

THE GOOD NEWS LETTER



FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

ISSUE: FALL 2023

Signs, Signs, Everywhere are Signs: Expectations, Perspective and Wisdom



I had a wonderful vacation in the Maritimes this summer. As usual we got to visit family and friends, swim in the ocean, and feast on fresh fish and donairs. We tend to follow the same routes around familiar towns and regions, but I still always like to stop at tourist bureaus for pamphlets and maps. I also like to read all the signage when we visit the different places. I want to share some of the signs I encountered on my journey this year, not the signs from museums and galleries, but just some everyday signs.

My first sign is about expectations. Sometimes we need to manage our expectations, but mostly it is good to know what your standards are and not expect anything less. As long as I can remember, the Irving gas stations have marketed themselves as having clean washrooms. No matter where you stopped for gas in the Maritimes you could be assured of a clean loo at the Irving. And Irving was the only gas stations we ever stopped at to fill the tank. As I grew up, some part of me figured all gas stations chains must be pretty much the same, but I was wrong. Not all stations have the same commitment to cleanliness that I have been brought up to expect. I expect high standards and am loyal.

My second sign is about perspective. It is good to step back and understand the whole picture, with multiple moving parts. The beach at Five Islands is beautiful and peaceful. The Islands look so close that you just want to stroll over and picnic on one of them. But not only are they farther away than they seem, the tides move in quickly and the water is deeper and faster than you might imagine. It is easy to get focussed on certain things in life, but always good to take a moment of caution to assess the perspective of the bigger picture.

My third sign is one that makes smile, it is from a fortune cookie at a restaurant that makes the world's best eggrolls! The fortune says, "If you've got it, flaunt it!" My Ma always used to tell me that. God did not give us beauty or brains just to have them denied or hidden, but instead to let them shine. My Mother grew up in a world that tried very hard to make her feel less than she was, but her beauty shone through, and she instilled in me a sense of self-confidence and worth.

And so my Friends, as we move into a new Season of Ministry at SJS, may we have healthy expectations, practice seeing the whole picture, and let our lives shine with gratitude for all God has given.

- REV. CHERYL

LOVE GOD... LIVE JESUS

Dear Theophilus...

The New SJSUC Weekly E-Blast

- REV. BILL THOMAS



At the beginning of August, St John's Stevensville started delivering a weekly newsletter into the email inboxes of members and friends of our congregation. For the last few weeks, we have been asking, if you wish to receive the weekly eBlast, that you give your contact information to Victoria either by signing the list that is available in the Fellowship Hall or by emailing her at sjsprograms@gmail.com.

When we were thinking of doing this, one of the questions was, "What would we call our weekly, online newsletter?" As you know, our hard copy, quarterly newsletter is titled, "The Good NewsLetter," so we wondered what might we call this new newsletter? I suggested that we call it, "Dear Theophilus," and so, I have been asked to explain why. The author of The Gospel According to Luke and The Acts of The Apostles begins both of those books with the greeting, "Dear Theophilus," and that has always both intrigued me and warmed my soul.

The question has been asked whether Theophilus was the name of an individual or is it a more generic term? Theophilus is a Greek word, often used as a proper name, that derives from two words, "Theos" which we translate as God and, "phileo" which, when used as a verb means to love and, when used as an adjective means beloved or friend of

I have always thought how "Theophilus" was a name that we should all strive to embody. I don't know if the gospel-writer was addressing his books to a particular person or a community of believers but, 2000 years later we are reading them and, they are in a very real way addressed to us. In this way, we are the "Theophilus" of the greeting. We are the beloved of God and we are the community that is called to be lovers of God. We are blessed with the knowledge that our God loves us and wants a deep, intimate relationship with us. We are also blessed with a deep seeded desire to be in relationship with God, to be lovers of God and, we seek ways to both express and live out that love in our lives daily.

The online, eBlast newsletter will keep us informed of what is happening at the church. Through it you will be kept aware of what is happening during worship, opportunities for nurture and study, ways to volunteer and serve and, other news about the church and wider community. My hope is that every time you open that weekly email, before you delve into the content and information it provides, that you are reminded that you are truly the beloved of God and that you find new opportunities to let others know that you are also a lover of God.



Immersing In The Story

- VICTORIA MACDONALD

For the months of October and November, there will be a short program called "March of the Magi." This program will be an interactive style game, where all the participants will be given a Magi to participate as. Over the six weeks, they will travel from Persia towards Bethlehem and see the types of conflicts and hardships that might have befallen the original Magi, and attempt to deal with those events properly.

The game is based loosely off of a D&D style campaign, and involves role playing, a little bit of dice rolling and for the participants to be able to place themselves in the story. At the end of the program, each participant will be expected to write (and perform) a short monologue of their experiences as a Magi who followed the star to find the Messiah.

Slots will open for the Young Adult group, first, but may open to the rest of the congregation should there be interest.

June 2023 Habitat Experience - Saugeen First Nations

- JOHN BEDELL



On June 19 & 20 I led a team of 25 volunteers on a 2-day Habitat for Humanity build in Saugeen First Nation, which included 11 members of St. John's Stevensville United Church. Following a bright & early 4:00am start on the 19th, the church team car-pooled up to the site (about a 4-hour drive). Team members not affiliated with the church, most of whom came from other areas, met us at the build site.

Following our orientation with the team from Habitat Grey Bruce, our enthusiastic team divided up and went to work on 4 houses where construction was underway. Within the first day we were raising walls on three houses, while another team worked on weather-proofing another house that was further along in construction.



After our work day was done on Monday, we shared a meal of pizza and wings in a conference room at the motel where we were staying in Southampton. Following the meal, we had a time of sharing where each participant spoke about their reasons for joining the team, and how they felt the day had gone for them. An important part of processing the build experience!

Tuesday morning we had breakfast at the motel, followed by a return to the build site and another day of highly productive work by our awesome team. Every single team member should be proud of the work we accomplished!

While we were at the site, Victoria recorded interviews with the church members who were on the build, and afterward created a great video that tells the story of the build. Along with a selection of photos from the build, it can be accessed on the St. John's Stevensville Facebook page or the church website.

After our build day was over on Tuesday, we all shared a meal at a restaurant in Southampton, before heading off homeward.

It was a wonderful experience, with a great team, and so planning has already begun for a return in 2024 during the days before Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21). If you're interested in coming with us, keep those dates open....and spread the word to friends, family, and colleagues. It's a great way to put Reconciliation into ACTION!



Heroes Assembled!!

- VICTORIA MACDONALD

HEROES
are called to
FOLLOW JESUS!

HEROES
are called to
HELP OTHERS!

HEROES
are called to
WORK TOGETHER!

HEROES
are called to
LISTEN to GOD!

HEROES
are called to
SHOW GRACE!



We spent a week at Hero Hotline Headquarters, getting calls from heroes in need and using the Hero Reference Manual (Bible) to teach each other how to be heroes on God's team!

The turnout for this year's Vacation Bible School was amazing, and the participation from those who showed up was uplifting! Thank you to all who helped spread the word and invited their friends and neighbours to come fly around with us!

Also, a special thank you to those who volunteered to do the snack station! Those tasty treats were a highlight for many of the heroes and we couldn't have done it without you!

When we jump back into Sunday School this fall, on September 10th, we will include some of our VBS music and enthusiasm during the church service that week. Since we know that all of you out there in the congregation are quite jealous of not being able to spend the week with us, we are bringing our fun to you!

Photos of the week will be posted online to our facebook and website, but I would encourage you to ask the children, themselves, about what they learned and did.

This year, Sunday school will operate at two different age ranges, with the 4-7 year olds meeting in the regular space and the 8-12 year olds meeting in the Morningstar Gallery. Ask me for more info, or a page of Sunday School descriptions if you think you have someone in mind to invite. Can't wait to see you all!





Studying Galatians

- REV. BILL THOMAS

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,
for all of you who were baptized into Christ
have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither slave nor free,
nor is there male and female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed,
and heirs according to the promise.

-Galatians 3: 26-29

On Monday, September 11, we will begin a 4 week Bible Study, examining Paul's Letter to The Galatians. The Letter to The Galatians, it has been argued is one of the first of Paul's letters, dating perhaps as early as 48 CE (the Common Era, also referred to as AD). This predates even the earliest of The Gospels and The Letter to The Galatians gives us a view into the fledgling community of believers in The Way, later to be identified as Christians. In this letter we see the theology of that early community and how that theology developed. We are part of the debate between those who believed that before being baptized into the community of Christ a person had to be circumcised, thereby first becoming a recognized Jew, a descendant of Abraham and those who believed that that was an unnecessary step and an additional burden that could not be justified. This is just one of the topics we will be exploring through the course of our time together.

We will gather at **The Embrace Centre, 14 Jarvis Street, on four consecutive Mondays, (Sept 11, 18, 25 and October 2) from 1:00–2:30.** Of course, the coffee pot and tea kettle will be on and there will be opportunity to chat both before and after the scheduled study time.

Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

- VICTORIA MACDONALD

We're getting close to that time of year again, and the Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre planning is underway! We had so much fun at last year's event, that we're ready to make it an annual thing!

This year, guests will gather at an old B&B which has been converted into the destination for a Weekend Mini-Bake with TV Celebrity chef Francis "Franny" Craddock. Unfortunately, Franny has been found murdered, and each guest is a

suspect. Does the murder have to do with the infamous treasure hidden in the BnB, or are the guests simply not all they seem to be?

The dinner theatre part will be on Oct. 28th at 6pm. Tickets will be going on sale at the beginning of October for those who are looking for an evening of intrigue and entertainment. Bring your sleuthing hats, and a hefty appetite! For those of you who might be interested in acting in our show, the sign up sheet for the 9 characters will be available in the fellowship hall, soon. There will be two rehearsal dates for the show, and then the dinner theatre itself. Scripts will be available at the first rehearsal date, but the sign up sheet will describe your character enough for you to decide on a costume and such. If you have any questions, feel free to ask Victoria.



Creative Spirit

10th Season!



Sessions Resume
September 14, 2023
Embrace Centre, Fort Erie
Info: creativespiritministry@gmail.com

Where it all began - A Series on Sunflowers.
We are kicking off our 10th season with some sunflower
love, contemplation and renewal of spirit.
All are welcome!

Mark your
Calendars

Save the Date!

Wednesday, December 6, 2023
Creative Spirit Advent Pour Supper
\$20 Fee & Registration
Details to Come

Save the Date!

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Christmas Uke Jam

6:30 PM- 8:30 PM

Refresher Lessons in November

Details to Come

Security updates

- JOHN BEDELL



At a June meeting of the Trustees, I was requested to look into a security system for the church as part of my “tech” responsibilities. Quotes were secured from 4 contractors, and after careful review by select members of Council I was instructed to proceed with Force Security Inc.

They have installed a comprehensive, monitored security system with building security, video monitoring, and building safety (CO and smoke detection). The system includes the ability to turn on perimeter security if anybody is working alone in the building – an important safety measure. The video monitoring includes our Innunguaq (often a source of controversy) and our expensive new church sign, as well as the rest of the church perimeter and all entry points.

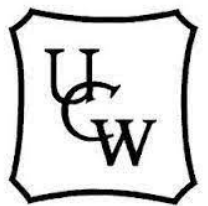
By the time this report is printed, I’m anticipating that all church key-holders will have been instructed how to disable the system upon entry and enable it when departing. If anyone has a key to the church but has not yet been instructed how to work the security system, please contact me at your earliest convenience. It is a very simple system to use, so instructions will only take a few minutes.

UCW Bazaar

The bazaar is an annual event here at St. John's Stevensville United Church and it gives our congregation/ community a chance to come together in a different type of fellowship. The hall is open to all as the UCW feeds us and puts on a sale of amazing things.

Preparations are under way, and we are excited to invite all of you out! On **September 30th**, from **10-2pm** in the fellowship hall, there will be a table of hand crafted goods, a table of baked goodies, and a display of different Christmas baskets. Get a head start on your Christmas shopping by coming and spending the afternoon with us.

We are requesting that anyone who is able to donate gift cards for local establishments or gift baskets, please get in touch with us by talking to Phyllis.



Trustees Discussions

- REV. DR. BRIAN BROWN

In our annual report last year, the Trustees of the Embrace Endowment Funds of St. John's Stevensville United Church focused on a possible layout for an expansion of the church building. By 2026 we may be ready to start on building a new wing, possibly dedicated to ministries and services for seniors, as a community service annex to the South Niagara Hospital opening in 2028. Now in an investment portfolio with The United Church of Canada Foundation, under the control of SJSUC Trustees, most of the resources for doing this were provided in his estate by Robert Keys. This was reaffirmed in her will by



his wife, the late Anne Keys, in expectation that members of this church would make contributions to turning their vision into reality, as we did in major renovations completed in 2026, and in opening the Embrace Centre in 2018. This South Niagara Hospital will have a specialization in Wellness in Aging as the first "WELL- Certified" hospital in Canada. As the only church within sight of the hospital, we will also see it from here, redefining our neighbourhood with eventually 10,000 new residents in suburbs between Lion's Creek and Sodom Road. This will be the fast growing part of Niagara Falls, where several thousand hospital workers and others may live with their families. In addition to serving seniors, we want to be the worship centre for many of our new neighbours. In a similar way, the hospital will feature a nearby Indigenous healing space and garden. Hospital planners have taken note of our welcoming neighbourhood Inukshuk.

In June of the current year the SJSUC Trustees met to do some vision work in reference to their responsibility to facilitate these intentions of the Keys' estate. The Embrace Centre was envisioned by the Keys to minister to greater Fort Erie to the south of us, and it may see some expansion for community outreach, serving both Fort Erie and Ridgeway. The hospital annex, attached to the church, and ministering to the north of us, will have a very different purpose. Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto has an agreement for out-patient Alzheimer's off-site day care with the nearby Lawrence Park United Church. This is for folks living at home with spouses who need a day or two a week of relief – one of the things we might provide for seniors here, with our volunteers sharing roles with hospital staff. Bob Keys saw such an arrangement for an ailing former business partner in Montreal, where Église Unie St. James United Church had a similar arrangement with Royal Victoria Hospital. As our population ages, this will give us the opportunity to vision.



Wanna Join The Church?

We will be having a Transfer of Membership Service on Sunday, Oct. 1st. If you are looking to transfer your membership from another church, or join the United Church, just let Rev. Cheryl or Diane Hartman (Chair of Worship) know. We will be more than happy to walk you through the process!

Hallowe'en 2023

- REV. BILL THOMAS

Hallowe'en seems a long way off as I write this during the "dog days" of summer. But, believe it or not, Hallowe'en is a mere two months away and we do need to start thinking about the events around that time of year that we, as a congregation will be participating in.

I was recently at a Bridgeburg BIA meeting where it was decided that we are going to re-institute the community trick-or-treat event but, this year it will be bigger and better. Saturday, October 28 th will be a day of confections, candy, concerts and community. Jarvis Street will be closed to vehicular traffic, making it a walking mall for the day. And, it is expected that there will be several hundred children and their families on the street that day. This year, Victoria is planning an activity and/or a craft that the children can participate in and will draw people inside The Embrace Centre. Also, again this year, we will be participating in BOO-at the Zoo at Safari Niagara. This is always a great event that gives Rev Bill an opportunity to release his inner hot dog, (Batman might make an appearance this year). This event sees close to 1000 children per day, and their families, over a four day period.

These two events provide a wonderful opportunity for St John's Stevensville to be visible in the wider community, sharing our understanding of God and the gospel with those in attendance. It is also an opportunity for members of St John's Stevensville to offer a little of their time and energy for our outreach ministry in a fun and care-free way. Watch the "Dear Theophilus" eBlast for opportunities to participate in these and other events and happenings around the church and in the community.



Vista Cards

- VICTORIA MACDONALD

The Vista Card program will be beginning again this fall. For those of you have not heard of it, that's because I've been really slacking. It is rebate program where members of the congregation can purchase gift cards for things such as grocery / gas / restaurants and more. Then, those companies that you are buying gift cards from give a portion of the sales back to the Youth Group / Sunday School. That money is then used for program materials or to help the kids travel to provincial conferences. So, when you're looking ahead, and thinking about buying gift cards for things such as Christmas, birthdays or back to school, consider getting those cards through the Vista program.

Order forms can be found outside the Sunday School room, and I am available to answer any questions you might have about the process.



ORDER DUE DATE

ORDER DISTRIBUTION DATE

SEPT. 24TH
OCT. 29TH
NOV. 26TH
DEC. 10TH

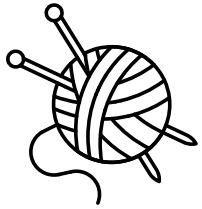
OCTOBER 1ST
NOV. 5TH
DEC. 3RD
DEC. 17TH

Announcements



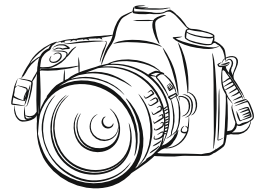
Looking to help out? Sign up sheets are available on the bulletin board next to the hall entrance. Sign up as a reader, greeter, hospitality team member and more. Thank you!

A funeral service for Eileen Kennedy will be held at the church on Saturday, September 16th at 11am. Refreshments to follow in the hall.



Nimble Thimbles and Prayer Shawl Ministry are starting Wed. Sept. 13 at 9:30 A.M. until 11 or so. If you are interested in quilting, knitting or crocheting or want to learn or just check us out or even visit please stop by. The coffee is on.

We are looking to put together a photo directory. If you would like to be involved, please see the sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall for time slots and dates. If you have questions, please see Victoria.



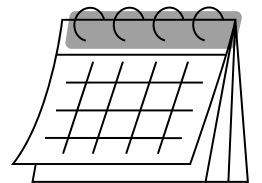
The Living History Project is still doing interviews about the history of St. John's Stevensville United Church and the churches that fed into it. If you have fond memories or stories, and would like to share them with us, please let us know! Schedule your interview with us by talking to Victoria.

The St. John's 4 are hosting a Gospel Night Concert here at the church on **Sept. 17, at 7pm!** Be sure to stop by and hear all your favourite gospel tunes! Hear them again on Nov. 10th at the Ridgeway Legion for some toe-tapping songs from World War I and II!



The youth group / young adults are trying something new. There is a discord server now available for those who would like to be a part of the group discussions. Note that each channel has a restriction to it, but the general chat is open for all. Add yourself by using the link <https://discord.gg/CYsXM3Vf>

Calendars are out in case you are wondering what is happening at the church for each month. If there are none available in the fellowship hall, feel free to ask us and we will gladly print off more!



The next Church Council meeting is Wednesday, September 20th at 3:00pm. If you have questions or comments, please talk with Ric Gorham.

Want to get your name on our address list? Our e-blast list? Just let us know! If you miss a newsletter, we can mail it right to you. Old newsletters can also be found on our website under "vault"



For Fun

Q W P K U U R A A T R K H U G P
 S O B R V F A D Q L T H V N S R
 K R O D R H Q K B P L R I T V E
 S S I D V R D Y I N K W P L I H
 W H K H E G C H U T O J H C Q Z
 O I S V R U S B S L G N R D D F
 U P U F B W D C L V Z C I C R R
 W E L C O M E O W L O O K O I E
 N X L L E F F R Y Z R D R M N H
 B X L P V C J U S Z O S Q M A T
 W E I P I R I D Q J B A A U O E
 F D W X I C D T X F S C T N X G
 W L C V F C S M S Z I U N I N O
 M J Q L I R A I Y U M D L T L T
 U J K F G B A M D N J G M Y E T
 E U B C Z T G N I D A E L R M T



- FELLOWSHIP
- COMMUNITY
- FOLLOWING
- DISCIPLE
- TOGETHER
- JUSTICE
- LEADING
- WELCOME
- WORSHIP
- AUTUMN



THE GOOD NEWS LETTER



FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

ISSUE: FALL 2023

Check Us Out

ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH
14789 SODOM RD., STEVENSVILLE
905-382-3344

Invites you to come to a special evening of music.

SONGS OF THE GOSPEL

THIS IS THE TIME I MUST SING



**A TRIBUTE TO
BILL & GLORIA GAITHER**

Featuring:

THE ST. JOHN'S FOUR
LINDA, RIC, FRAN n TOM

SUNDAY - SEPT. 17, 2023 7:00 pm

**FREEWILL OFFERING IN SUPPORT OF
THE EMBRACE CENTRE - FORT ERIE**

PRECIOUS LORD, TAKE MY HAND



BECAUSE HE LIVES

I WILL SING OF MY REDEEMER

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

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



www.stjohnsstevensvilleunitedchurch.com



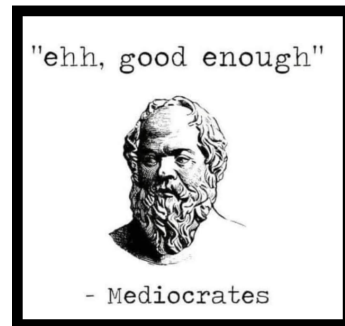
St. John's Stevensville United Church



The Embrace Center



www.niagaraonlineworship.com



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

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

Contact Us

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