



# THE GOOD NEWS LETTER

FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

SPRING ISSUE 2020

## Vandalism at The Embrace

On January 12th, I received a phone call informing me that someone had vandalized The Embrace Centre. So after worship, I made my way into Fort Erie to see the damage for myself. When I got to the Centre, I saw that two of the windows had what looked to be bullet holes in them. (It was actually ball bearings). I was upset that this had happened and the next day, I wrote this on my Facebook page. Okay, so I've had 24 hours to think about this and I have to say I am pretty disappointed that someone decided on a Saturday night that they had nothing better to do than to drive by The Embrace Centre and shoot pellets at our windows;



- Disappointed that it looks like that same person went up another block and fired pellets at people outside an LGBTTQ2Si establishment.
- Disappointed that ours was the only establishment on the block that was vandalized AND we are the only establishment with a PRIDE flag prominently displayed in our window;
- Disappointed that there is a segment of the population that continues to carry around such hatred (too strong a word? I think not) for LGBTTQ2Si people that they are ready and willing to resort to this kind of violence;
- Disappointed that when we posted a short report of the incident on The Embrace Center Facebook page, along with the many responses of support we had to delete some that suggested that being open about LGBTTQ2Si issues and our ally-ship with the community made this 'our fault';
- Disappointed that when I found out what had happened, I was not shocked and, in fact, I was surprised that something like this hadn't happened sooner;
- Disappointed that trying to live a gospel-centered life and emulate the love of God as expressed through the teachings of Jesus can, and often does still lead to a violent response.

But, this won't change what we do or how we do it because it doesn't change the 'why'. We will, out of necessity repair the glass, although I want to leave it as is for a few days so people will see the damage and might come in to ask what happened. But the doors will remain open and we will continue to advocate for people living in poverty; people seeking safe, affordable housing, refugees seeking asylum and sanctuary; Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, ...who wish only to be able to live their faith; women and children living with the reality of violence in their communities and their homes; and yes, LGBTTQ2Si people who continue to live with the threat of violence because of who they are and who they choose to love. Sorry for the rant but, after having a little time to think about what happened, I am truly disappointed and resolute. Thank you for your prayers and for your support of the ministry at the Embrace Centre. Together we are sharing our faith in Fort Erie as we try to Love God— Live Jesus.

*Rev. Bill Thomas, FRSA*

LOVE GOD... LIVE JESUS

## View Beyond the Altar

St. John's Stevensville is one of the most kind and joy-filled churches that I have ever had the privilege to serve. Although I have been around for this congregation in one capacity or another for five years, I am just really getting to know the community. I was delighted the other day to discover that two of our members are sisters, and that is the second level of integrating into a community; first you get to know who people are and then you spend the next number of years learning the connections between folks. It is integrating into a relationship where you learn about people's families, their jobs, where they have lived before, or where they have travelled . . . Folks are amazingly interesting and it is an honour to be invited into that space of sharing. As I get more settled into my role as your "in -reach" Minister, and member of the Stevensville / Fort Erie community, I look forward to many more conversations.

*Rev. Cheryl Wood-Thomas, FRSA*



## Upcoming!

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events!

- Mar. 15 - Lent #3
- Mar. 21 - Men's Breakfast at Mae's Restaurant @ 8:00am
- Mar. 21 - X-Wing Academy at The Embrace @ 1:00pm
- Mar. 22 - Lent #4 - Pancake Lunch
- Mar. 29 - Lent #5
- April 5 - Palm Sunday (Youth Led Service)
- April 9 - Maundy Thursday
  - Potluck w/ Communion @ 6:00pm
- April 10 - Good Friday service @ 7:00 pm
- April 12 - Easter Sunday with Communion
- April 18 - Men's Breakfast at Mae's Restaurant 8:00am
- April 18 - X-Wing Academy at The Embrace @ 1:00pm
- April 19 - Easter Cantata

### Every Week Events:

- Tuesday - Bible Study at The Embrace @ 7:00pm
- Wednesday - Nimble Thimbles @ 9:00-11:30am
- Thursday - Creative Spirit @ 1:00-3:00pm
- Thursday - Choir Practice @ 7:00pm

Looking for updates before the next issue,  
check us out online:

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

## UCW in March

We started off with a meeting well attended on Wed. the 15th, same time as Nimble Thimbles. Planning our Soup & Bun for Jan. 19th. The weather did not help with attendance, but the soup was enjoyed by all and the proceeds were the same as last year, \$185.00 which was GREAT. Thanks to everyone who made soup.

We talked about our Mission Dinner that will happen on April 21st. We will have Ann Watters from the Salvation Army as our guest speaker. No meeting in Feb. but we had our Minute for Mission by You Tube Video, thanks to John.

Wow, we had some great bakers for all the muffins made for our Muffins for Missions. The total was \$203.00, "Great"! March 1st, we will have finger foods for our Annual Congregational Meeting.

Glenda and I attended the meeting for the World Day of Prayer. It will be on March 6th at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The focus is on Zimbabwe. Please mark it on your calendar. It is always such a nice service, with different churches in the area.

The UCW Annual Meeting of the Niagara Falls Golden Horseshoe Region will be on March 6th at St. Paul's United, Dundas. Yes, we will have to travel further this year. Details will be sent soon.

I want to say thank you to everyone who has taken a turn at coordinating the people who do the Coffee Hour each Sunday. It is so rewarding to see the people in the congregation come together to help. The March 17th gathering will be at Mae's Restaurant @ 12.00. We always have a good turn out so we will be discussing the menu for our April Dinner. Just two more Community Coffee Hours starting at 9:30. April 1st, Bertie Church & First United Church, 5244 Hwy #3, Sherkston, and May 6th, First Baptist Church, 165 Bertie Street, Fort Erie.

*Submitted By Phyllis Booth*

## Congratulations!

What a happy moment for these two handsome men. On November 29th, 2019, Canada welcomed new citizen Omar Al Salloum (right) and then on December 18th, 2019, Omar Al Shame (left) became a Canadian citizen too.

What a proud moment for both of them and all of their friends at St. John's Stevensville United. You can see the happiness in their smiling faces.

Congratulations and welcome to Canada gentlemen!



## Worshiplude 2020

We did it again! Worshiplude 2020 was an action filled weekend-where 6 of our youth members travelled to Ottawa to join other youth groups from across the province and “celebrate their Light”.



### Activities

We went to the canal and strapped on our skates! After a few hours on the ice, we headed to the service, held at Rideau Park United Church, which began at 4pm. It focused on the topic of “Sharing Your Light!” which really hit home with many of our youth.

Afterwards, Rideau Park United provided dinner, and then a series of what they called “alt spaces.” These were different workshops that the different youth could move from one to the other and get to know other groups on a more personal basis. These included a labyrinth to walk, a game of “hungry, hungry humans,” a “find-your-own-adventure” game, an open mic night and a freestyle art space.

Even though it was getting late, after the alt-spaces, the youth were invited back to the canal by a few new friends. I will admit... I slept very well that night.

### Accommodations

The Church MICE stayed at Carleton Memorial Church for the two nights we were there. Along with us, there were two other groups staying at the same church. One was from Waterloo and led by a man named Gord, who we had met during last year’s Worshiplude festival. The other was from Orangeville, led by a woman named Cynthia, and this was their first time at the festival.

On Sunday morning, Carleton made the youth a special breakfast and invited some congregation members to meet us. We stayed for the service, and the youth were enthusiastic about the music selections, which were all upbeat and chosen from More Voices. Afterwards, the youth presented Rev. Eric with a homemade notebook filled with their adventures of the weekend and their personal notes of thanks to the church congregation.



### Conclusion:

The weekend was amazing, and we look forward to doing it again next year!

- Church MICE

## Prayer Shawl Ministry.

This small group meets Wednesday mornings at 9:30 in the hall. As well as Prayer Shawls, the ladies are working on items for the Fall Bazaar, and knitted squares for the Juravinski Cancer Clinic in Hamilton. We always make time for tea and a visit. New members are always welcomed. If you are interested in this active group, please stop in on Wednesday morning and check us out. One never knows how our love & caring will touch another person's life.



## Official Board Report

We have now held our first Board meeting with our complete new ministry team in place, and as we move forward in 2020, this might be our last Official Board meeting, but not the last meeting of the leadership of our congregation. This is due to a suggested change in organizational structure passed by the Official Board at its Feb. 5th meeting. At the meeting, it was passed by motion that, we recommend to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on March 1st to move from an Official Board" to a "Council" structure. This will accomplish two things; 1: Recognition that this brings us more in line with current UCC guidelines of Governance models, and 2: Recognizes the fact that in reality, we have been actually operating more as a Council, than as an Official Board for some time. This will be explained completely at the Annual Meeting, and put on the floor for adoption by the Congregation. So, moving into 2020, we will have completed the staffing of our Ministry Team, and with new administrative changes, situated ourselves to better move forward with our mission and ministry in Greater Fort Erie.

*Submitted By Ric Gorham*

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# Confirmation

On November 24, 2019, St. John's Stevensville United Church welcomed a number of new members. Through confirmation, we accepted Candice Goulding into our family. Through membership transfer, we also welcomed Heather and Dave Plato, Rev. Brian Brown, Jenny Brown, Sue Putney, and Dave and Shirley Young. The whole congregation celebrated with the new members by sharing a delicious cake during coffee hour.

Thank you to all of those who put in the extra work to help make this day special for all of our new members.



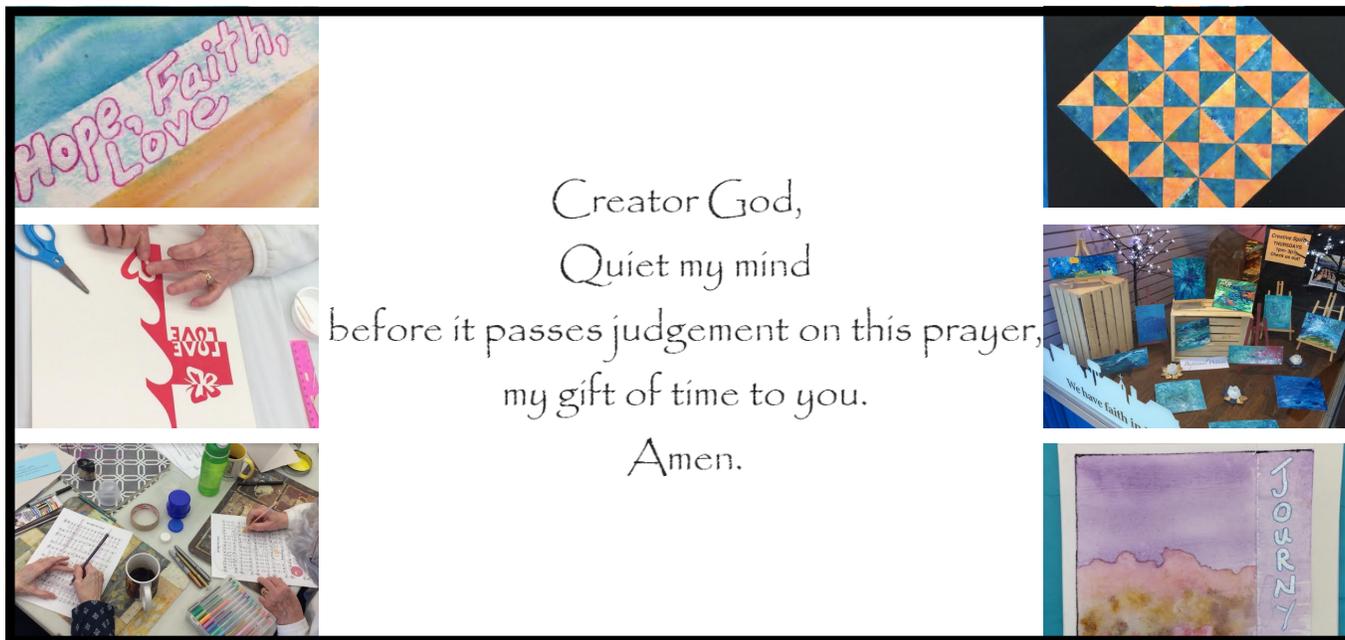
Looking to be confirmed? Baptized? Transfer your membership to St. John's Stevensville? Contact Rev. Cheryl or Rev. Bill about how to begin the process.

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DR. JILLIAN HARTMAN-GRELOWSKI D.C. D.A.C.  
forteriehealth@gmail.com  
905-871-5777  
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<p><b>Look good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tattoo Removal</li> <li>Spectra Carbon Laser</li> <li>Acne &amp; Scar Treatment</li> <li>Skinceuticals Skincare</li> <li>Hollywood Carbon Peel</li> </ul>		<p><b>Feel great.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chiropractic</li> <li>Acupuncture</li> <li>Massage Therapy</li> <li>Shockwave Therapy</li> <li>Nutritional Supplements</li> </ul>
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# Creative Spirit



Creator God,  
 Quiet my mind  
 before it passes judgement on this prayer,  
 my gift of time to you.  
 Amen.

## Lent 1: Shout it Out

For Lent 1, we took an old familiar hymn as our foundation, one that we heard God shouting God's love to us and through a repetitive process of circles, we quieted our minds and entered into an art filled prayerful state where we would "sit" in that love.

*"God shouts God's love from heaven loud enough for all God's children to hear."  
 - Longing For Home - Daily Reflections for Lent pg 15*



## Lent 2: Celebrating International Women's Day

Looking to our ancestors, female role models in our lives and all women around the world, we give thanks to God for them through our animated drawings. We are all sisters.

*"We give thanks for all women who have been part your Holy story, all women who form a tree of life."*

*- Oaks of Righteousness: Keri Wehlander UCC 2013*



# Murder Mystery Evening

Thank you to all who attended our Murder Mystery Evening. It was a lot of fun to put on, and the actors all enjoyed themselves immensely. The murderer was discovered, and congrats to all of you who guessed correctly! We hope you all enjoyed yourselves as much as we did!





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## Funnies and Puzzles

No day is complete without a little bit of fun!



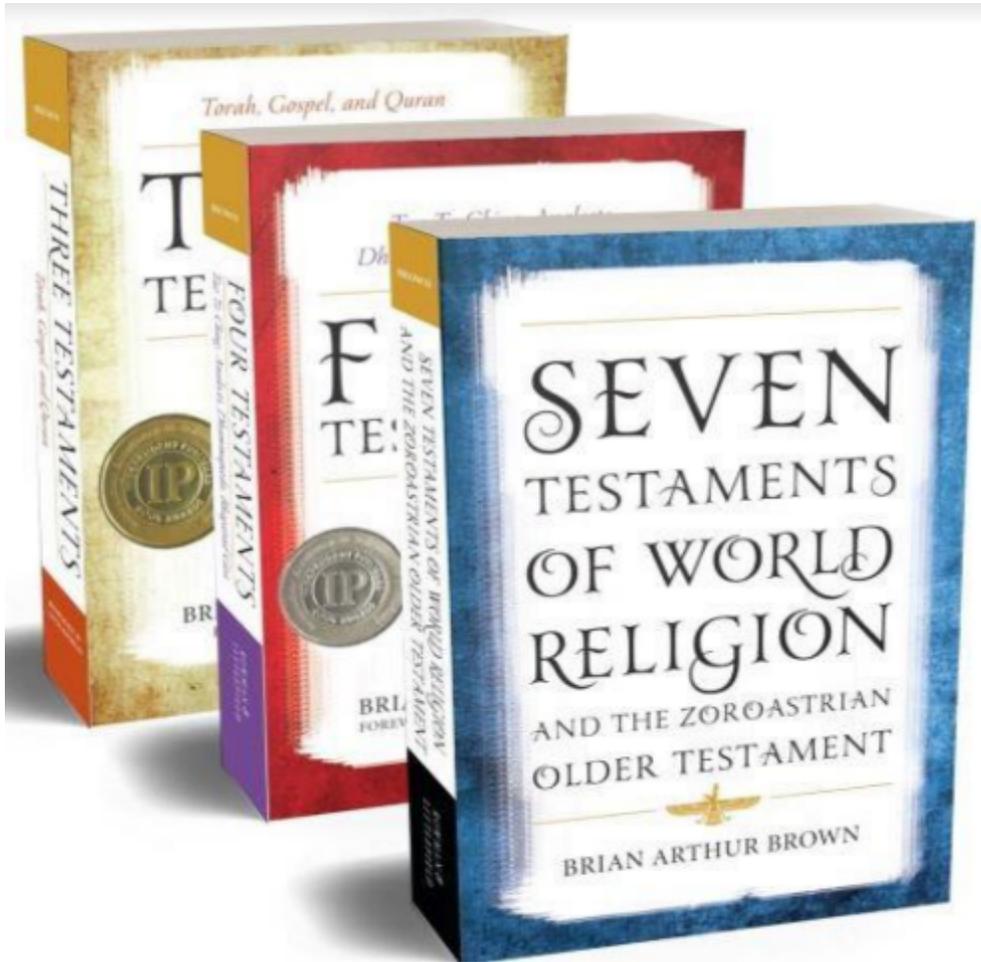
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## Disciples of Jesus

Find the names of Jesus' disciples in the word search box.

- James the Lesser
- Simon the Zealot
- Bartholomew
- Simon Peter
- Matthias
- Phillip
- Andrew
- Thomas
- James
- Judas
- John
- Jude



**“In *Seven Testaments of World Religions* Brian Arthur Brown and his ‘sacred circle’ have succeeded – with rigorous scholarship, tender devotion and divine insight– in presenting humanity’s greatest treasures as now becoming a universal legacy.”**

**- Rev. James T. Christie, Dean of Theology, University of Winnipeg and G20 Global Consultant in Multifaith Dialogue and Religious Liberty.**

Jewish scholarship in the book contributes to our common understanding. Appreciation of an Islamic “final testament” is made possible, and a Christian “new evangelism” is aimed party at themselves. Confucianists, Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists are affirmed as academic & spiritual partners.

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For more information please visit the author  
[www.BrianArthurBrown.com](http://www.BrianArthurBrown.com)

## Not A Book Review

Some of my friends at St. John’s Stevensville United Church know that I do some writing. After I retired in 2007 I did two little books, *Noah’s Other Son* and *Forensic Scriptures*, which some of you have read. In the last twelve years I have attempted a trilogy of larger works that have been well received in many places.

My publisher puts ads like this in various magazines. They also pay \$100. To colleges, universities, seminaries and congregations like SJSUC, who put the ad in their newsletters, with this space where professors or ministers may write book reviews. The ad has enough to say, so I am not reviewing the book, yet I thought SJSUC might as well have the \$100. But don’t feel you must buy books, the newest being *Seven Testaments of World Religion*. Publicity books can be purchased from Rev. Cheryl, with proceeds to the church, or you may borrow copies from Rev. Bill at the Embrace Centre if interested.

As Christians we believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ contains all truth necessary for salvation. We also believe that prophecies of Christ are found in the Jewish scriptures, or what we call “The Old Testament.” In the smaller world of the twenty-first century, we realize that scriptures of other religions also point to Christ in much the same way. Christians have much to learn as well as much to offer.

Brian Arthur Brown, Minister Emeritus



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## Contact Us

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### **Rev. Bill Thomas:**

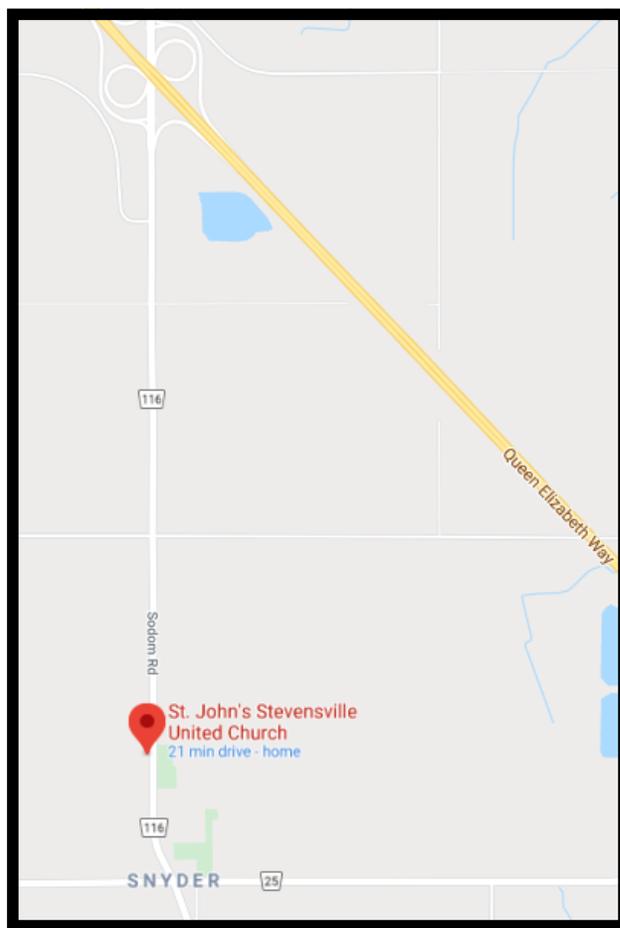
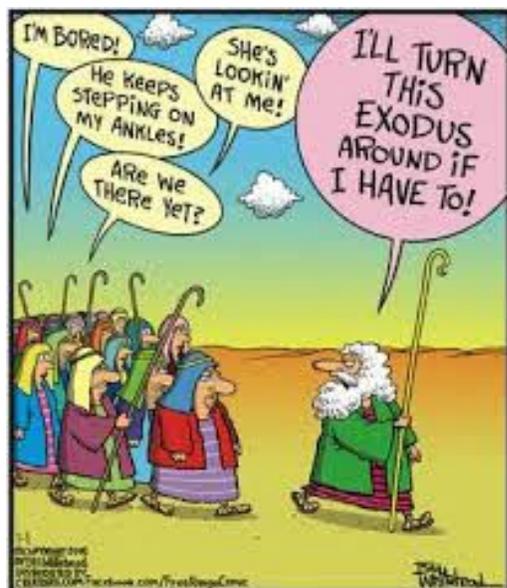
289-213-3153  
rev.bill.thomas@gmail.com

### **Val Spear (Director of Music):**

905-871-0514

### **Rev. Dr. Brian Brown (Minister Emeritus):**

905-871-0514



Curious how to get to get to the church?

- Take exit 16 off the QEW Highway and drive south for approximately 1km. The church is on the right-hand side of the road.
- Driving along Highway 3, turn north onto Stevensville Rd, and drive for approximately 7km. The church is just past the 4-way stop on the left-hand side of the road.