

# House tour serves up holiday decorating tips

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
sbolan@yrmg.com

Bring the outside inside.

That is this year's hot holiday decorating trend, according to Carolyn Dobson, chairperson of the Stouffville Home for Christmas Tour.

The fourth tour, which takes place Nov. 1 and 2, includes seven homes ranging in size from a tiny starter to an estate and everything in between including a new build, century home and renovated residence.

"Hopefully, they can see themselves in one of the homes they see," Ms Dobson said.

The tour will once again include the Friday night Twinkle special, which includes the full home tour as well as a cocktail party at Willow Springs Winery.

Each designer had a budget of \$1,500 to \$2,000 to decorate a home's main floor as well as add accents to its front and back entrance ways.

For the typical homeowner, that budget is a bit high for decorations, however, elements of what people see on the tour can be economically incorporated into what they already have.

Some of this year's non-traditional colours include pinks, oranges, reds, lime green and brown, which can easily be added to your traditional decor via balls, ribbon and lights, according to Ms Dobson.

"There's no wrong way to decorate for Christmas. It's all what makes you feel good and what works for the house," Ms Dobson said.

"For some people, it's too overwhelming, they don't like change," she said.

The Stouffville Home for Christmas Tour is not only an opportunity for people to get decorating ideas, but all proceeds from it will be equally divided between the Jennifer Ashleigh Children's Charity and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Emergency Care Fund.

Last year, each of these organizations received \$10,000, according to Jacky Messner, an event committee member.

"We like to beat our previous year's fundraising amount. This year hopefully we'll do the same," Ms Messner said.

Tickets for the Friday tour are \$35. The Saturday tour costs \$25. Both tours are self-guided. Tickets can be purchased at [stouffvillechristmas-hometour.ca](http://stouffvillechristmas-hometour.ca) or at Canadian Tire, Candlelight and Memories, the Red Bulb and Stouffville Toyota.

ON THE COVER: Carolyn Dobson, Debbie Powell and Jacky Messner prepare for the Stouffville Home for Christmas Tour at a house on Brill Court.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville musician Marie-Lynn Hammond has written a song about the Children of Peace and is performing at the Sharon Temple tomorrow during a benefit concert.

## Song chronicles Sharon Temple's history

BY SIMON MARTIN  
smartin@yrmg.com

When Stouffville singer-songwriter Marie-Lynn Hammond visited the Sharon Temple a few years ago, she was struck by a picture of the derelict structure from the early 20th century.

In the photograph, all of the windows were broken and cows grazed on the land in front of it.

"I found it very powerful," she said.

When she returned home, she decided to start writing a song about the rise and fall of the Children of Peace who built and worshipped at the temple.

Canadian folk musicians have a long history of painting a picture of the past in their songs. There was Gordon Lightfoot with the Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald and Stan Rogers with the Northwest Passage.

Similar to these luminaries, Ms Hammond has tried to shed light on an interesting period of history that occurred through her song, Children of Peace.

► For more information visit [sharon temple.ca](http://sharon temple.ca) or [marielynnhammond.com](http://marielynnhammond.com)

For about a year, Ms Hammond researched different aspects of the Children of Peace, so she could present a historically accurate picture of the sect.

She collected different tunes played on the temple organ during the group's heyday and chose to adapt one with a haunting minor key.

The chorus of the song sounds more similar to a traditional hymn.

She was also in touch with temple curator John McIntyre several times to make sure every word was accurate.

In the end, she chose to sing the song through the eyes of one of the last surviving members of the Children of Peace, Emily McArthur.

While she invented this person for the song, Mr. McIntyre informed her there was someone similar to the character in

her song.

"I told her as much as I could about Emily McArthur," he said.

The finished product is something with which both Mr. McIntyre and Ms Hammond are pleased.

"It's a really authentic story of this very fascinating sect," Ms Hammond said.

It is the first time a musician has written a song about the temple or the Children of Peace, Mr. McIntyre said.

The song has a unique way of looking at the Children of Peace, he said.

"She was very moved by what it must have felt like being one of the last members," he said.

People will get the chance to hear Ms Hammond sing the song at the temple Sunday as part of a Roots and Rhythm benefit concert.

She will perform with David Woodhead's Confabulation. The song is featured on Ms Hammond's new CD *Creatures* released earlier this year.

The concert is from 2 to 4 p.m.



### Care & Share THRIFT SHOP

Mennonite Central Committee

Clothing • Furniture • Variety  
Used Books • Thrift Outlet

Where every purchase is a gift to the world

As the excitement of our move and new building builds, we ask that you please continue to bring ALL YOUR DONATIONS TO OUR CURRENT LOCATION AT 6240 MAIN ST. UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Please remember your donations are valuable to us and we would appreciate receiving them, Monday - Saturday 9:30am - 4:30pm.

6240 Main St. • 905.640.1410