

THE GOOD NEWS LETTER


FROM ST. JOHN'S STEVENSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

ISSUE: FALL 2025







Check Us Out

7 TYPES OF REST

Physical Nap Stretch Walk 	Emotional Self-care Boundaries Journal 
Mental Breaks Puzzles mindfulness 	Sensory No screens Nature Books 
Social Loved ones Solitude Joy 	Creative Draw Write Try something new 
Spiritual Meditate Reflect Connect 	

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
Free Community Lunch - Tuesdays,
11:30am - 1pm

Contact Us

St. John's Stevensville United Church:

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PO Box 267
Stevensville, ON
LOS 1S0
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905-6872664
rev.cheryl.wood@gmail.com

Rev. Bill Thomas
289-213-3153
rev.bill.thomas@gmail.com

LOVE GOD... LIVE JESUS

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Important dates

Sept 5 - Pampered Chef Party

Sept. 7 - Sunday School Rally (First Day Back, and Bouncy Castle)

Sept. 9 - First Embrace Lunch of the Season (volunteers always needed!)

Sept. 10 - First day of Nimble Thimbles

Sept. 11 - First Day of Creative Spirit

Sept. 11 - First Day of Youth Group (At the Embrace Centre)

Sept. 14 - Creative Spirit Prayer Walk

Sept. 17 - UCW Meeting @ 11:30

Sept. 20 - Art, Beats and Eats (A Jarvis Street Fall event)

Sept. 24 - Church Council Meeting

Sept. 25 - Embrace Open House

Sept. 26 - Great Duck Reunion (Potluck @ 6pm)

Sept. 28 - First Day of Young Adult Program

Oct. 10-11 - Boo At The Zoo (volunteers needed)

Oct. 24 - Murder Mystery Dinner @ 6pm

Oct. 25 - Trunk Or Treat (A Jarvis Street halloween event)

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Signs - Thoughts On Vacation

When I travel east on vacation there are certain markers I look for along the way to measure my progress towards my destination. Toronto of course is the big unknown in my travels; it can take an hour to drive across or three hours to drive across depending on traffic! Sigh!!!

But after that, I time my travels past Kingston, across the Quebec border, look for the dinosaurs at Madrid 2.0, the turn at Rivere-du-Loup, and the time change as we cross into NB! And even though there is another 6 hours of driving after that, I feel like I am home. I like to know where I am going, and I like to have a clear and accurate estimation of how long it will take me to get there. But this year on our way to the cottage, when we got to Portipique we encountered a detour. There is construction work happening on the bridge, so we were forced to detour 6 km on a dirt road every time we went to town and back. Our vehicle spent the whole vacation coated in backroad dust. It wasn't a big deal, just a minor inconvenience, but it did get me thinking about life.

How many times to we go through life with a particular plan only to discover the road ends! The road ends despite our best planning and intentions. The road ends because of something beyond our control; a death, a job loss, a break-up, an injury, a natural disaster. We could sit and be stuck, we could reverse and live in the past, or we could look for the detour. God always provides a detour, an alternative path, one we might not have chosen, but a road that will take us where God wants us to be in life. It might be dusty and bumpy for a while, but just keep going.

Happy Travels!
Rev. C



For Fun!

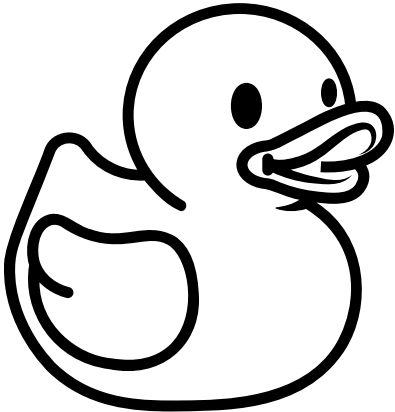
PROPHETS OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT

- ISAIAH
- JEREMIAH
- EZEKIEL
- DANIEL
- HOSEA
- JOEL
- AMOS
- OBADIAH
- JONAH
- MICAH
- NAHUM
- HABAKKUK
- ZEPHANIAH
- HAGGAI
- ZECHARIAH
- MALACHI

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



Colour Grace
Gander, the
duck who's
been hiding in
our sanctuary
all summer!
Have you seen
her?





Announcements

Pampered Chef Party

If you've signed up for the "Fill Your Freezer" party, than don't forget to come out on September 5th, from 7-9! We will cooking up a storm and prepping food for the fall season by following Terrence's guidance and recipes!

Creative Spirit Prayer Walk

Join Carolyn and a group as we journey through the Niagara Glen on September 14th. The group will be carpooling, leaving the church at 12:30pm, to be at the park for 1pm. The walk will be self guided, and then a short art session will follow. Talk to Carolyn or Victoria to sign up.

Gift Basket Collection

Starting in September, the UCW will be collecting items for gift baskets to be made and sold at the Bazaar in November. If you have any items you'd like to donate, please speak with Wanda.

September Bible Study: The Three Epistles of John

Tuesdays, Sept 9, 16. 23. 30 and Oct 7

Through the month of September and into the month of October you are invited on a journey through the three Epistles of John. We will look at each epistle individually AND consider them as a collection. We will also explore the relationship of the epistles to other books of The Bible. If you are interested in participating or if you have questions about what to expect, speak to Rev Bill after worship or contact him at rev.bill.thomas@gmail.com. I look forward to taking this journey with you! See you on the 9 th .

Volunteering

There are always many events / projects that need an extra hand or two around the church. Such as Embrace lunches, sandwich making, morning greeting or reading scripture. The Embrace tent goes out into the community a few times a year, and people are always welcome to help spread the Word to participants. If you would like to be involved, in any way, please reach out, or check the sign up sheets in the fellowship hall!

E-Blast

The E-blast goes out every Friday night, giving information on the coming Sunday Service, the youth group activity, and special announcements. If you do no receive the e-blast, but would like to, please give your email to Victoria!

Newsletter

Do you have insights you'd like to share in the next newsletter? Just let us know, we love to add new voices!



Our Need For Sabbath

Submitted By: Rev. Bill

As I write this article, September is a mere five days away and so, we are five days away from ending our 2025 month of Sabbath rest. The practice of sabbath, a time of intentional rest and re- creation is a gift, offered to all of creation by our God and Creator from the very beginning of time. Indeed, our creation story, recounted in the first chapter of The Book of Genesis concludes with God resting on the seventh day and setting an example while also giving both permission and encouragement to all creation to do likewise.

While preparing to write this article I came across this quote from Tom Roth, "Rest is an investment in the energy you will need to be effective tomorrow." We rest, not because there is no work to do but because we are tired and no longer working efficaciously. We know that there is much work to do and we have to be rested if we are going to be at our best. With rest comes revitalization. With rest comes rebirth. With rest comes inspiration and renewed commitment.

It is difficult stepping back, knowing that there is work that we could (should?) be doing. There is a story in Matthew's Gospel in which a woman anoints Jesus with costly perfume. Judas challenges her that the money could have been given to the poor to which Jesus responds, "The poor you will have with you always, but you will not always have me." During moments of sabbath, we are afforded the opportunity to sit in an intentional way with our God, to be nourished and nurtured, strengthened and equipped for the challenges that lay ahead.

When we honour Sabbath, we admit to God, to ourselves and to the world that we are human and that we need God's presence and support.

We are all familiar with the Ten Commandments that The Book of Exodus tells us Moses brought down from Mount Horeb. The Fourth Commandment instructs the believer to "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." We are enjoined to set time aside, it might be a particular day, it might be a season, to open ourselves to God's grace and to recognize our reliance on God in all things.

Annie Lamott once wrote, "When you rest, you catch your breath and it holds you up, like water wings." Reflecting on Lamott's observation I would amend it slightly. When you rest, you open yourself to being caught by the breath of God, (the ruach or Holy Spirit) and she holds you up as if on the wings of eagles. The Psalmist catches some of this sentiment in the 91 st Psalm.

I pray that this time of Sabbath has been life giving and soul renewing. I pray that you found opportunities to rest in God's countenance and to know God's loving presence. And I pray that you have been gifted with a spirit of discernment that you might know what God is calling you to in this next season as the work and ministry of our small church community begins to take form.

**"There's virtue in work and there's
virtue in rest.
Use both and overlook neither.'
-Alan Cohen**

**"Your commitment to your
wellness is part of the revolution.'
-Danielle LaPorte**



Standing On Holy Ground

Submitted By: Marlyn Damas

In listening to Reverend Bill's sermon this morning [August 17th], coupled with a daily passage I read a few days ago, it brought to mind a couple of very important beliefs for me...

When I was growing up, we used to go to Portugal every 2-3 years, as that's where my parents were born. And every time we were there, we'd go to visit Fatima. For those of you unfamiliar with the story of Fatima, it's located in central mainland Portugal, where there were several apparitions from Mother Mary to 3 children in 1917. I won't get into all the details of what the children went through, but if interested, I highly recommend reading the book 'Fatima, in Lucia's Own Words'. Lucia was the eldest of the 3 children. The site of the apparitions is considered one of the most famous shrines in the world, honouring the Virgin Mary, and the Holy Ground where she'd appeared.

When we'd be in Fatima, from the youngest age, I used to always be in awe, knowing I was walking on holy ground. I'd feel a deeper connection to my faith while there and I often felt sad leaving. I remember that I'd think that I couldn't wait to get back there, so I could once again 'stand on holy ground', in order to feel closer to Mother Mary, but also to God and to Jesus.

As I grew up into an adult and life got fuller & busier and the trips to Portugal became fewer & fewer, I'd often find myself striving to regain that deeper connection to my faith that I used to feel in Fatima. It was tough at first, but eventually I began to feel it in other ways... hearing my babies laugh, watching a sunset, being out on my paddleboard when the lake is like glass in the early morning.

But in hearing Reverend Bill's sermon this morning, it reminded me that I also feel that deeper connection when I respond to Jesus calling... when I know what Jesus would want me to do in a particular situation, and rather than form excuses in my own mind as to why I can't, I just do it. And it feels wonderful & amazing, and it feels right! It's what Jesus is calling upon me to do. And truly, aren't we all just spiritual beings journeying through life in a human form? Aren't we all spiritually connected?

To quote Melody Beattie in *Journey To The Heart*:

"When you look for holy ground, look down. That's where your spiritual experience takes place. Right where you're standing, wherever you are now".



Bequeathing Blessings:

A Message From The Trustees

We gratefully remember Eileen Elizabeth Kennedy, who moved on into the loving arms of God in her 100th year, peacefully slipping away at midnight at Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie a year ago, with her funeral following at St. John's Stevensville United Church thereafter, and her final gift to the church being received recently and invested by the Trustees.

Eileen was an active member of the UCW of the Central Avenue United Church in Fort Erie, and connected with the UCW at St John's United in Stevensville in recent years. She was aware of the endowment activities of this church and bequeathed a generous gift to St. John's Stevensville United Church. This was recently invested by the trustees through the United Church of Canada Foundation, a measure to prevent erosion of our supportive endowment program through inflation over future years, thus ensuring the permanence and strength of this this congregation's ministry in centuries to come. Using St. John's Stevensville United Church as their model, many congregations across Canada are now intending to make United Church progressive ministries permanent in their communities and areas through endowment programs with The United Church of Canada Foundation, as we are doing.

The Trustees of St. John's Stevensville United Church encourage all members to make gifts to our endowment program at least once a year (when we celebrate our anniversary on the first Sunday in November), and to tithe in our wills, naming this congregation, or to leave bequests to the church, in whole or as part of their estates, to ensure the continuation of our ministries.

For your consideration,

Rev. Dr. Brian Arthur Brown, FRCA

Chair of Trustees and Minister Emeritus of St. John's Stevensville United Church



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FOUNDATION



Creative Spirit: Prayer Walk and 12th Season!

Submitted By: Carolyn Campbell

Join us for our second prayer walk of the summer season. At the end of July, Creative Spirit gathered at Queenston Heights Park for a prayer walk. It was a time for us to prepare and reflect on our upcoming Season of Sabbath, the month of August when we put all the church activities on hold and take some time to 'be still'. Part of "being still" was reflected in the processing time for our cyanotype art (sun printing) we created. As our Sabbath season ends, and the days of summer are counting down, we will gather for our second prayer walk, this time at Niagara Glen. The Sunday afternoon prayer walk will be a time for us to give gratitude for that Sabbath, moving into autumn. Niagara Glen, with its beautiful views of the Niagara River, gives us an incredible backdrop for contemplative prayer and creating art. All are welcome!



When: Sunday, September 14, 2025

Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

We will carpool from the church leaving at 12:30 p.m. Bring a lunch to eat at the park.

Victoria will have a sign-up sheet at church or email her at sjsprograms@gmail.com

AND... Creative Spirit Resumes!!

Yes! Thursday, September 11 th at 1:00 p.m. Creative Spirit resumes its regular weekly gathering of 'engaging in the spiritual practice of creativity', at the Embrace Centre. We will be kicking off our 12 th season focusing on the 5 weeks of the Season of Creation, "Peace with Creation".

We're excited to be starting back into our weekly gatherings. For those that have never been to Creative Spirit, perhaps this is the year that you come out and give it a try. No experience of any kind is necessary. It is 2 hours of your week that is for you, for rest, renewal and rejoicing in God. We sing, we pray, we connect, we create. Looking forward to meeting you!



A Note From Our Music Director

"Hello! It has been wonderful to get to know you during the last number of weeks of summer worship. Thank you for being welcoming and accommodating, and for sharing your enthusiasm! I have played the piano since the age of 5 years old. I had the privilege of learning from two amazing teachers that instilled a true passion for musical expression.

For those that may not know, I was born and raised in the United Church of Canada. I participated in the Praise Band at St. Andrew's United Church in Niagara Falls when I was in high-school. This opportunity opened many musica doors and introduced how a piano could be incorporated into worship in a church. Growing up with traditional piano lessons through the Royal Conservatory of Music created a deeply-rooted appreciation and passion for classical musical studies; the opportunities to improvise and create spirit-lead worship were important milestones I experience early in my musical journey.

After high school, and having completed the ARCT in piano performance through the Royal Conservatory of Music with my childhood piano teacher, I had to fly from the nest, and next pursued a Bachelor of Music at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario with a focus on the classical repertoire for the piano. Along with these studies, I was immersed in composition lessons, advanced theory, and was introduced to the world of jazz music.

Upon graduation from university, I needed to pay off student loans, and started teaching piano lessons full-time. After working at a prominent music school in the Oakville/Mississauga Area of Ontario, I got married and moved to Hamilton, Ontario. During this time, I started working at local churches, and "came back to my roots" in the United Church of Canada as a Director of Music. I also opened my own business teaching piano/theory/composition lessons. Many fruitful years have passed, and I am still loving the challenges of juggling many musical activities; the enjoyment of music is still strong!

I am very excited to have the opportunity to honor the traditions at St. John's Stevensville United Church. There are many talented and dedicated participants in this congregation. I love collaborating with others, and creating a team environment. From the Gathering Hymn to the Choral Closing, each component has an important role to play in creating meaningful worship. It is my privilege to honor traditions, to embrace the future, and also to create a meaningful worship experience. If you would like to reach out and chat more, please feel free to connect with me after church on Sunday mornings, or send me an email to musicbyiangreeninc@gmail.com. My door is always open to connect. I am excited for a great year ahead!

Yours in Christ,
Ian Green, Director of Music (aka Music Sheriff)"



Duck Fun - A Summer of Adventure

Submitted By: Victoria Janssen

Everyone has been absolutely incredible, playing along with the Duck adventures of the summer! If you're a little confused, the Ducks were sold by the Sunday School at the beginning of the summer, and the congregation were encouraged to take those ducks on their summer vacations. After dressing them up, and naming them, our ducks travelled far and wide! All summer, we've been getting pictures coming back of the ducks in new places, meeting new people, trying new foods, exploring new areas, and so much more! To everyone who participated, thank you for adding so much fun to the project! But wait!!! It's not over yet!!

On Sept. 26th, we will all be gathering together (if possible) in the Fellowship hall for a Duck Family Reunion! Bring your ducks back, so they can share their stories with their fellow ducks. All photos from the summer will be on display, and we will host a potluck dinner to celebrate together!

There will be snacks and refreshments available, and the winners of the photo contests will be announced! Remember, there is a category for "Coolest Photo of a Duck," "Best Dressed Duck," and "Furthest Travelled Duck!"

Everyone is welcome, even if you didn't take a duck on the road with you. Come celebrate the triumphant return of our duck family anyway, and join in the fun and excitement of simply being together!



"I'm Interested...."



Want to learn more about what's happening at the church? Sunday morning isn't the only time that the church is filled with people. Things are happening all the time! Some events are every week, some are once a year, but everything has the spirit of St. John's Stevensville United Church running through it!

Through September there will be a list of different things that the church is doing, and you will have the chance to sign up for more information about each one. If you leave your email, an information sheet will be sent to you, and you can share it with whomever you'd like!

Now's your chance to understand the goings ons of the church, and to maybe get yourself involved!

Holding God's Word - A Churchwide Challenge

Grab a group and prepare for our fall challenge... a memory verse challenge!

Beginning on Sept. 14, teams of four will be able to register with Victoria. Team members can choose from the available memory verses which, when recited correctly to Rev. Cheryl or Victoria, will earn points. Whichever team has the most points at the end of the challenge, Nov. 16, will win!!

The memory verse options, and leader scoreboard, will be available in the fellowship hall, outside the Sunday School room.

The Sunday School classes will be competing as a single team, and they officially challenge you to the "Holding God's Word" event! Think about your teammates carefully, and prepare!

