



The Mustard Seed

February 2026

*Newsletter
of*

*St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church*

47 McLachlin St. S., Arnprior
Ontario K7S 2Z1
Church Council

Andy Kalnins (Chair) 863-0202
Enid Blackwell (V./Treas) 623-7017
Debbie Witt (Sec'y) 622-1500
Karen Greening (416) 540-5354
Fred Steinke 298-5017
Mellissa Watt 858-9932
Pr. Sylvia: Cell: (613) 331-1962
Home: (873) 527-0136

See us on facebook:
St. John's Lutheran Church Arnprior
On the web: stjohnsarnprior.com

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches." - Matthew 13: 31-32

Reflections from our Pastor

Lent is near, a holy time of reflecting on and challenging the things in our lives that keep us from turning to, trusting and following God in our daily lives.

It is time to ask ourselves challenging questions. Are we living as Jesus taught? Do I have courage to challenge injustice when I see it? Where is Christ leading? Am I worthy? Lent is personal. Many of us pray more, read more scripture and take time with daily devotions. We listen to the whispers of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Lent is also a community time, a shared practice. The world is full of horrific acts. Most of us are feeling vulnerable, uncertain and afraid for the world. We need one another to make faithful sense of it all, and share in response. We share thoughts that leave us uncomfortable or anxious. What does Christ offer us as a community? How do we support one another?

In the next weeks we are invited into a time of quiet reflection, shared questions, and peaceful surrender, releasing all those things that worry us, those things we cannot control. It is a time to reject feelings of shame, inadequacy or guilt - we are created good and we are loved. Our life is a response to the love God gives us - especially when we feel least worthy. Lent is not a time to make ourselves miserable - remember, God has created us for goodness and joy. It is, instead, a time to grow in peace and deep joy by releasing those things that keep us from living as God hoped. We ask questions, and we listen to God. We prepare to receive the gift of Easter - new life.

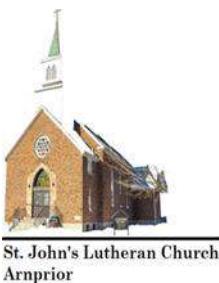
It is my prayer that we enter into the time of Lent with courage. May we trust Christ to share the pain we carry personally, and together, creating space to carry the love that is offered to all. We are worthy, we are loved and we can be courageous in the days ahead.

In service,
rev sylvia

February 2026 Calendar

NOTE the service time change beginning Feb 8th: 11:00a.m.

DATE	EVENT
Muslim Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Prayers: 1:00-2:00 p.m.— each Friday in the Lounge. Ramadan evening prayers begin Wed. Feb 18th for 30 days in the Lounge.
Music 'N Motion	<p>Wednesdays. Music 'n Motion. 12 noon—1:00 p.m. in the Hall</p>
Sunday Feb 1 st	<p>10:30 a.m.—Worship Service with Holy Communion Music Lynne Z.</p>
Sunday Feb 8 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:00a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion Music Lynne Z. Sunday School
Sunday Feb 15 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:00a.m. — Lay led Worship Service Music: Lynne or Karen
Monday Feb 16 th	1:00—Council Meets
Wednesday Feb 18 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2:00 p.m. — Ash Wednesday Service Trinity-St. Andrews United Church & St. James Lutheran 291 Plaunt Street S., Renfrew,
Saturday Feb 21 st	9:00—Men's Breakfast at Jim's
Sunday Feb 22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:00a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion Music: Electronic Annual General Meeting follows Service Lunch will be served



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Arnsprior

Draft Minutes of January 12, 2026 Council Meeting

Attendance:

Pr. Sylvia Poetschke	Karen Greening
Andy Kalnins	Debbie Witt
Enid Blackwell	Fred Steinke
	Mellissa Watt (Regrets)

Meeting called to order 1:00 pm. Pastor Sylvia opened with a reflection.

Previous Minutes: Debbie moved that the November 17, 2025 minutes be accepted as distributed. Seconded by Fred CARRIED.

Financial Report –January to December 2025 DRAFT 1: Ordinary budget income: Commitments for December \$11,951, some \$5,550 more than November. Thanks to all for Advent/Christmas gifts. Remaining youth UNPLUG grant and last quarter rental from Muslim community also in income. Operating expenses \$9,200. Some one-off bigger expenses in Dec. include: remote thermostat system \$487, organ tuning \$610, parade float, costume and Christmas Eve signage \$307. Pastoral Ministry total figure still high; review planned. Projected budget deficit now just under \$4,800, some \$4,000 less than projected at Financial AGM meeting due to larger December donations. Other income/expense: Friends of Creation, Lake Chad CLWR and Food Bank: 2025 totals now transferred out. Bank account \$13,855, Charitus is \$79,822 and cashable GIC is \$5,049. Enid moved that the financial report to end of December, draft 1, be accepted as presented. Karen seconded. CARRIED

Property: Fred is repairing the snowblower, donated by Ryan. Weekly property checks are continuing as well as snow clearing. Discussion on humidity; Property monitoring.

Pastoral Care: Christmas platters were delivered and were very much appreciated by all who received them. Thanks to P+ Norine for noting and providing added care visits by her, and others.

Service Time Change: In order to make travel time safer for Pr. Sylvia to make her way on Sunday to SJL from Renfrew, it is proposed that our service change from 10:30 to 11:00. This will also give more time for her at St. James. Karen moved that our service time be changed from 10:30 to 11:00 for February/March 2026; to be reviewed in April. Seconded by Enid. CARRIED

Service in the Absence of Pr. Sylvia: One Sunday a month (generally the 3rd Sunday) will be creative lay led services which could be lay adult or youth led, include use of the worship service of the word, or be more creative worship. Pr. Sylvia is committed to supporting a Worship Committee for these services. It is to be formed and led by a TBD coordinator.

Selection and Compensation of Musicians: Council received a suggestion that we should gradually move towards \$100/service over time, whereas an increase from \$60 to \$65 with an added number of live music services was approved in the 2026 budget. Enid did further research on local historical pattern of honoraria for supply musicians and on the range of compensation for musicians at some other congregations, when it is an honorarium for those who are not professional organists. No musician has requested an increase; the treasurer will advise if any change. Council confirmed agreement to the \$65 as approved.

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Minutes of January 12th Council Meeting, continued

Date for AGM: The date will be February 22, 2026. This meeting will be to cover our ministry as to where is Jesus leading you and how would you be involved. To look at what it means for leading service on Sunday. The previous survey indicated that people are just happy to come to church and give financially and not be involved in volunteering. Reports to come in to Debbie Witt by February 2, 2026.

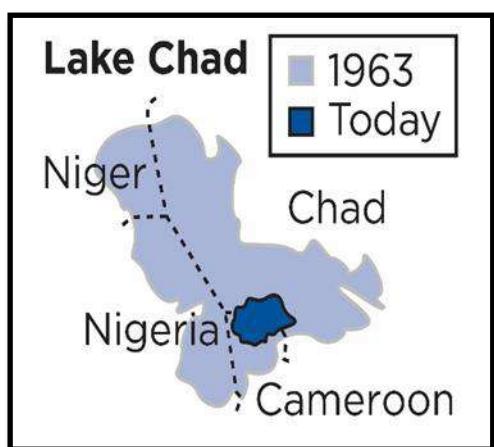
People Stepping Down from Roles: Some volunteers are stepping down from various positions which have become hard to fill.

Communication with Council: Andy and others will now be sending all inquiries/requests on to Council so all are aware of the communication.

Meeting closure: Meeting closed with prayer of thanks by Pastor Sylvia. Next regular meeting: February 16, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.



Friends of Creation Challenge – Thank you for your support



Around Lake Chad, the entire water cycle has been disrupted. The lake itself shrunk between the 1960s and 1990s to a fraction of its previous size, and rainfall has become lighter and more erratic. Droughts have increased, irrigation channels have been damaged, drinking water polluted, and native fish species have disappeared. With your support, over 128,000 people will have better nutrition and water, plus, higher crop yields—and another 640,000 will live and work in a restored ecosystem. Our congregation has generously stepped up to the challenge this past year by donating \$1360 to help farmers dependant on Lake Chad restore land, regrow forests, adopt sustainable farming and water management practices, and rebuild a thriving economy.

<https://donate.clwr.org/>

Meanwhile in Canada



**Annual meeting of the
Summer Tires Club**

INSPIRATION



I would love to live
Like a river flows
Carried by the surprise
Of its own unfolding.

by John O'Donohue

There is no controlling life.
Try corralling a lightning bolt containing a tornado.
Dam a stream, and it will create a new channel. Resist, and the tide will sweep you off your feet.
Allow, and grace will carry you to higher ground.
The only safety lies in letting it all in – the wild and the weak; fear, fantasies, failures, and success.
When loss rips off the doors of the heart, or sadness veils your vision with despair, practice becomes simply bearing the truth.
In the choice to let go of your known way of being, the whole world is revealed to your new eyes.

By: Danna Faulds



Prayer Vigils for Climate Justice – Lent 2026



Each Tuesday evening during Lent,

8:00-8:30 pm

the ELCIC and its synods are hosting a

Prayer Vigil for Climate justice:

Week 1, **February 24 – 8:00pm**: Creation, biodiversity, ecosystems, and those trying to protect them.

Week 2, **March 3 – 8:00pm**: Our sinful abuse of the planet, consumerism, and those trying to live more simply.

Week 3, **March 10 – 8:00pm**: The vulnerable, the poor, the sick, immigrants and those displaced by war.

Week 4, **March 17 – 8:00pm**: First Nations/Indigenous people and reconciliation.

Week 5, **March 24 – 8:00pm**: Youth and future generations.

Week 6, **March 31 – 8:00pm**: Peace, leadership (national, provincial, territorial, and municipal leaders, scientists).

Please [register here](#) to join the vigils live and/or to receive a link to the recording.

February 2026



February 6th –
Shane & Kayla Zimmerling

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!**

February 1st—Rick Frivalt

February 2nd—Sawyer Elliot

February 3rd—Debbie Witt

February 10th—Lucas Roberts

February 11th—Debbie Kargus

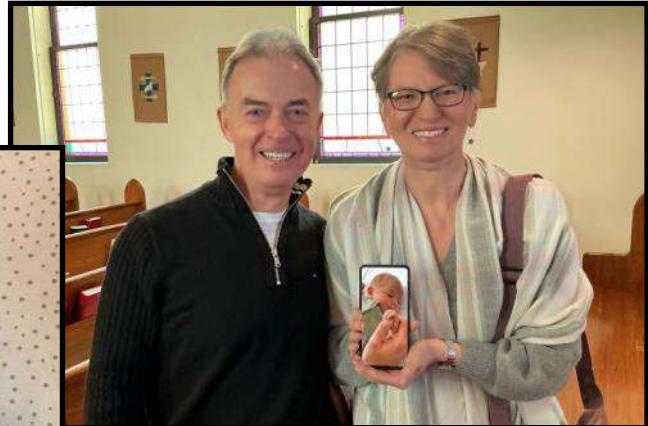
February 14th—Ryan Kargus

February 21st—Debbie Steinke

February 26th—Julie Zimmerling

February 29th—Enid Blackwell

Proud Grandparents Maureen and Lorne welcomed granddaughter Quinn Rue Cowan, born in Canberra Australia to their daughter Megan and her husband Chris. Quinn was born on January 21, 2026.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

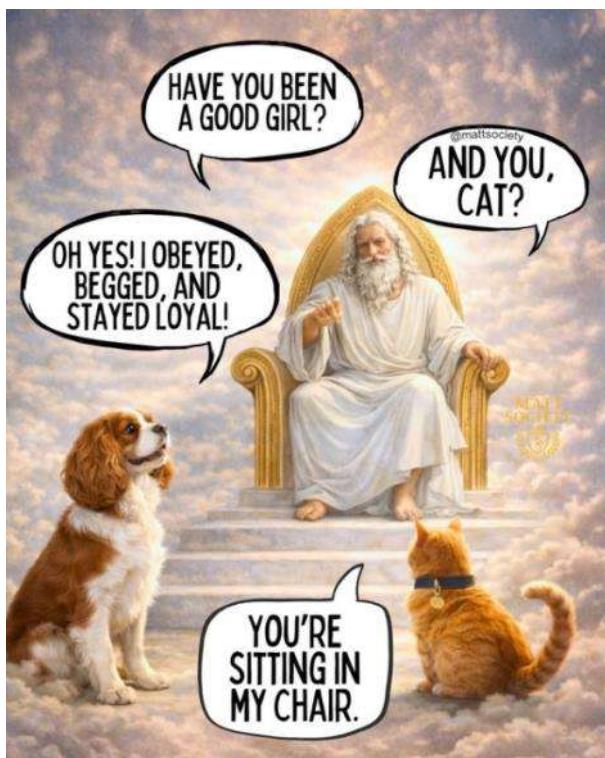


Sunday January 19, 35 people representing 7 congregations from Arnprior, gathered as one church for an ecumenical service, kicking off the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-25, 2026). The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an annual celebration when Christians around the world are invited to pray for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in jointly-organized ecumenical services, and to share fellowship.

Randy represented St. John's for this event.

During this week of shared prayer and reflection, you are invited to explore the "Devotional Guide for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" found here:

<https://www.galileecentre.com/.../2026-Week-of-Prayer-for...>



"Finally saw my doctor on Monday... Showed him the rash on my bottom, but he ignored me and kept pushing his cart through Costco. 

Meanwhile in Canada

@MeanwhileinCanada

It's time to play a favourite Canadian game called: Am I On The Road?

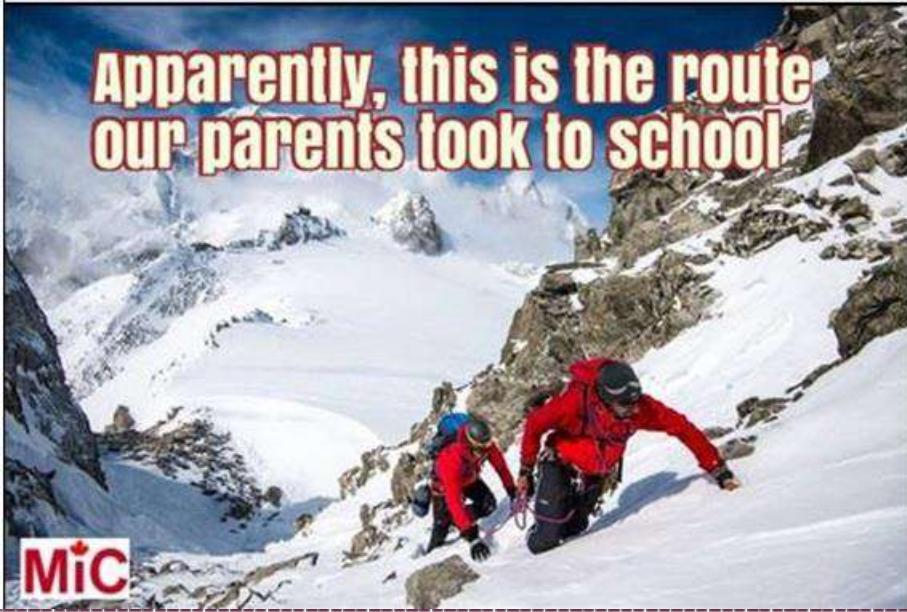


Snow Pants



MiC

Apparently, this is the route our parents took to school



MiC



VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

February 2026

DATE	READER	ALTAR	COMMUN-ION ASSIS-TANT	MUSIC	GREETERS	COUNTERS	SOCIAL
Feb 1st	Karen	Jo Anne	Andy	Lynne	Andy & Cory	Cheryl / Karen	
Feb 8th	Jeff / Debbie	Jo Anne	Karen	Lynne	Andy & Cory	Cheryl / Karen	
Feb 15th	Maureen	Jo Anne		Lynne or Karen	Andy & Cory	Cheryl / Karen	
Feb 22nd	Andy	Jo Anne	Enid	Electronic	Andy & Cory	Cheryl / Karen	Lunch
Mar 1st	Jessica & Family	Cathy Z.		Lynne	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	

“Never skimp on anything that is between you and the ground; namely, shoes, tires, and beds.”—*Jarrod from Fort Worth*

