



The Mustard Seed

March 2025

Newsletter

of

***St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church***

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

Church Council

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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

Message from our Pastor

Dear friends in faith,

Invitation to Lent:

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent – self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love – strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament.

Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

With these words we enter into the 40 days of Lenten discipline. These words take on a new meaning in 2025 as the world needs faithful people to step up together to "contend against evil and resist whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbour."

I cannot think of a time in my life where this commitment has taken on more importance, my parents (deceased) surely could. It is a time to look inward and then act. To stand up for love, decency, mercy and creation. To build and reinforce community.

What does this mean? In Ontario, research and vote. Choose the party that best reflects what Christ would do - not what might seem the most advantageous to some while leaving others behind. Hold your elected officials accountable to the most vulnerable.

On a personal level use your power. Graham and I are looking at everything we do and buy through Christ's eye on the impact. Goodbye Facebook, Netflix and Airbnb and Amazon. Shop local. Increased support of our democratic, inclusive and progressive neighbours. The list goes on.

As we prepare for our "epic adventure" in spring (Graham's niece is getting married in Perth Australia (April 23-May 14) we have altered and revised plans to avoid having our dollars support evil or cause harm. It has cost a bit more, and there are surely unknown things, but we are reflecting and acting. The days of simply doing anything without thought are behind us.

Message from our Pastor, continued

It is time for prayer, self-examination, repentance, sacrificial giving and acts. It is true that we may upset and anger some. It may feel hopeless or insignificant. But, such is the life of the faithful - Jesus and his disciples were not always welcomed - compassion and solidarity with the vulnerable takes courage now and always has. Speak out. Seek out real news and facts.

We, as Christians, support and encourage one another to do what is right in the eyes of God. This is more important, and more difficult now than ever. May we trust the Spirit to guide. Amen.

Poetry moment

Some of you may be aware that reading and reflecting on poetry is a part of my spiritual practice. Mary Oliver is one of my favourite poets. As the days lengthen and it starts to feel like spring might be around the corner, here is a favourite of mine.

Wild Geese by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
 You do not have to walk on your knees
 for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
 You only have to let the soft animal of your body
 love what it loves.
 Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
 Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.

In service

Pr Sylvia

Get involved at St. John's!

Where is Jesus leading? Our question of the year! Are you being nudged to consider reading scripture at worship? Do you have a knack for building maintenance or want to learn? Interested in hospitality? This is the perfect time to get involved in new ways at St. John's. Whether it is signing up to mow the law, or bring snacks we are all invited to share our time, talent and treasure with one another. Interested in seeing/starting something new, or forgotten? Share your idea with one another and your pastor! Let's commit to following the Spirit together this year!

March 2025 Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Muslim Community	Weekly Prayers: 1:00-2:00 p.m.— each Friday in the Lounge. Ramadan: 9:00 p.m — every night: Feb 28 th through March 29 th
Wednesday's	6:00 p.m. — Dance
Sunday School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2nd • April 13th
Sunday Mar 2nd	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion - Music: Karen Prince - Sunday School
Wed Mar 5th	2:00 p.m.—Ash Wednesday Service at St. James Renfrew <i>(Trinity St. Andrew's, 291 Plaunt St, Renfrew)</i>
Sunday Mar 9th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion - Music: Lynne Zander
Saturday Mar 15 th	9:00 a.m.—Men's Breakfast at Jim's
Sunday Mar 16th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion - Music: Karen Prince
Monday Mar 17 th	1:00 p.m. — Church Council Meets
Sunday Mar 23rd	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion - Music: Lynne Zander
Sunday Mar 30th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion - Music: Craig Burkett



Draft Minutes of February 10th, 2025 Council Meeting

Attendance:

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

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

1. **Previous Minutes:** Debbie moved that the January 20, 2025 minutes be accepted as distributed. Seconded by Karen, CARRIED.
2. **Message from Chair:** Andy stated that after talking with Alison Burkett about her rental proposal it was agreed to be deferred to the new Council.
3. **Pastor's Activity/Report:** Pastor Sylvia reported on her work for the month. Council installation date TBD. Lent & Easter plans noted. Pr. Sylvia will be on holiday April 23 – May 14, 2025.
4. **Property:** Fred reported that the organ is the current focus, and humidity is still being worked on.
5. **Finances:** Council approved the 2025 budget for recommendation to members via a unanimous online e-vote on February 9, 2025. Moved by Enid, and seconded by Debbie Witt. Information on January 2025 income and expenses was presented. Enid moved, Debbie seconded, that this information be accepted. CARRIED. Confirmed supply compensation guidelines.
6. **AGM:** Fred moved that the AGM will be on February 23 after service. Seconded by Enid. CARRIED. Two of the Financial Reviewers for 2024, Randy Zimmerling and Maxzene Zimmerling were thanked for their service. Quotes for 2025 review by accounting firms were noted. Marilyn Kropp, treasurer, St. James Renfrew, and Maureen Rueckwald have agreed to be presented as 2025 reviewers. Moved by Karen, seconded by Fred, that they be presented to our members for appointment as 2025 financial reviewers at the Annual Meeting. CARRIED. Three council members are up for re-election and have accepted to stand.
7. **Working with Vulnerable Youth, Elders and others:** Youth leadership, and those working with elders and other vulnerable people need to have police checks which have to be completed every 3 years; in addition, commitment annually to abuse protection policy is required. File in locked cabinet available for all these documents.
8. **Loose Ends:** Discussion on confirmation pictures, taken down from hall: consideration of photo album or digital library, with special showings on screen and/or photo tablet, also available to members for own use. Being looked into further. Thank you's for recent memoriam donations planned.
9. **Pastoral Care:** Ongoing visits to drop off newsletters, and tax receipts have been conducted. Pastor Sylvia has met with a few more of these folks and will be arranging other visits with communion during Lent in March. Also in June, September and December.
10. **Youth:** Melissa sent notice that Sunday School is Feb. 16 (storm cancelled) now March 2.
11. **Round Table:** Pastor Sylvia's understanding is that building more vibrancy in St. John's community is desired in time. Some thoughts expressed on exploring special needs in broader community that might be served by St. John's.

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



Humour



The Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they should not interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist church, the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistry. The deacons met and decided to put a waterslide on the baptistry and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and, unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Lutheran church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later, the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the waterslide.

The Episcopalians tried a much more unique path by setting out pans of whiskey around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol poisoning. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunk squirrels can do.

But the Catholic church came up with a more creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter. Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

I cannot shop at Costco anymore! Yesterday I was at Costco buying a large bag of Purina dog chow for my loyal pet, Necco, the Wonder Dog, who weighs 191 lbs. I was in the check-out line when a woman behind me asked if I had a dog. What did she think I had an elephant? So because I'm retired and have little to do, on impulse I told her that no, I didn't have a dog, I was starting the Purina Diet again. I added that I probably shouldn't, because I ended up in the hospital last time, but that I'd lost 50 pounds before I awakened in an intensive care ward with tubes coming out of most of my orifices and IVs in both arms. I told her that it was essentially a Perfect Diet and that the way that it works is, to load your jacket pockets with Purina Nuggets and simply eat one or two every time you feel hungry. The food is nutritionally complete so it works well and I was going to try it again. (I have to mention here that practically everyone in line was now enthralled with my story). Horrified, she asked if I ended up in intensive care, because the dog food poisoned me. I told her no, I stopped to Pee on a Fire Hydrant and a car hit me,





CLWR Announces New Interim Executive Director

The Board of [Canadian Lutheran World Relief](#) (CLWR) announces the departure of our CEO, Karin Achtelstetter. We wish her well in her future endeavours. We are also happy to announce the hiring of Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse, who will be joining the organization as the Interim Executive Director. To read the full announcement, [please click here](#).

Welcome spring into our 'new year' with a day of inner peace activities suitable for the whole family. Wellness, dance, movement, sound, ceremony with hosts from varied backgrounds and cultures.

[#ArnpriorLife](#)
[#CultureInArnprior](#)
[#ArnpriorMuseum](#)
[#CommunityMuseum](#)
[#SeekingPeace](#)

**Greet the New Year with
dance, breathing,
ceremony, and calm.**

program : arnprior.ca/museum

Saturday
March 22nd
11 am - 4 pm

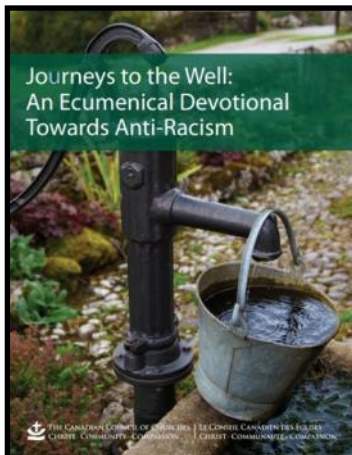
Arnprior + District Museum
35 Madawaska St.

613.623.4902



March 5 - 2:00 Ash Wednesday Service.

We gather together at St. James, Renfrew for a shared service with Trinity-St. Andrews. Join us as we begin our Lenten path. Imposition of ashes is offered, but not required.



Devotionals are meant to help deepen faith practice and worship (worship being a form of devotion to God).

See: [Council of Churches Devotional on Anti-Racism](#)

Our January Sunday School class was on the "Good Samaritan" bible story. Mellissa had the children write their heartfelt answers to "I am a Good Samaritan because" on a post-it note which was then mounted on the big heart on the bulletin board in the basement. Below in print are the ones we could decipher - but please take a look at the board yourself for a few others.

I'm a good Samaritan because . . .





Here's a simple way to observe the holy season of Lent - get an email each day with a concise, encouraging prayer along with a picture to ponder and a snippet of scripture. Subscribing is easy! Point your browser to:

<https://mailchimp/hbehlert.com/lent-2025>

Or you can email me at: prayer@hbehlert.com



The Outreach Team thanks you for supporting Teachers Against Poverty (TAP)

Together we raised \$500 to assist in the purchase of nutritional food items for the "Breakfast Program". Teachers are doing their best to address a growing issue of students coming to school with no breakfast or very little lunch.

Maureen Rueckwald presented our donation to Katie Clattenburg. Katie is one of the dedicated TAP members in the Arnprior area.

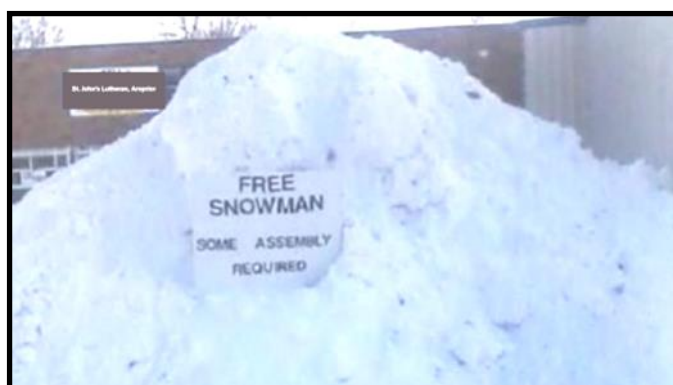
We welcomed Cheryl Supple as a member on February 23rd.

Welcome Cheryl!



Elves, Lorne and Frew hard at work removing snow from the roof.

Then they got creative about how to get rid of the snow!



From Lorne & Maureen's recent trip to Australia: "This is a waterfall coming down from the top of Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, Australia."

Amazing hiking and photography opportunities!

Ramadan: A Month of Spiritual Significance for Muslims

Ramadan is a pivotal month in the Islamic calendar that holds immense spiritual importance for Muslims worldwide. Celebrated as the ninth month of the lunar calendar, Ramadan commemorates the moment when the Quran, the holy book of Islam, was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. This sacred month is a period of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community, allowing Muslims to draw closer to God and cultivate a deeper sense of spiritual awareness.

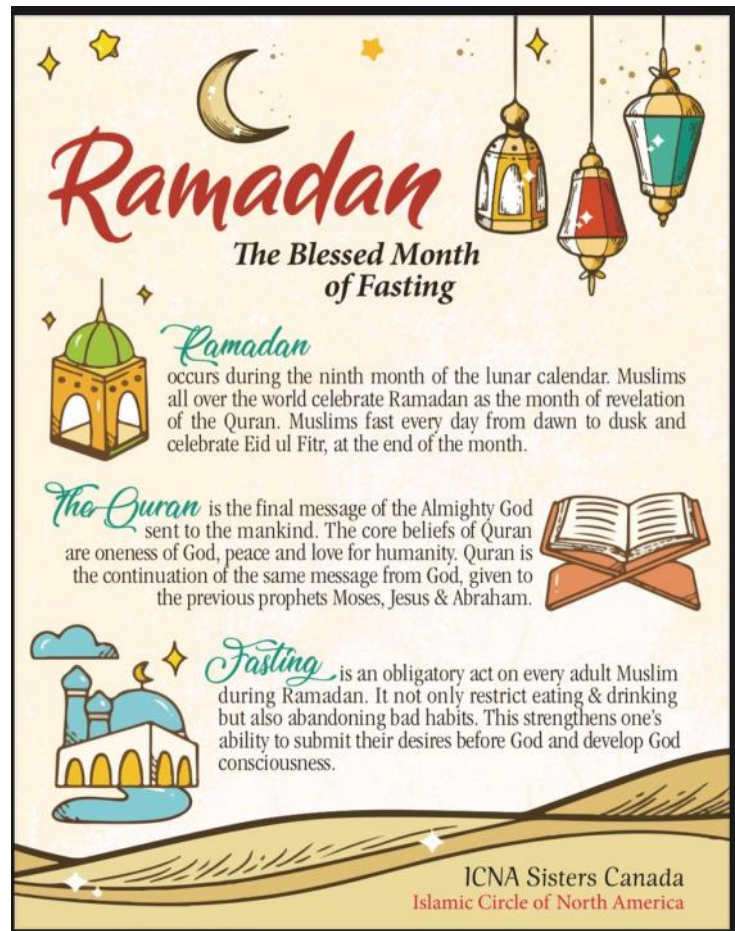
One of the most significant aspects of Ramadan is fasting, known as "sawm," which is considered one of the Five Pillars of Islam. From dawn until sunset, Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and engaging in sinful behaviour. The fast is broken each evening with a meal known as "iftar," often starting with the consumption of dates and water, mirroring the Prophet Muhammad's tradition. This daily practice of self-discipline helps Muslims develop empathy for those less fortunate, encourages gratitude for the blessings they have, and fosters a sense of spiritual purification.

Beyond fasting, Ramadan is a time of increased devotion and worship. Muslims are encouraged to engage in additional prayers, particularly the "Tarawih" prayers, which are offered in congregation at night. Recitation and reflection upon the Quran are also emphasized during this month. The "Laylat al-Qadr," or the Night of Decree, falls within the last ten days of Ramadan and is considered the holiest night of the year. It is believed to be the night when the Quran was first revealed, and Muslims spend this time in intense prayer, seeking divine mercy and forgiveness.

Charity, or "zakat," is another key element of Ramadan. Muslims are encouraged to give to those in need, reinforcing the principles of generosity and social responsibility. This charitable giving serves as a reminder of the importance of supporting the less fortunate and working towards a just society.

The conclusion of Ramadan is marked by the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, a festive holiday that signifies the end of fasting and the beginning of a new month. Muslims gather for communal prayers, enjoy feasts with family and friends, and give zakat al-fitr to ensure that even the poorest among them can partake in the celebrations.

While distinct from other religious observances such as Lent in Christianity, Ramadan shares similarities in its focus on self-discipline and spiritual growth. The month-long observance offers Muslims a unique opportunity to renew their faith, strengthen their community bonds, and deepen their connection with God. Through fasting, prayer, and charity, Ramadan embodies the core values of Islam and represents a profound period of reflection and spiritual renewal for Muslims around the world.

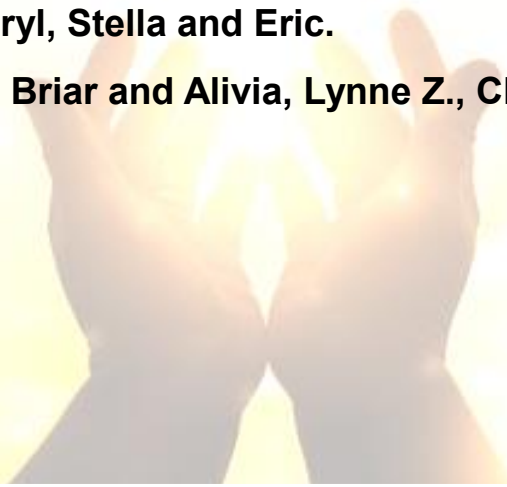


PRAYER LIST

Please pray for these people in your daily prayers:

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

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



March 2025



BIRTHDAYS

March 8th—Melissa Watt

March 11th —Randy Zimmerling

March 15th—Jacqueline Bertrand

March 20th—Elmer Leek

March 25th—Pastor Stan

March 29th—Lorne Bretzlaff

March 30th—Jo Anne Bretzlaff

March 30th—Blake Zimmerling



VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

March 2025

DATE	READER	ALTAR	COMMUNION ASSISTANT	MUSIC	GREETERS	COUNTERS	SOCIAL
March 2 nd	Cheryl Supple	Cathy Z.	TBD	Karen Prince	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	
March 9 th	Maureen Rueckwald	Cathy Z.	TBD	Lynne Zander	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	Social TBC
March 16 th	Andy Kalnins	Cathy Z.	TBD	Karen Prince	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	
March 23 rd	Ryan/Julie Z & family	Cathy Z.	TBD	Lynne Zander	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	Social TBC
March 30 th	Bob Witt	Cathy Z.	TBD	Craig Burkett	Debbie & Bob	Debbie & Bob	



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



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.