

## Thoughts and Smiles – January 20, 2025



Imagine you're sitting in a comfy church hall with a hot cup of tea, listening to a lively conversation about what the future might hold. Someone mentions how church pews aren't quite as full these days, especially as many beloved members grow older. Suddenly, someone else chimes in—"But wait, have you noticed how Canada's shifting population could bring a burst of new life too? Immigrants and newcomers are settling in our neighbourhoods, and they might be curious to peek in on this warm, welcoming place we call the United Church." Everyone nods, realizing that demographic changes could be a reason to worry but also a reason to hope.

Then, the talk turns to how the world is, well, a little intense right now—climate worries,

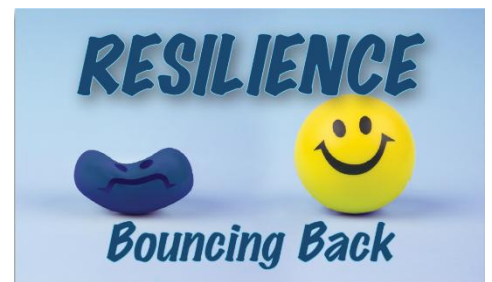
economic ups and downs, and calls for social justice echoing through every news cycle. "Isn't this exactly where a faith community can shine?" someone suggests. After all, the United Church is known for rolling up its sleeves, whether it's environmental stewardship or reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Sure, it's not always easy to be a voice crying out for fairness and dignity, but if the Church stays engaged, it could be a powerful force for compassion and change. "Just imagine how we can keep walking the talk," a friend adds, "advocating for cleaner air, or standing against racism—not because it's 'trendy,' but because it's right."

At some point, the conversation takes a practical turn: "What about finances?" someone asks. "Old buildings, fewer folks in the pews... how do we keep the lights on?" A seasoned member shrugs and says, "Well, we might need to get creative—maybe rent out space, partner with local non-profits, or even convert the basement into a community centre. It's not the end of the world! With a bit of imagination and openness, our spaces could become a real blessing for folks who need them." And that idea actually sparks excitement: not just to survive, but to thrive by sharing resources in a spirit of hospitality.

There's also a buzz about new models of ministry—like lay-led teams, ecumenical projects, or online faith groups. "Hey," someone jokes, "my phone's always in my pocket—why not use it for a Tuesday night Bible chat with people who can't make it on Sunday?" Everyone laughs, but the truth is that virtual connections might help keep the community vibrant, especially for busy families, shift workers, and seniors who can't travel as easily. It's a reminder that the Holy Spirit can show up in unexpected places, including your favourite Zoom link!



Of course, all these new directions might feel like a roller coaster. “We’ve been on quite a ride over the decades,” a long-time member muses. “Still, we’re a church built on love, justice, and genuine care for each other. If there’s anything our story tells us, it’s that we bounce back. We adapt. We find fresh ways to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. And that’s exactly what will keep the United Church alive and well—continuing to welcome everyone, wrestle with big questions, and share God’s grace in countless ways.”



As the conversation winds down, you look around at the thoughtful smiles, the nodding heads, and the gentle spirit of hope in the room. Challenges? Absolutely. But also brimming potential, new partnerships, and a tradition of rolling with the times—always ready to shine a light of love, compassion, and faithfulness. “Here’s to the next decade!” someone says, lifting their cup. And indeed, no matter what comes, the United Church can step forward, trusting in the same bold, unshakable spirit that has guided it for nearly a century—and counting.







To all the supermarkets and big commercial stores with self-checkouts: It seems like we're heading towards a future with mostly self-checkout lanes. Yesterday, I went shopping at one of these stores, and at the exit, a lady was stopping everyone to check receipts. I didn't want to participate in that, though. I had already filled and emptied my trolley, scanned all my items, and refilled it. So, I simply skipped the exit line and walked out. I heard her say, "Umm—excuse me," as I kept walking, holding my receipt above my head while leaving the store.

Here's the deal: you can either trust me to use the self-checkout, or you can bring back cashiers like it used to be.

- I'm not interested in proving that I did your job for you.
  - If you want me to be a cashier with no training, that's your issue, not mine.
  - Keep employing young people and providing job opportunities.
- You don't pay me to scan my own shopping, and you don't offer me a staff discount for doing it.  
Signed... All of us.  
People, we need to share this. It's about the store's profits and putting people out of jobs!

- Source- Grannies Funnies Sarcastic

**I went to the grocery store today and the cashier said my total was \$208.47...**

**I wanted a second opinion so I went to self checkout and my new total was \$43.20**

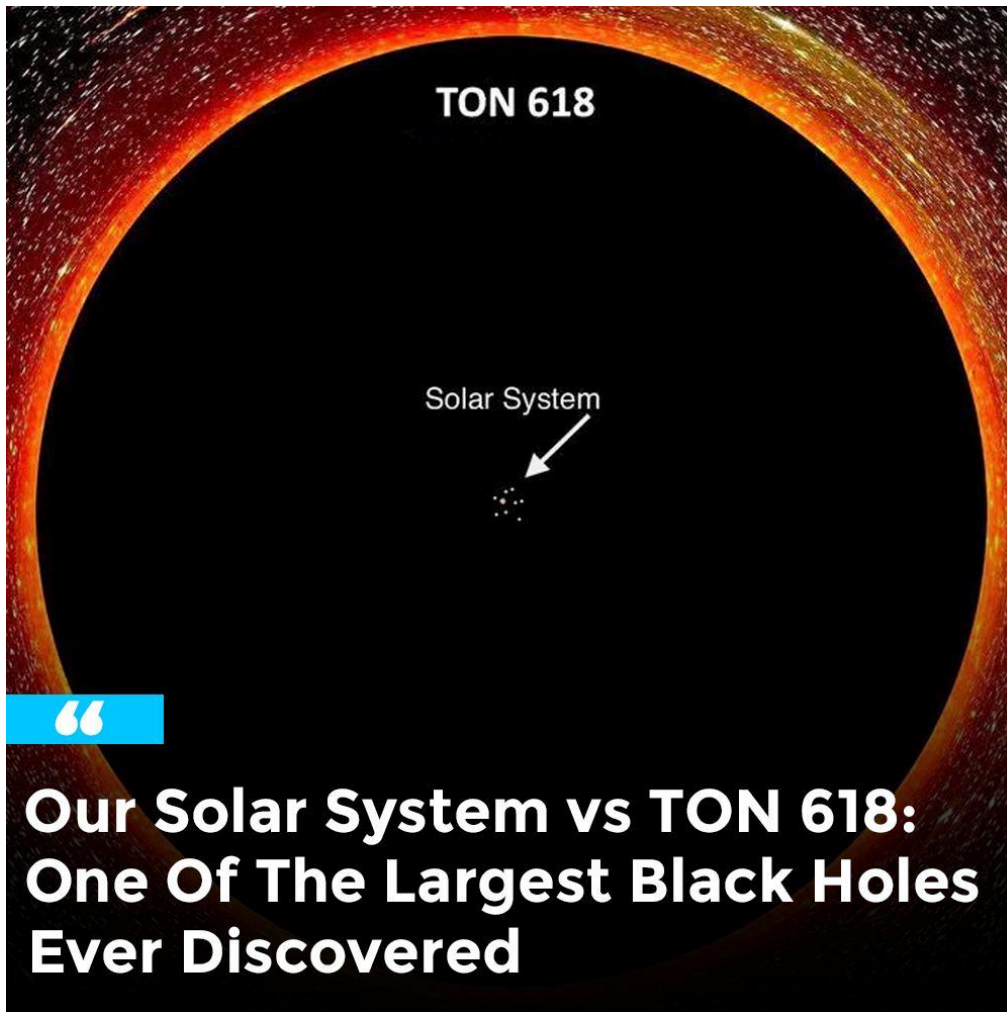
Abby Has Issues I'M JUST A GIRL, Hedger Humor  
STANDING IN FRONT OF A SELF-CHECKOUT,  
SCREAMING THAT

THERE'S NO UNEXPECTED ITEM  
IN THE BAGGING AREA!



As it turns out, they were prepping us for self checkout the whole time





The mass of the supermassive black hole TON 618 is thought to be about 40 billion times that of the Sun. Furthermore, it is \*much\* more significant than our solar system. Our solar system as a whole, from the Sun to the far-off Oort Cloud, would disappear under the gravitational pull of TON 618, which has a diameter of 30–40 times that of the solar system's outermost reaches.

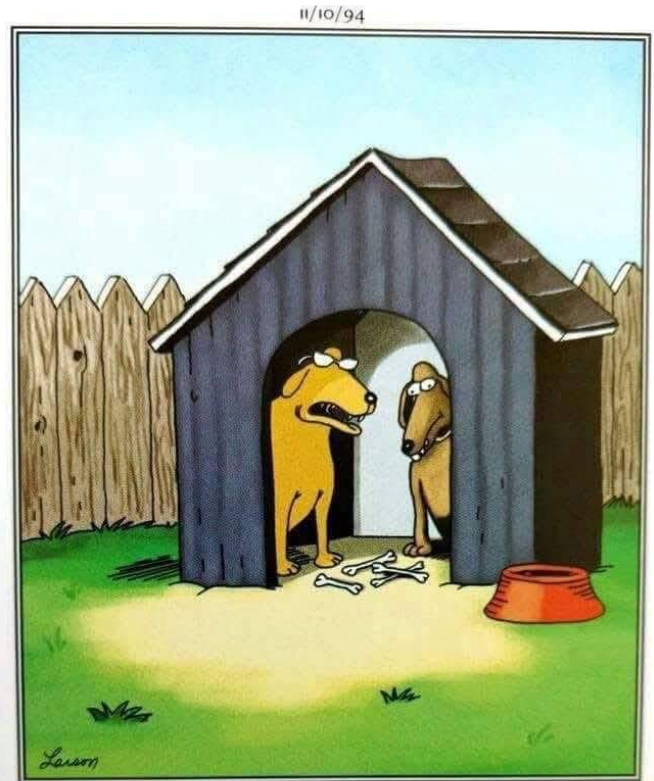
A very rare photo  
of the Milky Way  
viewed from Mars







"There's nothing wrong with him. He just does that to make me look stupid."



"Look. You *had* five bones, right? Your friend Zooky comes over, stays awhile, then leaves. Now you have *four* bones, right? ... You don't have to be a 'Lassie' to figure this one out."



We'd like to talk to you about cheeses.

*Church Mice.*

Blessings to you all!

David Jones

Minister

Hepworth-Sauble Beach Pastoral Charge

226-568-3476 [ipcross.jones@gmail.com](mailto:ipcross.jones@gmail.com)

Check out "David's Blog" on the Sauble Beach United Church website.

<https://saubleunitedchurch.ca/category/davids-blog/>

**I JUST SAW  
SOME IDIOT AT  
THE GYM PUT A  
WATER BOTTLE  
IN THE PRINGLES  
HOLDER ON THE  
TREADMILL.**



And last, check out this marvellous prayer and come back to it now and again...

<https://youtu.be/XUrZjkelf8g?si=LmDCJCL8-M4-TCG2>