



The Mustard Seed

February 2025

Newsletter
of
St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church

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See us on facebook:

St. John's Lutheran Church Arnprior
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"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

Message from our Pastor

Dear friends in faith,

I don't think that I am the only one who is feeling like January has been a long, long, long month. Short, dark days and bitter cold has kept me indoors much more than is good for me, and world events have me feeling a deep sense of sadness when I think of the unfathomable suffering that so many live, and die, in.

Like many, I hunkered down and kept very busy with some visiting, many phone calls and emails, worship preparation, and paying attention to the tremendous amount of work that our church family members put into preparing for the Annual General Meeting. It is a time to look back at the year that was, celebrate and give thanks, while looking ahead to see where Christ is leading in the year ahead. What are Christ's priorities? Who needs the church in the year ahead, how can we serve? These are key questions in our life together at church, and at home. Imagine waking up each morning with the thought "thank you God for the gift of a new day. I wonder where you will lead today, who I can meet and care for, and who I will meet that cares for me? Who can I pray for today?" Imagine every meeting beginning with "who needs the church today?"

Truth is, we all get caught up in the chores of everyday life - at home and in our church. Stuff just needs to get done, God knows this. And waits for us. A chore is just a tedious chore until we see the wonder that is our life here in the Ottawa Valley. We live in beauty, a sense of safety and abundance (which we don't always share well).

We look ahead into an entire month ahead of Epiphany - a time where God's hope and love for us becomes clearer - through stories of miracles, hardship, call, love and blessing. As the days grow longer it is my prayer that we experience the epiphanies in our spirits that we need the most. Amen.

2 Corinthians 4

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart.

February 2025 Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Fridays	1:00-2:00p.m.—Muslim Community—each Friday in the Lounge.
February 23rd	Muslim Community Afternoon Gathering—Lounge & Hall.
February 28 th	Ramadan begins, evening Prayers
	Dance may resume in February—TBC
	Sunday School date for February to be determined.
Sunday Feb 2nd	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion
Sunday Feb 9th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service—Lay Led
Monday Feb 10 th	1:00p.m. — Church Council Meets
Sunday Jan 16th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion
Saturday Feb 22 nd	9:00 a.m.—Men's Breakfast at Jim's
Sunday Jan 23rd	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion
Sunday Mar 2nd	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion

Reverend to his congregation: “We have good news and bad news.
 The bad news is that the roof needs repairing.
 The good news is that we have the money to pay for it.”
 (appreciative murmurs all round)

Reverend: “The extra bad news is that it's still in your pockets!”



Draft Minutes of January 20th, 2025 Council Meeting

Attendance:

Pr. Sylvia Poetschke	Karen Greening	Melissa Watt
Andy Kalnins	Debbie Witt	Fred Steinke
Enid Blackwell	Guest: Alison Burkett	

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Andy who welcomed everyone. Pastor Sylvia opened with a prayer.

1. **Previous Minutes:** Debbie moved that the December 16, 2024 minutes that were published in the newsletter be accepted, as there were minor wording changes in the Finance section to clarify points in that report. Seconded by Karen, CARRIED.
2. **Service & Worship:** Ash Wednesday service will be at St. James for 2:00 p.m. on March 5, connect with Randy if a ride is needed. Lent will be Setting 2. For Palm Sunday it is requested to use cedar bows instead of palms. Good Friday service, April 18 at St. John's inviting St. James for 10 a.m. Easter is April 20; Easter breakfast proposed to be put on by the men welcomed.
3. **Property:** Fred reported from Randy that the sidewalk will be plowed by the town. Looked into various options for lift and it is on hold for now. We have new security cameras. A sign will be posted in the lobby stating audio and video is recorded.
4. **Clergy Activities and Reviews:** Pr. Sylvia gave her weekly schedule (flexible) as: Tues. - available for office meetings, visits, etc; Saturday – hospital if needed; Thurs/Fri – weekend. Pr. Sylvia went over how she does her report for council as this works for her. She will attend some of the Ottawa Valley Cluster meetings.
5. **Annual General Meeting:** Alison would like to make a presentation at AGM of rental proposal. A light lunch will be provided and hospitality will be consulted. Andy and Debbie are to continue on council for a third term, and Melissa for a second term. Nominations open.
6. **Finances:** Operating income/expenses: Commitments received to date almost \$88,000. Some \$3,200 from memoriam. Just short \$3,400 of being on target with total commitments budget \$91,000. Rental is \$3,481, over budget by close to \$900. Pastoral Ministry and Supply \$34,283 to end of December. Transfers to Food Bank \$250, TAP \$180. Enid reported Adam Rueckwald is doing extra year-end and payroll work and proposed an additional \$100 go to him in January. Seconded by Karen, CARRIED. Enid motioned that the financial report to end of December be accepted as presented. Melissa seconded, CARRIED
7. **Moving Forward with Youth:** Alison Burkett gave a detailed report on Sunday School, UNPLUG and VBS as to how well attended & energizing they have been and the plans going forward for 2025. The Youth Fund and freewill offerings for VBS and UNPLUG attendees' fees would reduce budgeted expenses.
8. **Pastoral Care:** The Christmas platters were gratefully appreciated by our shut-ins. These individuals were also happy for having a connection with people from the church which is very important to them. Cheryl Supple would like to become a member and Pr. Sylvia is looking into this.
9. **Other Reports:** Alison Burkett gave a report on an option for rental income combined with full-time (70%) ministry to be considered by Council. Council will be discussing further.

Close of Meeting: Next meeting: Monday, February 10, 2025, 1:00 p.m. Ended with the Lord's Prayer, led by Pr. Sylvia.

Bigfoot says Canada is a Good Place to Live

Reflections from the Swamp

January 20, 2025

(Re-printed from the Millstone News)

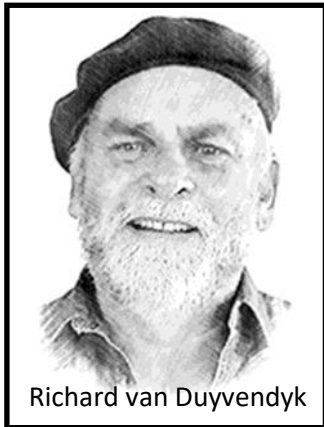
Dear Reader

We are on the cusp of navigating the troubled waters of trade tariffs with no clear captain to steer the ship. Bullies surround our boat while the mermaids and sirens keep whispering about where the safe passageways are. These two topics, trade and leadership, are the main focus of what we hear in the media. We hear almost nothing about Bigfoot and his concerns.

Writers and storytellers tell lies. We call it fiction. Raw facts, like potatoes, are drab and beg for embellishment and spice. The reader can read the book, set it aside, and judge whether it was good. The universe continues to unfold as it should. Creativity is what we share with Nature.

Conspiracy theories, although entertaining, muddy the lines between truth and fiction. They are not the same kind of lies that writers of fiction use; these theories manipulate the public for political gain. They often spread fear and hate.

While on our walks in the woods, my bride and I often encounter Bigfoot, and we share a coffee from my thermos while sitting on a fallen log near the trail. We discuss climate change, pretty female Bigfoots, and the best carrion(beaver) available in the area.



Richard van Duyvendyk

Bigfoot is about eight feet tall and has thick red-brown wavy hair (he looks like Chewy from Star Wars). He has size 22 feet. At first, we were afraid of him until he waved us over to his fire and offered us some boiled beaver.



Since then, we have become friends and often share walks and meals. He loves the spices we gave him to enhance his stews. Bigfoot loves going for long walks and told us he walked here from Saskatchewan, where he was a part of the Sasquatch nation.

We live on the unceded territory of the Sasquatch Bigfoots! I didn't know that. Bigfoots believe that all the Earth belongs to Nature, and the plants and animals are the guardians. After we introduced ourselves, we asked him what his name was. He said, just call me Hairy.

I tried to secretly take Hairy's picture from a distance. All photos turned out blurry. He refused to let me take his picture, which would allow me the proof I needed to validate my claims about seeing him. Falling snow or strong winds erase his footprints. I write down his words of wisdom in my notepad. I would never claim them as my own.

Unlike stereotypes of his species, Hairy Bigfoot is well-educated, politically astute, and wise. Although he has enormous feet, he also has a sizeable brain. Hairy weighs over 500 pounds; he is no easy pushover.

While sitting down in the woods next to a boiling pot of organic beaver with no gluten, dairy or preservatives, we discussed the recent election south of here, the victory of “The Grand Pooh-bah,” and the use of conspiracy theories to confuse the voters.

Bigfoot has a way of boiling down the carrion and getting to the meat of the matter. He said, “Despite record high employment, decreasing inflation, and falling crime rates, The Grand Pooh-bah convinced enough people that immigrants broke America, and only he could save the country by kicking out the immigrants (and Bigfoot tribe members) and lowering the price of eggs. He included many lies about immigrants eating dogs, raping and killing people in border states, and stealing jobs from blacks. He has since planned tariffs, spreading panic to all his trading partners, including Canada.”

The Pooh-bah ignored the only issue Bigfoot was concerned about: climate change. The Grand Pooh-bah’s tactics worked.

While sitting around the fire, we exchanged thoughts about the uncertain future.

Bigfoot mused, “I know you humans are concerned about trade, jobs, and rising prices, and I feel for you, but you keep ignoring what your actions are doing to the planet. Every time you have a crisis you scramble around like chickens with their heads cut off and kick climate change actions down the road. The habitat for Bigfoots in the west is burning down due to climate change as I speak.”

My bride told him, “We depend on jobs and trade to keep the economy going; if a trade war causes widespread unemployment, the economy will collapse. All our adult kids and their offspring will move into the basement, and we will run out of potatoes. We’ll have to hide the crayons. Instead of drawing unemployment, the kids will start drawing on the walls. I appreciate cave art, but cleaning the walls is nearly impossible.”

Bigfoot nodded in agreement with my bride. “I heard stories passed on by the ancient relatives. Some of my kin got stuck in a cave with their kids during the ice age. The kids started drawing on the walls with whatever they used for crayons back then. Those drawings are still there!”

Hairy took another sip of coffee and said, “Many human problems are caused not by your oversized feet but by your inflated egos. Your ego keeps you prisoner. You are subject to its whims and fancies. The rich and powerful keep it all for themselves. The Grand Bigfoot once said, “If you have two beaver coats, give one to your neighbour.”

Hairy continued, “Humans think they are separate from Nature and not a part of it. Ask what is best for the planet, which badly needs your focus as the world heats up. Find the joy in living and being human as a part of Nature. Canada is full of Nature and is a great place to live.”

I love Hairy. Hairy Bigfoot gave us a lot to think about. I hope you meet someone like him to help provide perspective about life and what is valuable and vital. If you see a Bigfoot and try to take a picture, the photo will always be blurry. Like love, Bigfoots are hard to see in pictures. You must recall what your Bigfoot said by digging deep into your soul, hearing his voice and bringing these truths to light.



The Annual Meeting is coming soon: the planned AM date is

February 23, 2025.

This time is an opportunity to reflect on all the ministries of faith and care we, as St. John's folks, seek to be and do within, in the local community and beyond in the wider world. Recording these reflections is a task, but important, as we go forward.



Now that **Respiratory Virus season** is here, everyone is reminded to stay away from others if you are symptomatic, and sanitize often.



Film Screening & Coffee House

Date: Friday, February 7, 2025

Time: 7 pm

Film: *The Sultan and the Saint*

Location: Galilee Centre 398 John St. N. Arnprior

No registration required but appreciated, no cost

www.galileecentre.com 613-623-4242 x 21

The story of St. Francis and the Sultan is a moment of encounter. This film highlights an impossible en-

counter, an encounter that was inconceivable to many. Join us for a screening of the film *The Sultan & The Saint* and continue with a time of coffee house gathering to discuss the film and the opportunities we may have for encounter with those of other faiths, and the difficulties that seem to surround the opportunity for open dialogue and authentic exchange.

We are happy Stella Boese has been able to return to her home at the Villa, after a hospital stay. Here she is with daughter-in-law Diane.



- ⇒ My laptop caught pneumonia, apparently because I left Windows open.
- ⇒ What do you call a beehive without an exit? Answer: Unbelievable.

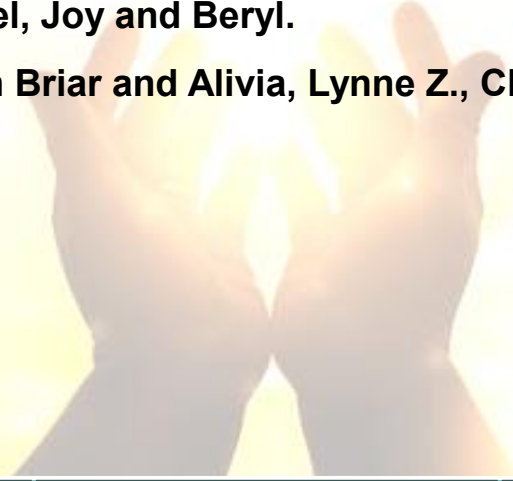


PRAYER LIST

Please pray for these people in your daily prayers:

From our Congregation: Jaqueline, Vicki, Samantha, Pastor Norine, Karen, Mellissa, Gerald, Rachel, Joy and Beryl.

Friends: Terry, children Briar and Alivia, Lynne Z., Claude, John S. and Mary.



February 2025



Anniversaries

February 6th—Shane &
Kayla Zimmerling

BIRTHDAYS

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



VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

February 2025

DATE	READER	ALTAR	GREETERS	COUNTERS	SOCIAL
Feb 2	Karen Greening	Lorne & Jo Anne	G.F.K. Steinke	Lorne & Jo Anne	
Feb 9	Bob Witt	Lorne & Jo Anne	G.F.K. Steinke	Lorne & Jo Anne	<i>Social Possible</i>
Feb 16	Jessica Z / Elliot family	Lorne & Jo Anne	G.F.K. Steinke	Lorne & Jo Anne	
Feb 23	Mark Boese	Lorne & Jo Anne	G.F.K. Steinke	Lorne & Jo Anne	AGM—Lunch Debbie K & Cathy Z.
March 2	Cheryl Supple	Barbara & Gerald or other	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	



The Prayer Jar in the Narthex

This jar is a confidential place to list your prayer concerns and put them in the jar. NO ONE will be reading these at all. The Prayer Team simply raises up the contents in prayer without knowing what is requested on the notes.

Please feel free to add yours at any time, using the post it notes on the narthex table.