

## Grace United Church presents special service to open Gananoque Pride Week

[Lorraine Payette](#) • For Postmedia Network; Published Jul 17, 2023 • 2 minute read



L-r, Mx Sam Crosby, Reverend Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro and soloist B Heaslip participated in the special service held at Grace United Church to usher in Pride Week in Gananoque. This was the first Pride service ever held in that sanctuary. Lorraine Payette/for Postmedia Network Lorraine Payette/For Postmedia Network

Grace United Church helped open Pride Week in Gananoque with a special service dedicated to the LGBTQIA community held on July 16.

“This is our first Pride worship service in this sanctuary,” said Reverend Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro of the church. “God chose a rainbow as a sign of hope for the future of humanity and life on earth. Today we are invited to do our part and work together to co-create something as beautiful and bright as a rainbow for all people who are created in God’s image.”



Reverend Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro of Grace United Church led a special Pride service on June 16 to usher in Pride Week in Gananoque. This was the first Pride service ever held in that sanctuary. Lorraine Payette/for Postmedia Network Lorraine Payette/For Postmedia Network

With the lighting of the rainbow candles, the service began, focusing on the Biblical story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were forced by King Nebuchadnezzar to burn in a fiery furnace for refusing to give up the ways of their true selves and become like everyone else in their community. This was compared to those in the LGBTQIA community and the trials so many have faced at the hands of others who do not understand them.

“We can transform this world with love and love alone,” said the Reverend. “We all are created in God’s image – no one is excluded.”

Mx Sam Crosby of the Gananoque Pride Alliance (GPA) spoke on “Time with Youth and the Young at Heart” as the featured lay speaker and vocal soloist B Heaslip performed “Amazing Grace” and “Like a Prayer”. After the service, all in attendance were invited to enjoy lemonade and a cake from Robeson’s.

“This is a real milestone for a Gananoque church,” said organist Paul Harding. “We’ve made great strides at Grace.”

This was just the beginning of the Pride celebrations in Gananoque. They are being held this year in July so as not to compete with the June celebrations held in other communities.

Monday saw two official flag raisings – one at the Gananoque Emergency Services building, the other at Town Hall. This was followed by a full schedule of other activities including youth karaoke, trivia, board games, crafts, and even an outdoor movie.

“There’s really something for everyone,” said Dennis O’Connor of the O’Connor Gallery. “Pride is a joyous time and not limited to just members of the LGBTQIA community. It’s for everyone – a chance to get out, have some fun and get to know each other better.”

The event runs all week with activities for all ages. Saturday things start with a full Pride Festival and vendor market in Joel Stone Park beginning at 9 a.m. and running throughout the day. Also, that day will be two Pride parades – the main one through the streets of town and a second youth parade that will take wind its way through the vendor fair. The party will be ending with a Mardi Gras Masquerade – Pride After-Party at the Lou Jeffries Rec Centre from 7-11:30 p.m.

To find a complete program of this year’s Gananoque Pride Week go to [ganpridealliance.ca/pride-week-2023](http://ganpridealliance.ca/pride-week-2023).



Mx Sam Crosby was the guest lay speaker at Grace United Church on June 16. The church held a special service to usher in Pride Week in Gananoque. This was the first Pride service ever held in that sanctuary.

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