

FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

ISSUE: ADVENT 2022

What does it mean to come Home For Christmas?

Even though my children are all grown, and I am a Grandmother now, when I think of Home for Christmas I think about my parents, both of whom are now in their Heavenly Home. I think about Dad cutting a fresh fir, a big one that filled the room. I think of Ma going overboard with the tinsel after we decorated the tree. You could never have too much tinsel! I think about music and food and family and laughter. I have experienced some sad Christmases as well, but every year that excitement builds in my heart, and I share the stories of years gone by. Keeping the memories of loved ones departed alive and sharing those memories with the younger generations.

Part of my Christmas joy is anticipating going to Church on Christmas Eve. Although I grew up in the church, I did not come from a denomination that had worship services on Christmas Eve unless it fell on a Sunday. But I married into a family who would all gather to attend Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, a beautiful service followed by family phone calls and celebrations. I am not a fan of staying up past midnight (lol) but I love the church decorated for evening worship to celebrate and welcome Jesus once again in to our midst. I step through the doors of the sanctuary and it feels like home.



Home is sometimes a loaded word for some people. Whether your idea of home is joy-filled or dysfunctional, we can all agree that home is a complicated concept.

That is also true when using this year's Advent theme of "Coming Home to the Church Family for Christmas. It is painfully obvious at times that North American churches have declined over the past 60 years. Some of that decline is due to changing demographics and cultural shifts, but some of the blame rests on the shoulders of individual congregations and their willingness to adapt or lack of hospitality. There is good news though, Christianity is growing throughout the world, and new churches are being planted – even in Canada!

So, as we invite people home for Christmas, it may be their first time. And we pray that as folks walk through the doors of a multitude of sanctuaries, they find themselves embraced by a family they have been longing for but didn't know it.

Welcomed into the arms of the Christ Child, whom they knew about but can now experience. Be part of the continued story of God's grace and salvation offered to humanity through the Incarnation.

This year, we invite you to come home, and bring a friend.

Blessings of Advent and Christmas to you and yours!

~ Rev. Cheryl

Night of Song and Remembrance

November 11th is also a day of mixed emotions. It is the day we remember the sacrifices made by so many Canadians in the two great world wars. It is also a day when we celebrate the peace that was gained by their sacrifice. It is a day to thank all service men and women who work to maintain peace in far-flung places around the globe. It is a day when we all should recommit ourselves to working towards peace and justice in the world.

This year in addition to Rev. Bill's leadership at the Stevensville Service on Sunday the 6th and the cenotaph service in Ridgeway on Friday the 11th at 11am, a musical evening was offered to the wider community and featured familiar tunes from the WWI and WWII eras.



We learned a little bit about the singers and composers of some of our most familiar pieces, and the audience tapped their toes and sang their hearts out to familiar tunes like; It's a Long Way to Tipperary, Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree, Chattanooga Choo Choo, and Mademoiselle of Armentieres. There were pieces of music that moved the audience to tears like, Keep the Home Fires Burning, and Let There Be Peace on Earth. A special thanks goes out to Fran & Tom and Ric & Linda for this delightful musical treat. Afterwards Folks enjoyed a time of refreshment with pie! The monies raised from this event will go to support the EMBRACE Outreach Ministry.

Dinner Theatre Success

Thanks to all of those who came out to attend our Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre "Pasta, Passion and Pistols." The night was a great success, raising \$600 for the Embrace Centre ministries going into the cold season. The actors did a wonderful job of portraying their characters and the guests were all very attentive at even the smallest details. Special shout out to those who correctly guessed who the murderer was before the big reveal!

We are looking to do the event again, but if you've heard a rumour that its next month... DON'T LISTEN!! (cough cough... Melodie... cough). We will make a big announcement the next time we are looking for actors, and new people are always welcome! Thank you again!





Ho Ho Ho! Merry Christmas Cookies!!

For Christmas, we baked 60 variety cookie boxes that included scrumptious homemade Thumbprint cookies, decorated Sugar cookies, Gingerbread, Swiss Mountain Shortbread, Sandies, Chipit Dreams and Date Pinwheels. They sold fast, and we want to thank all of you who bought a box of cookies. We hope you you enjoy your box of holiday goodies!

Proceeds from these sales will be used to support both the choir and our Sunday school.

Thank you for supporting us!

~Nancy, Susan and Terrence

Scriptures to read ahead

Wondering what the services of Advent will look like? Read ahead by following our Advent Lectionary;

Sunday, November 27, 2022 – Advent #1

Let's go Home to the House of the Lord
Psalm 122 (VU#845) / Isaiah 11:1-10 Jesse Tree

Sunday, December 4, 2022 - Advent #2

Welcoming Brothers & Sisters Home
Psalm 72 (VU# 790, Parts 1&3) / Matthew 3:1-12 John the Baptist

Sunday, December 11, 2022 - Advent #3

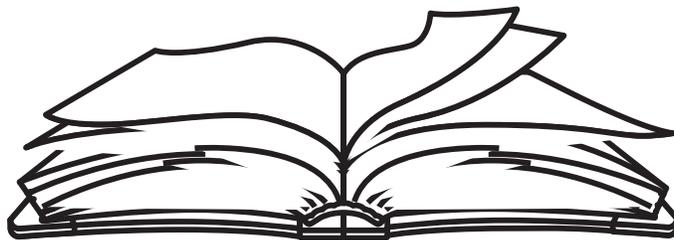
Joy-filled Kitchen Party
Isaiah 35:1-10 – Bloom in the Desert / Song of Mary (VU#898-899)

Sunday, December 18, 2022 - Advent #4

A Home filled with Love
Isaiah 7:10-14 A Virgin shall bear a Child / Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph's Dream

Saturday, December 24th 2022 - Christmas Eve Service 5:30pm & 7pm

Come Home for Christmas! There is always room for you at the Table.
Luke 2:1-20 / Psalm 96 VU#816



Schedule of Events

All are welcome to join us for the Christmas season. See our website for more information or simply drop in. Merry Christmas!

- **First Week of Advent (Sunday Service with Communion)** - Nov. 27 @ 11am
- **Dramatic Reading of the "Christmas Carol"** - Dec. 4 @ 2:30pm
A seven part retelling of the classic tale of Christmas transformation! No tickets required, all are welcome!
- **Children's Pageant And Uke Club Performance**- Dec. 11 @ 11am
The children have been preparing their "Story Ornaments" and the Uke Club have been practicing hard for a light hearted and fun Sunday Morning Service!
- **Christmas Open House** - Dec. 11 @ 1-3:30pm
Rev. Cheryl and Rev. Bill are inviting the members of St. John's Stevensville Untied Church to an open house at their home during this Christmas season! Come after service for some light refreshments and merry conversation!
- **Christmas 'Cocktail' Party** - Dec. 16 @ 6:30 - 8pm
Come join us at the Embrace Centre as we host a mixer evening for all of the community folks looking to spend some holiday time together.
- **Christmas Cantata: "Sing Joy To All The World"** - Dec. 18 @ 2:30pm
Please join the choir for an afternoon of songs of the season and a retelling of the Christmas Story. No pre-registration required.
- **Longest Night of the Year (Blue Christmas Service)** - Dec. 21 @ 7:00pm
During the busy Christmas season we know that there are many who struggle with loss and loneliness. We invite you to gather with us as we recognize that not all emotions during the season are joyous.
- **Christmas Eve Service** - Dec. 24 @ 5:30 pm and 7:00pm
Two Christmas Eve services will be held this year, and neither requires you to pre-register. Please come with your family and friends to whichever of the two services best fits your holiday schedule.
- **Christmas Day Service** - Dec. 25 @ 11am
As is tradition, in those years where Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, you are invited to attend the Sunday Morning service IN your pyjamas!

Fun stuff

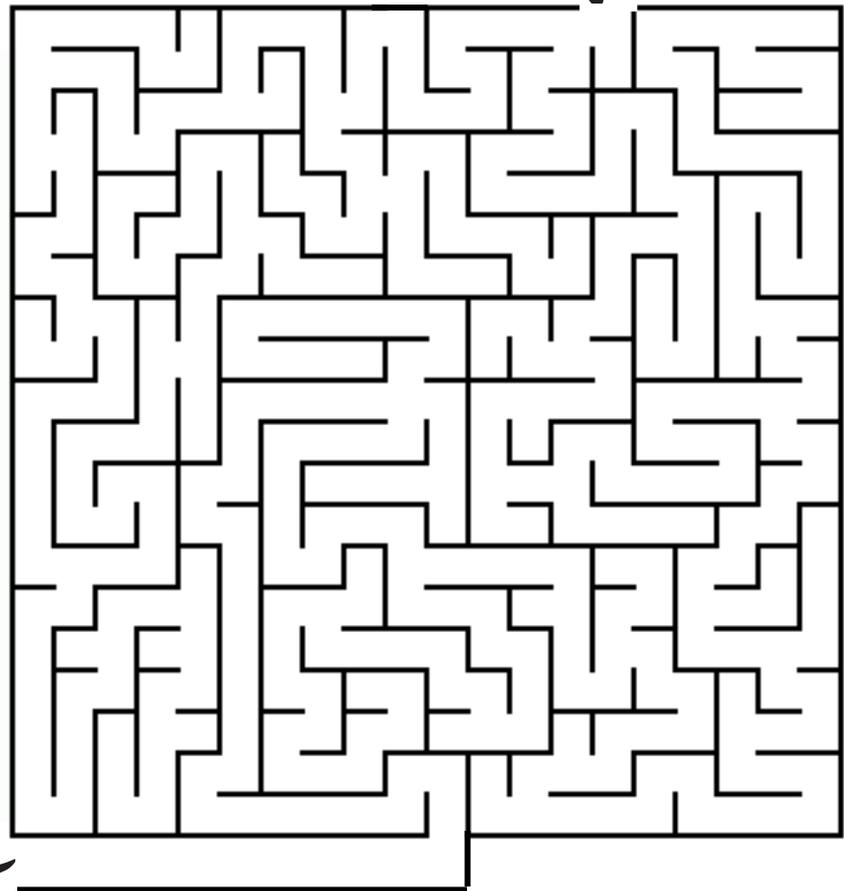
CAN YOU GUESS THE CHRISTMAS SONG FROM THESE LINES?

1. "The Cattle are lowing, the baby awakes..."
2. "See the blazing yule before us..."
3. "Children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile..."
4. "Peace on the earth, goodwill to men, from heaven's all gracious king."
5. "O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way!"
6. "So she stumbled out the door into the snow."
7. "Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!"
8. "Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum..."
9. "He was made of snow, but the children know..."
10. "Rejoice, Rejoice! Emmanuel! Shall come to thee, O Israel!"

1-Away In A Manger, 2-Deck The Halls, 3-Silver Bells, 4-It Came Upon A Midnight Clear, 5-Jingles Bells, 6-Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer, 7-O Come All Ye Faithful, 8-Little Drummer Boy, 9-Frosty The Snowman, 10-O Come O Come O Come Emmanuel

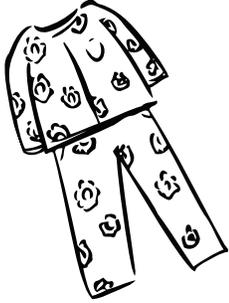


The Wise Men are late... can you help them get to the manger so they can meet the baby Jesus?



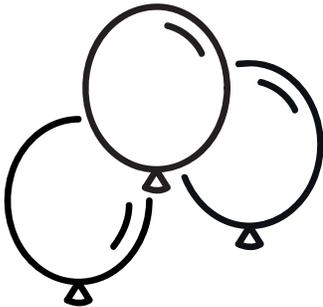
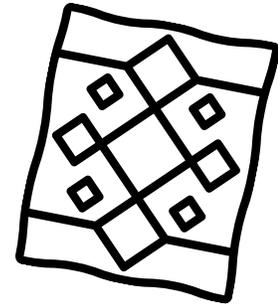
Announcements

Looking to help out? Sign up sheets are available on the bulletin board next to the hall entrance. Sign up as a reader, greeter, hospitality team member and more. Thank you!



Did you know that when Christmas falls on a Sunday (like it does this year), people are generally invited to wear their pyjamas to church! Come on Dec. 25th dressed in your warmest, coziest pyjamas! It's tradition!

Thank you ThreadHedz! The fabric art display in the Morningstar Gallery for the past month has been an absolute blessing! We wish you all the best in your future projects and hope to see you come back again.



The Children will have their Sunday School Christmas Party on Dec. 18th during the service, and the Youth Group will have their Christmas Party at the Embrace Centre on Dec. 14th. If you know anyone who would be interested in attending either event, please pass the word on. All are welcome!

Did You Know...?

Incarnation: the central Christian doctrine that God became flesh, that God assumed a human nature and became a man in the form of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. Christ was truly God and truly man.



Want to get your name on our address list? Just let us know! If you miss a newsletter, we can mail it right to you.

THE GOOD NEWS LETTER



FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

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Check Us Out

Come worship with us Sunday mornings
at 11:00am, in person or online at
www.niagaraonlineworship.com

Embrace Center Drop In - Monday to
Friday, 10am-4pm

Wondering where to find out even more
information about the upcoming events and
ongoing activities;

-  www.stjohnsstevensvilleunitedchurch.com
-  St. John's Stevensville United Church
-  The Embrace Center
-  www.niagaraonlineworship.com



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