



# The Banner

## Advent 2024

Website: [www.saintlukesunited.org](http://www.saintlukesunited.org) Telephone: (519) 658-2351

*"A community of faith reaching out to others through Christ"*



*"Of all the Spirit's gifts to me,  
I pray that I may never cease  
To take and treasure most these three:  
Love, Joy and Peace"*     -Fred Pratt Green, 1979

Dear Saint Luke's family and friends,

Over the past several hundred years, Advent and Christmas seasons in the Christian tradition have inspired composers to create a vast inventory of wonderful music for both singers and instruments. Scientific studies have proven that music - and particularly the pairing of words and music - brings together not only emotional elements, but also stimulates different parts of the brain. This can result in many positive outcomes for our all aspects of our health... physical, emotional and spiritual.

The final words listed in the hymn lyrics quoted above (#57 in Songs for a Gospel People) are 3 of the 4 focuses of Christian Advent worship, seen in the circle of candles that we light each Sunday during this season. While they can be reflected upon separately, the combination of all 4 binds together elements of our faith, tapping into resources available to us for abundant life and culminating in the lighting of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve. But I can hear you saying, "So, in these hymn lyrics, where is the 4<sup>th</sup> focus... and perhaps, 'What is it?'"

The missing component is actually the first thing that we focus on in Advent, and it is the first candle we light... **Hope!**

As we begin our journey toward Christmas, I invite you to ponder this: I believe, as a Christian, that Jesus came to earth to share the reality of a loving Creator in concrete terms that our human brain might understand. This has the potential to give us **hope** for our lives, but we know that doesn't always sink in.

No matter who we are, where we live, whatever we have done or thought in the past, I believe we all want to be loved. In this world where superficial relationships and insensitive intolerance seem to have proliferated, is it any wonder that many people have given up hope that they can find sincere and unconditional **love**, revitalizing **joy** and a sense of deep **peace**? (Indeed, many have lost hope that a loving Creator even exists.)

In this world, so many turn to external gratification to find love, joy and peace. Perhaps we can consider that the message of Christmas is this: the birth of Jesus can give us **Hope** that abundant life comes from connecting with our Creator, and we only need look within ourselves for that connection. From that inward place comes the **Love** that brings deep **Peace** that enables us to experience **Joy** in every day. The freedom that this brings can empower us – each person – to connect with the Source of Life... the Source of Love that inspired Creation in the beginning; the Source of Love that inspires creativity for well-being – of individuals, yes, but more importantly, for the well-being of all Creation.

I pray that in the busyness of this approaching season of Advent, you will have the courage to take the time to accept the invitation to connect with that Divine source of **Hope**... of **Peace**... of **Joy**... and of **Love**... all manifested in **Jesus**. We would be blessed to share that experience with you at our Advent and Christmas worship services (see information below).

Blessings and peace to you and yours...

Daria Salemka, interim pastoral care provider

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**May your Christmas be joyful, merry, safe  
and blessed and may the peace of the  
Prince of Peace be yours.**

**Advent / Christmas Services:** Let us gather together and worship the Lord this Advent Season!

Dec. 01 Advent 1 HOPE Karen Cartmell, LLWL

Dec. 08 Advent 2 PEACE Michele Braniff, LLWL

Dec. 15 Advent 3 JOY Paul Knierim, LLWL

Dec. 22 Advent 4 LOVE Rev. Jenny Stephens, Communion Service and a helping hand offering.

Dec. 24 Rev. Jenny Stephens, Christmas Eve Service 8:00pm

Dec. 29 Christmas Carol Sing

**December 11th UCW Christmas Program at 7 p.m** in the Mary Clemens room. This will be an evening of Christmas music, stories and readings with an opportunity to sing many of your favourite carols. The evening will close with refreshments and seasonal treats as well as a time of fellowship. This special evening is open to everyone (ladies, gentlemen, friends and neighbours).

Come, experience the joy of the Christmas season!



We are very happy to welcome Joanne Lahey to the position of Part-time Admin. Assistant.

Joanne will be in the church office on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is a great addition to our church team.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT



*"It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope"*

Plans are underway for Advent and Christmas.

We invite volunteers to decorate the Sanctuary **Monday, Nov. 25 at 7pm**. We are also looking for Advent readers (candle liturgy and/or Scripture) during Sunday worship. Please inform Joni, Daria or Mary W. if you would like to take part.

**Saturday, Dec. 21** We will be offering a "Longest Night/Blue Christmas" service in the evening. Through quiet music, readings and time for reflection, we want to acknowledge the impact of the physical darkness of longer nights, as well as the struggle with grief for those who have suffered loss. Everyone is welcome.

Rev. Jenny Stephens will be officiating Holy Communion on **Sunday, Dec. 22**, and will also be leading us in worship for **Christmas Eve**, in a service starting at **8pm**.

There will be a Baptism taking place **Jan. 26**, with Rev. Jenny officiating. Please contact the church office if anyone is interested in baptism, confirmation or becoming a member of our congregation on that Sunday, or if you would like more information.

Worship committee is hoping to have another games night in the near future. Stay tuned for the date!

All our wonderful and dedicated worship leaders are in place through to March.

Peace and many Blessings,  
Joni  
Worship Chair

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?  
Mark the season of Advent by  
loving and serving the others with  
God's own love and concern."

*Mother Teresa*



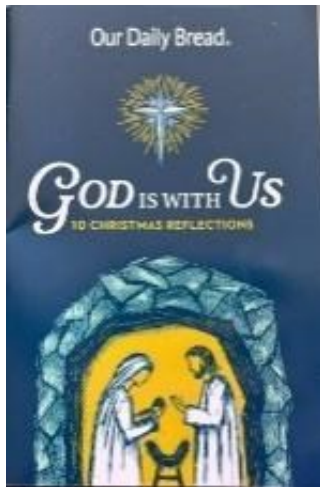


## 2025 - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of United Church of Canada



Ideas are still welcome for varied ways to celebrate the centenary of our United Church of Canada throughout 2025. For starters, we plan to create a banner with fabric squares depicting people's memories and joys experienced within the United Church, particularly at our faith community of Saint Luke's. You are welcome

to decorate a square (with fabric that will be provided) or submit ideas of designs you would like to see included. This is a collective effort - we need your help, so don't be shy! Got ideas but not sure how to make it happen?... Contact Carrie or Mary W. to get your square(s) or for more information / suggestions.



**Devotional Booklets** - Our Daily Bread booklets have generously been donated for individual devotional study. These booklets are FREE for anyone who wishes to take one or an extra copy for a friend. The current issue covers September, October and November. The next issue covering December, January and February has also arrived.

There will be a special *“God is With Us”* issue of 10 Christmas devotions as well that would make a wonderful stocking stuffer for someone special. Please help yourself.

**From the Community** - A new regional community choir will perform its inaugural concert on **Friday, November 29 at 7pm** at Emmanuel United Church in Waterloo. Based on the theme of Cyclic Time, the concert features a mix of spirituals, other music written or arranged by living composers and will include a Canadian premiere! Daria S. is excited to be part of this new venture called **Collective Voices Chamber Choir (CVCC)**, along with other familiar faces. While admission to the concert is free, donations are gratefully accepted, but not required. Carpooling can be arranged. Speak to Daria for more information.



## **Keeping You in the Loop**

**The Outreach Committee** - The Outreach Committee would like to give a big shoutout to our congregation & Stewardship Committee. The Retail Card Programs have been so successful, thanks to our congregation, that the Stewardship Committee decided to pay it forward & donated \$1,000 to the Mission & Service campaign from the accumulated proceeds. With a grand total of \$5,900.50, we have now reached 92% of our Mission & Service goal. Outreach will continue to campaign for M&S until the end of the year in hopes of raising the \$500 we need to reach our 2024 goal. Any donation will be gratefully received.

With Thanks, Outreach

**Truckin' Tuesdays** - congratulations on another great season for Truckin' Tuesdays! Our season ran from May to September and we earned \$4,366.10, which also included \$243 from ice cream sandwiches that we sold this year. We had rain several Tuesdays and on one Tuesday we had to cancel because of a heat warning, which unfortunately reduced our sales. However, we also earned \$300 from Krankie Frankie's serving fish and chips on Good Friday which brings our Food Truck total to **\$4,666.10**. We are so grateful for earning this from our efforts! We want to thank all of our devoted volunteers who showed up every week to set up and take down tables, clean up garbage and everything else that needed to be done. We can't do Truckin' Tuesdays without our volunteers! We sure do have a lot of fun chatting and socializing with each other on these Tuesdays.

If you are interested in joining the Food Truck Committee, please let us know.



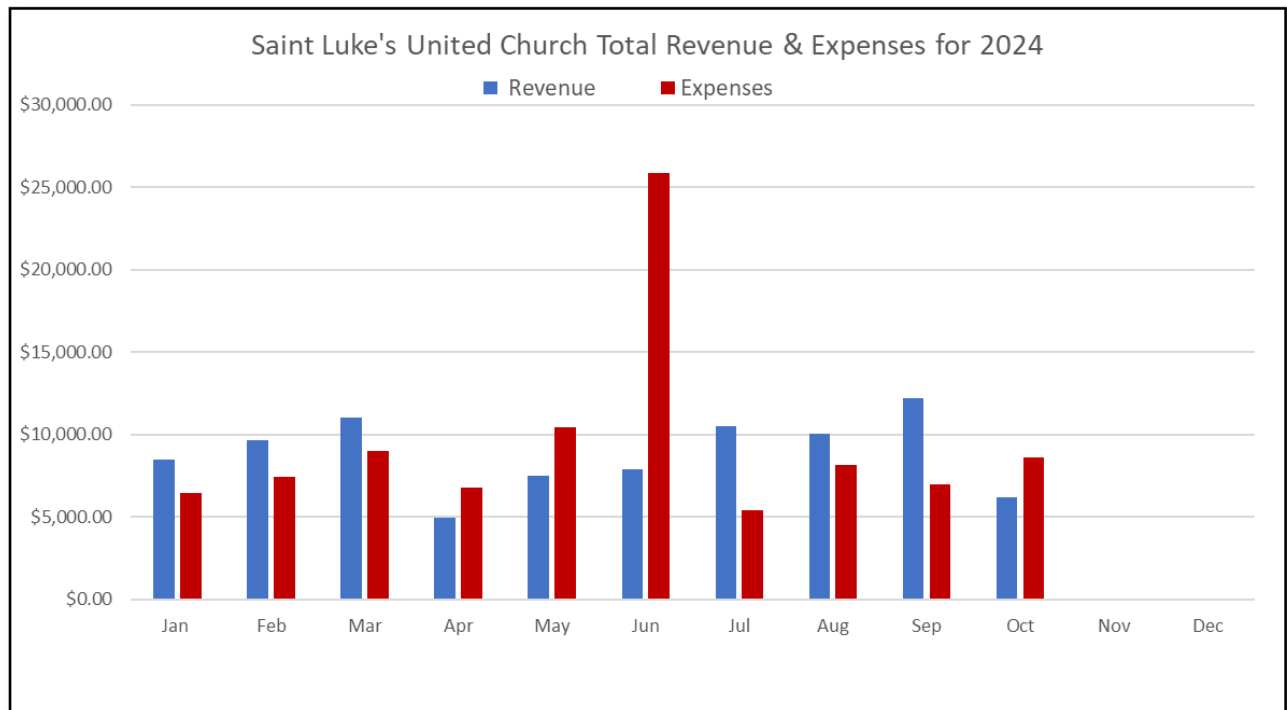
## Finance News

### YTD Income Statement from January - October 2024

Total Revenue: \$88,687.00

Total Expenses: \$95,272.51

Net Income: -\$6,585.51



## Mark Your Calendars - February 2025

Back by popular demand! Come enjoy the spaghetti and meatballs you love with all the fixings. Date will be confirmed in the New

🎵 "When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, come to Saint Luke's..." 🎵





