

# THE GOOD NEWS LETTER



FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

ISSUE: SPRING 2023

## Welcoming New People

Pentecost is a great season in the Church world. We hear about the birth of the church movement, and we see the growing pains of identity and organization. It makes us feel closer to the early church when we remember that they were real people with real issues, just like us. What inspires me about the stories from the early church is the enthusiasm with which they witnessed and welcomed new members. They were excited to share the "Way of Jesus" with all whom they met, invited them to share with them at the table, and made them feel loved and cared for. We as modern Christians are more muted in our witness. Some of that is cultural, but some of it is fear.

On Pentecost Sunday we welcomed new members, and we are so happy to have them "officially" join the roll of the congregation. My prayer is that our happiness will not just stay silent in our hearts, but will burst forth through our lips with words of encouragement, and energize our arms to give hugs or handshakes or fist-bumps. My prayer is that we will intentionally take the time to share our welcome without fear. And that witness will overflow through the doors of the sanctuary into our community to a point where we invite our friends and family to join us. And if they say no, then we invite them again, so they are reminded that they are always welcome. As many years as I have spent in ministry, I am still delighted at how interesting people are when you sit down over a cup of tea and get to know them.

Everyone has a story.

Coffee time in the fellowship hall is an excellent opportunity to start those conversations, and have friendships build from there. That is how the Church works.



LOVE GOD... LIVE JESUS

# Eye of The Believer: Visual Confession Of Christological Faith

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote,*

*"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; We are spiritual beings having a human experience."*

As many of you know, Rev. Cheryl has recently become the Rev. Dr. Cheryl, having graduated with her Doctorate of Ministry on May 20, 2023. We are all very proud of her!! I'd like to give a special thanks to all of you who came out to the celebration for her, it was wonderful to be surrounded by friends and family on such a wonderful occasion!

In case any of you have forgotten (or never truly understood) what her thesis was about, let me try to recap it for you.

It can be difficult to properly describe who we think Jesus Christ is, but we all live out our faith in the different ways that make the most sense to us. Rev. Cheryl theorized that all those who lived out their faith in similar ways would be drawn to the same images and depictions of Jesus in art. That way, through study, a congregation could be identified by the art style they display and the ways they live out the gospel, which are intricately related. Through the study we discovered that the faithful actions of St. John's Stevensville United Church relate to a piece of art that is inclusive, interactive, and focusing on Jesus himself. Therefore, a proposal has been written to design a sculpture that fits that criteria and can eventually be put on display in front of the building.

Below is the official abstract from Rev. Cheryl's dissertation is written below;

*How do we inform our experience, bring our humanity more in line with our spirituality. A key medium on the human pursuit of knowledge and self-awareness is art and, specifically visual art. How an individual views, receives and perceives the visual arts serves to shape and form their understanding of the world around them and within them. Nowhere is this more true or profound in our receiving of artistic depictions of episodes from the scriptures of the world, and for the purpose of this paper I am drawing particular attention to artistic depictions of Jesus Christ and how those depictions affect the viewer and, effect change in their living out their Christian faith.*

*Focussing primarily on three pieces of public art, sculptures that can be encountered in accessible spaces in Toronto Ontario, I will explore how an individual's experience of their encounter impacts their spirituality and their understanding of what it is to be a follower of Christ. The Crucified Woman, Homeless Jesus and, When I Was a Stranger are three specific and, unique depictions of Christ that demand a response from the viewer.*

*From this study and, working with the participants, I will create a piece of public art that will be housed at St. John's Stevensville United Church that will serve to inform and challenge the viewer to continue their journey towards a deeper and more committed relationship with the Divine.*



# Our Place in Creation

~Rev. Cheryl

As I sit down to write this, I have to start by telling you about two interesting emails I received this morning. The first one was from my doctor's office informing me about a new program they are offering called "Forest Therapy". Apparently, a new program to teach the "gentle practice of mindful awareness and connection to nature" thus promoting wellness by attuning my senses, so that I can reconnect with myself and with others. How lovely that my doctor's office is concerned about not just my physical health, but also my mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being! This is a definite departure from my early childhood experiences of the doctor's office that revolved around x-rays, prescriptions, and booster needles.

It used to be only the church that sought to attend to my spiritual and emotional wellbeing. The reason this email struck me so much was because right under that email was one from the denominational office also informing me about an upcoming event, a church webinar was on "How to Develop an Investment Policy Statement". Now, there is nothing wrong with developing investment policies, nor developing statements about such investments, it was just the timing of the two together that struck me funny. The restructuring of our denomination a few years ago moved us to more of a corporate structure, and some days I mourn the loss of our focus on growing disciples of Jesus Christ. Last I checked, the forest therapy course was full, and the policy statement webinar still had spots available.

As a Minister I am always interested in ways to facilitate spiritual growth in our faith community. Ways to help Folks be attentive to the workings of the Holy Spirit, so that we might all grow deeper in our relationship with God.

The other reason why I mention my 'Forest Therapy' email is that I have just arrived home from a day spent checking out walking trails for our summer Prayer Walk series. Sometimes you need to step outside, get some air, and remind yourself who you are, and who God desires you to be. There is value in removing ourselves from our regular environments in order gain renewed perspective about the wondrous gift of God's creation, and our place in that creation. And we plan to facilitate such opportunities this summer over three walks.

Our first walk will take place on Saturday, June 17th at Dufferin Island Park. People can meet the group there at 10am, or join a carpool from the church at 9:30am. We will begin with prayer and then Folks will take time to explore, before meeting up again for a brown-bag picnic lunch. We should be back at the church again by 12:30pm. Dress for the weather, bring sunscreen, water, a journal, and your lunch.

The second excursion will be to Queenston Heights Park on Saturday, July 15th. Again, we will meet up at the church at 9:30 to carpool to the walk site, and stay for lunch. The third prayer walk is set for September 2nd with the location to be announced later. The walks sites were chosen because they have easy trails, clean accessible bathrooms, and picnic tables.

**"Bless to us, O God, the earth beneath our feet.**

**Bless to us, O God, the path whereon we go.**

**Bless to us, O God, the people whom we meet.**

**Amen! (Iona Community Worship Book)**



## Things We're Getting Ready For

Update your calendars, because there are lots of things coming up this season that are going to be filled with fun, worship, and community! Everyone is welcome to come and join in for any of the following events. Ask us, or look at the website, if you want more details about any specific one!

### **Springfest - June 3**

Stevensville Annual Springfest is put on by the Stevensville Kinnettes at the Memorial Hall on Stevensville Road. This family event boasts vendors and bouncy castles!

### **Pride - June 24**

Fort Erie Pride is back for their Second Annual celebration. God Loves Everyone, and we want to spread that news far and wide! All are welcome and the event is family friendly!

### **Canada Sings Picnic and Concert - July 2**

Beginning at 5:30, the community is welcome to stop by the church for games and a bbq to celebrate Canada's birthday. To cap off the evening, we will be heading inside for a selection of canadian songs presented by Linda, Ric, Fran and Tom.

### **Prayer Walks - June 17, July 15 and Sept. 2**

Rev. Cheryl is leading a series of prayer walks with a journal for guided meditation. Sometimes we just need a breath of fresh air and to feel God walk with us. Please meet at the church at 9:30 to be driven to the hike site (10am - 12pm).

### **Creations Alive Exhibit - July and August**

We are reaching out to the community and asking for their representation of "Creation Alive!" All works of art (of varying mediums) will be displayed in the gallery for the summer months and all are welcome to check out the artistry.

### **Annual Sunday School Water Balloon Fight - June 11**

To finish off an incredibly successful year of Sunday School lessons, the children will be heading outside during the service to have their annual water balloon fight and picnic! Thanks to all for such an amazing year!

### **Habitat for Humanity Build - June 19-20**

John Bedell is leading the team going north to the Saugeen First Nations reserve to participate in the building of several homes. The team consists of 25 volunteers, who are all eager to get out and help by putting hammers to nails!

### **VBS - August 21 - 25**

Super Meer is coming to St. John's to teach about God's teams of heroes, and how YOU can be one of them! Vacation Bible School this year follows the journeys of Biblical heroes and teaches those aged 4-12 how to be just as amazing in their own lives!

Although many of our regular programs, like Sunday School, Youth Group, Nimble Thimbles, and Uke Club are going to be on hold for the summer months, don't fret! They will all return in the fall! Keep an eye out for specific dates.

Have a wonderful summer!!!

## Hanging Out With The Geeks!

Rev. Bat-Bill and Victoria spent the day at Fan Con Fort Erie, chatting with the amazing people that came out to celebrate their fandoms!

They dressed up in their favourite characters and both managed to have wonderful conversations to spread the news of our upcoming events. The weather was perfect, and the community really came together for the event.

We had a great time and look forward to doing it all again in the coming years!



## Creation Alive

One of the great joys of spring is the many signs of nature awaking from its long winter's nap. And as spring gives way to summer we truly experience creation coming alive.

During the Months of July and August, we'd like fill the Morningstar Gallery with the community's interpretation of "Creation Alive." Please submit a painting, photograph, quilt, poem, knitted afghan, collage, woodworking, sketch, or whatever form your God given talent takes.

Pieces should be at the church by the last week of June in order for them to be curated in place for the long-weekend in July. It will make a heartfelt welcome to the community as we invite them to join us for a neighbourhood picnic before the July 2nd, Canada Concert in the Sanctuary.

It all goes well, we will follow this up in the late Autumn with another community art display, titled, "Creation at Rest". So be thinking ahead!



**Ahh! Your head's on fire!  
I guess it's Pentecost.**

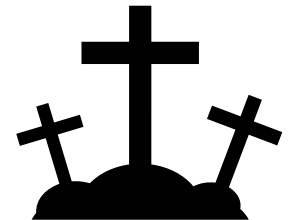


## Announcements



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!

Thank you to all of those who contributed art work for the Stations of Lent project in the Morningstar Gallery! The pieces were gorgeous and the message of the stations were meaningful for all who read through them.



Welcome to St. John's Stevensville United Church, our brand new members! Karen Holt and Karen Slegers have transferred their membership to our congregation on Pentecost Sunday. Welcome!

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.

Old newsletters can also be found on our website under

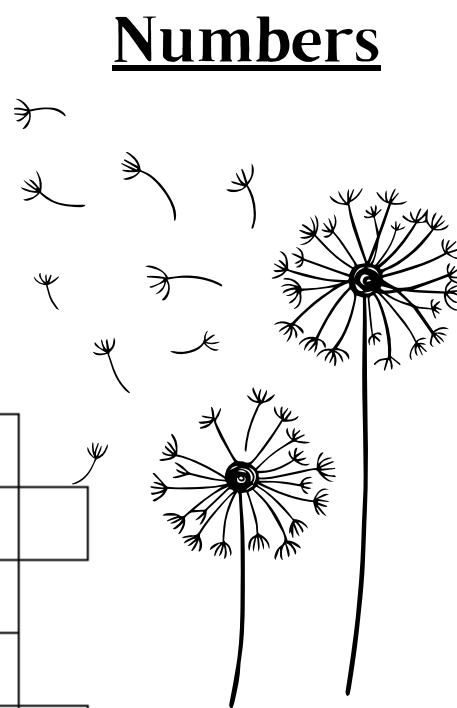


Our cross in the sanctuary has been updated and relit! Praising God has never been brighter!

Special thank you to Anderson Kentie, who earned his scout badge for community engagement by gathering and donating 55 deodorants to the Embrace Centre!



# Safety In Numbers

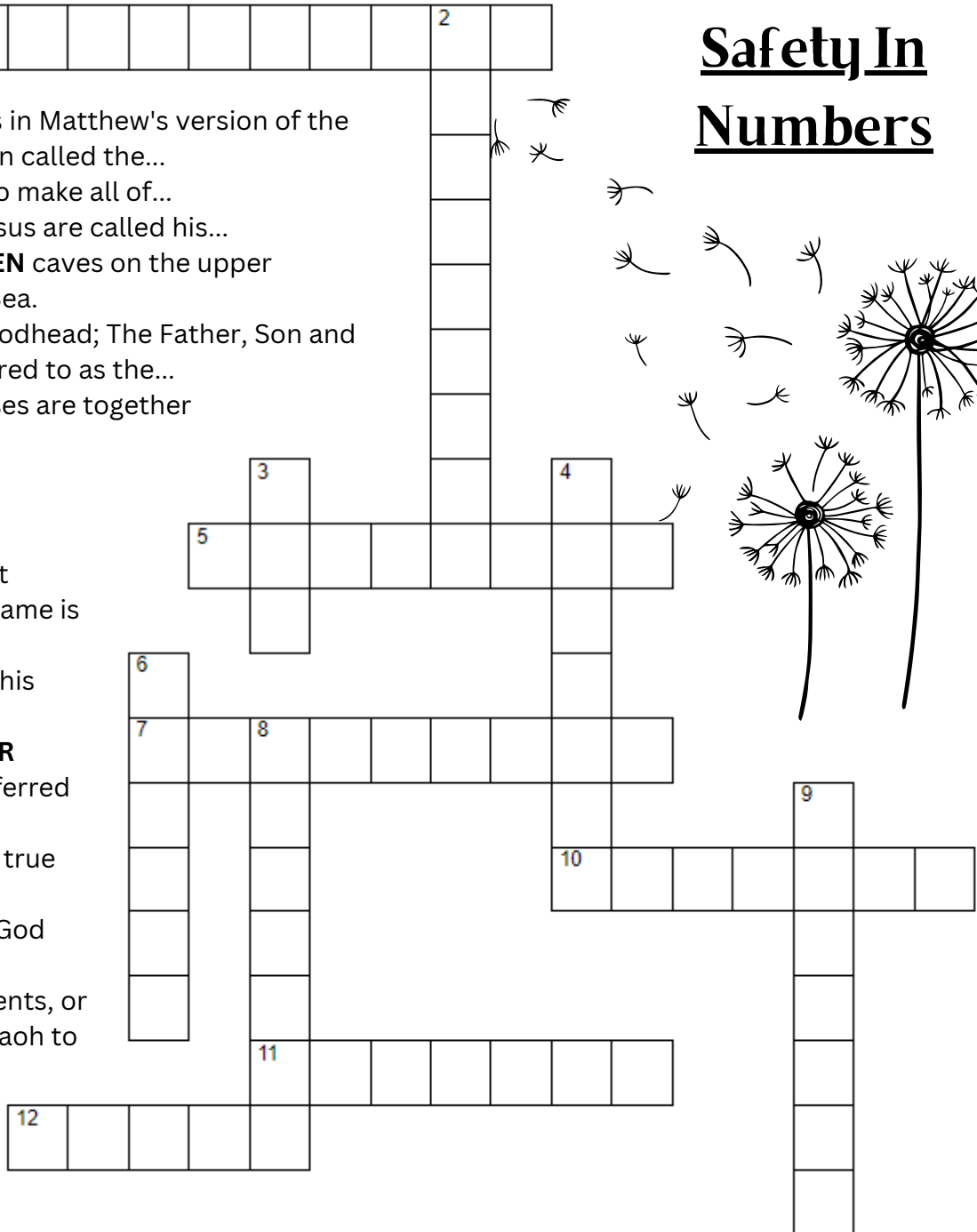


**Across:**

1. The **NINE** teachings of Jesus in Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount are often called the...
5. God laboured for **SIX** days to make all of...
7. The **TWELVE** followers of Jesus are called his...
10. These were found in **EVELEN** caves on the upper northwest shore of the Dead Sea.
11. The **THREE** figures of the Godhead; The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are together referred to as the...
12. The first **FIVE** books of Moses are together called the ...

**Down:**

2. In Psalm **EIGHT**, the Psalmist proclaims how \_\_\_\_\_ God's name is in all the earth.
3. Noah brought animals into this structure, **TWO** by **TWO**.
4. The life of Jesus is told **FOUR** different ways in the books referred to as the...
6. A Hebrew word for the **ONE** true God.
8. On the **SEVENTH** day, when God rested, he called it the...
9. In Exodus, God sent **TEN** events, or **TEN** \_\_\_\_\_ to convince Pharaoh to release the children of Israel.

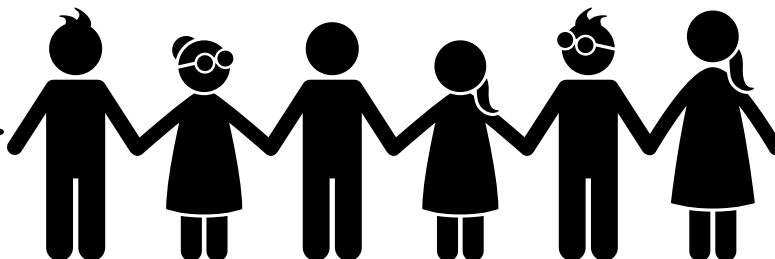


## Words of Wisdom:

"He'll forgive me. That's what Jesus does."

- Logan

Thomas (when he messed up on his Jesus craft)



"You always have to say Amen."

- Emma

Coley (when talking about how to pray)

# THE GOOD NEWS LETTER



FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH





ISSUE: SPRING 2023

## Check Us Out

Come worship with us Sunday mornings  
at 11:00am, in person or online at  
[www.niagaraonlineworship.com](http://www.niagaraonlineworship.com)

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

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

-  [www.stjohnsstevensvilleunitedchurch.com](http://www.stjohnsstevensvilleunitedchurch.com)
-  St. John's Stevensville United Church
-  The Embrace Center
-  [www.niagaraonlineworship.com](http://www.niagaraonlineworship.com)



## Contact Us

### **St. John's Stevensville United Church:**

14789 Sodom Road  
PO Box 267  
Stevensville, ON  
L0S 1S0  
905-382-3344

### **Rev. Cheryl Wood-Thomas:**

905-6872664  
[rev.cheryl.wood@gmail.com](mailto:rev.cheryl.wood@gmail.com)

### **Rev. Bill Thomas**

289-213-3153  
[rev.bill.thomas@gmail.com](mailto:rev.bill.thomas@gmail.com)