost 1100 breakfasts served this summer
- 80 children and youth were registered and sponsored to attend off-site summer camp opportunities, 13 youth were sponsored to attend City of London leadership programs, 5 community youth served as on-site interns with us. To accomplish this, over 160 volunteer rides were provided!
- Our core afterschool programs continue weekly this fall with art and music lessons, recreational drop-in programs on Fridays, Jr. Youth and High school youth groups. We welcome over 100 children and youth each week.
- New this fall are some amazing opportunities with our partner agencies including a bi-weekly Boys Group running in partnership with Camp Kee-Mo-Kee, regular on-site visits from the London Children's Museum and a parenting program offered by Vanier Children's Services.

**[londoncommunitychaplaincy.com](http://londoncommunitychaplaincy.com)**

**We are so grateful to our 2023 funders for their support of our vision!**

CAS Employee Charity Fund  
 Calgary Foundation-Wilson Family Fund  
 City of London-Innovation Fund  
 Kiwanis Club of Middlesex  
 Kiwanis Club of Forest City London  
 Lambeth Lions Club  
 LCF-Community Services Recovery Fund  
 LCF-Making a Difference Fund  
 LCF-Anonymous  
 London Police Association  
 May Court Club of London  
 MIM Wealth  
 Ontario Trillium Foundation  
 Rotary Club of London Lambeth  
 Sisters of St Joseph  
 United Church of Canada  
 Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of London  
 Westerlund Family Foundation

And our sincere thanks to the multiple, diverse faith communities in London that regularly support the Chaplaincy with practical donations, volunteer hours, prayers and financial support. (Our supporting faith communities are listed on our website.)

## Angel Of Hope Campaign 2023

Dear Friends,

The Chaplaincy continues to serve families in need through our Chaplain and Executive Director Pam Cullen. She is joined by a small but dedicated staff team, board members, many part-time students, and volunteers committed to accomplishing our mission to serve and support others. We are privileged to walk with those experiencing poverty in many ways. The London Community Chaplaincy serves at several complexes (Limberlost and Southdale) as well as off-site locations that struggle with meeting many needs that we take for granted. We offer emotional, fiscal, and nutritional support, we provide transportation to the food bank when required, and we have emergency basic need resources onsite. We offer meaningful programs daily for children, youth, and parents. Part of what the Chaplaincy does is to focus on youth, providing positive influence, support and encouragement to succeed. We have witnessed this success after students verbalize their goals and they go on and graduate high school and go to college and university to pursue their dreams.

Words cannot express the joy in being a part of that process and watching families and youth succeed. However, many struggle in the challenges of poverty, and we work hard to create special events and programs as well as offer food hampers or gift cards to help families have a celebratory season. We serve over 300 families, which include about 850 children and youth. Each month at the Chaplaincy sites, we see over 1000 visits. The challenges we all face are felt even more intensely by the families we serve because of the rising of the cost of living. You are the angels who assist us in providing support for all these Chaplaincy initiatives and care.

Our Vision is "Positive Futures for Children and Youth"

Our Mission is "We are Committed to Respecting and Supporting Families Facing the Challenges of Poverty, We Offer Pathways to Positive Futures"

You are Angels of Hope for the families we support. Without you, we would not be able to succeed in this mission and see the blessings and accomplishments in their lives. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your love and support. This is the true meaning of Christmas. We invite you again to be Angels of Hope by financially supporting the Chaplaincy as you are able this Christmas.

We wish everyone a Happy and Joyous Season and thank you again for all that you've done.

With Gratitude,  
 Brent Nolan & Chima Adejuwon  
 Board Chairs

