



The Mustard Seed

April 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:

This month, I offer a bit of a re-working of a note I used for a newsletter years ago - rarely is an old item relevant but this one is fitting as our Muslim cousins in faith complete their annual month of Ramadan observances (March 29) and we prepare to observe the death and celebrate the resurrection of Christ (April 20). I am sure that all people of faith have much to share and learn from one another in a world that seems to be spiraling into evil upon evil.

This is a prayer crafted by a former colleague at Canadian Armed Forces Base Kingston, Serap Bulsen. She offered this prayer at a padre's gathering years ago, and graciously sent it to me - I use it for my personal devotions from time-to-time when I am feeling a bit "empty," and I always seem to be reminded of what I need; what God has given. She is a devout, and determined Muslim chaplain, and used this prayer as a part of one offered by Chaplain Khalid Latif. We are reminded that we, Christians and Muslims, share the promise God gave to Abraham and Sarah as we share holy days and holy hearts.

Our Lord, Most Merciful of those who show mercy, instill within us courage as we start this day.

Our struggles are real, but Your Promise is true. Indeed with hardship, there always comes ease.

Remove from our hearts any fears or inhibitions, and replace them with an ever-increasing boldness to live each moment as best as we can.

Grant us the courage to express our feelings, to let those that we love know how valuable they are to us, to seek forgiveness from those that we have wronged, and to exert mercy towards those who have wronged us.

Message from our Pastor, continued

Grant us the courage to stand again after we have fallen, to find meaning in our failures, and to keep moving forward no matter what is trying to push us down.

Grant us the courage to put our trust in You, whether we understand or not, and the courage to recognize and feel the depth of Your Love. Help us to harness that Love and utilize it to illuminate the darkest of places we might have to venture in, both in the world around us and the world within us.

Love Your creation through us. Be gentle to them through us.

Increase them in strength through us.

Give them courage through us. Help them grow through us.

Endow them with confidence through us. Fill them with sincerity through us.

Protect them through us.

And us them bring good and benefit to the rest of us and this world – Most Merciful of those who show mercy.

And let our successes be many as we make a difference in this world by doing the things which others say cannot be done.

You are with us always, dear Lord. Help us on this day to recognize Your Presence, and through it give us the courage to meet the challenges of this day and those of every tomorrow that we will see.

Protect us always from hearts that are not humble, tongues that are not wise and eyes that have forgotten how to cry.

Forgive us for our shortcomings, and guide and bless us all.

Amen.

A worthy prayer for all. Wishing you and all those who love a meaningful and joyful Easter Celebration!

In service with thanksgiving,

rev sylvia

April 2025 Calendar

DATE	EVENT
Muslim Community	Weekly Prayers: 1:00-2:00 p.m.— each Friday in the Lounge.
Wednesday's	6:00 p.m. — Dance and Yoga in the Hall
Sunday School	April 13th Jessica / Alison
Sunday April 6th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion – Music: Lynne Z. – Social: Barbara LeBlanc's Birthday
Saturday April 12 th	9:00a.m.—Men's Breakfast at Jim's
Sunday April 13th Palm Sunday	10:30a.m.— Palm Sunday Service with Holy Communion – Music: Craig B.
Monday April 14 th	1:00p.m.—Church Council Meets
Friday April 18th Good Friday	10:30a.m. — Good Friday Service – Music Karen Prince
Sunday April 20th Easter Sunday	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion – Music: Sylvia E. 9:00a.m.— Easter Breakfast hosted by Men's Group.
Sunday Apr 27th	10:30 a.m. — Worship Service with Holy Communion - Music: Sylvia E.



St. John's Lutheran Church
Arnprior

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Arnprior

Draft Minutes of March 17th, 2025 Council Meeting

Pr. Sylvia Poetschke

Karen Greening

Mellissa Watt

Andy Kalnins

Debbie Witt

Fred Steinke

Enid Blackwell

Guests: Jeff Kargus & Maureen Rueckwald

Attendance:

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 February 10, 2025 minutes be accepted as distributed. Seconded by Karen, CARRIED.
2. **Outreach:** Jeff presented suggestions from Outreach involving low financial effect for support in the community and beyond. Propose having a globe bank for change or whatever amounts people wish to put in for CLWR, and regular story telling featuring CLWR projects. Monies to be sent to CLWR when matching amounts are present for a cause. Locally, concept of a "Celebrate Box" discussed: e.g. for low income families, who cannot afford items for a birthday cake/party for their children or new mothers who need items for a baby or maybe for seniors packages and visits. Planning ongoing for identifying needs through TAP other support groups, and developing concept further. Possibly involve Sunday School in packing items and making cards.

The "Big Give" in the recent past involved clean up of Division Street, but the suggestion is to return to hosting a neighbourhood BBQ, previously well attended, for the "Big Give", on Saturday, June 7, and ask the Muslim community if they wish to participate with us in this. Council gave support to working on all these initiatives, and immediate approval for initiating the globe CLWR bank.
3. **Property:** Andy provided a report from Randy with an outline of maintenance jobs that he will continue to do but also listed other tasks he hopes someone else can oversee or schedule e.g. winter and summer outdoor work schedule available on green sheet. Fred will take over these tasks and follow through with them, seeking another to assist as needed. Fuller discussion of accessible washroom deferred.
4. **Finances:** Operating budget surplus to end of Feb \$12,859 mostly attributed to memorial donations and expenses slightly below budget. Noted that Jan commitments down some \$800 below monthly asked donations, in Feb. \$2,500 below. Expenses up for music, and include additional humidifier. Bank balance is \$48,167 at the end of Feb. The Charitus investment year end is \$32,878, GIC is \$30,743. Consultations with Scotiabank and Charitus on current surplus cash. Moved by Enid, Seconded by Mellissa, that up to \$24,000 be approved for transfer from chequing account to Charitus. CARRIED. Moved by Enid, Seconded by Debbie that financial report be approved as presented. CARRIED.
5. **Worship:** Pastor Sylvia provided a written report, including weekly flexible schedule. She advised of planning music with Randy, worship roles and scheduling files, with access for updating by others. Bulletin material being developed, including for services for when she is away. Suggestion to have video music once a month. An Easter Breakfast is planned.
6. **Pastoral Care:** Visits continue by pastor, and others with deliveries of newsletters and Eternity for Today. We will once again deliver Easter Platters, Date: TBD.

Minutes of March 17, 2025 Council Meeting, *continued*

7. **Youth:** Notice was sent that Sunday School will be on April 13, Palm Sunday, for 12-13 children. Discussion was held regarding Vacation Bible Camp to possibly be held in August. As well a suggestion was made to have a free will donation for VBC. An idea of 1/2 day camps on PA days raised. UNPLUG events also being discussed.
8. **2025 Priorities:** Andy proposed each monthly meeting focus on a priority, referencing where our greatest passion meets world's greatest needs, e.g volunteers, music, youth, building modification. Suggestion to seek input from community on topics.
9. **Other/Round Table:** Pastor Sylvia gave a suggestion as a fundraiser that a "Silent Auction" be held for items people no longer use but are of some value.
10. **Meeting closure:** Meeting closed with a prayer offered by Pr. Sylvia.
The next regular meeting will be: Monday, April 14, 2025, 1:00 p.m.

Humour



Two little boys were at sitting together in a church during a wedding ceremony.

As the couple said "I do", one of the little boys leaned over to the other and asked, "I wonder how many wives can a man have?"

The second little boy looked at his friend like he was an idiot and said, "He can have 16 wives."

"How do you know that?" The first little boy asked.

"Weren't you listening? The priest just said it. Four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer."



Two guys are walking through a game park & they come across a lion that has not eaten for days. The lion starts chasing the two men. They run as fast as they can and the one guy starts getting tired and decides to say a prayer, "Please turn this lion into a Christian, Lord." He looks to see if the lion is still chasing and he sees the lion on its knees. Happy to see his prayer answered, he turns around and heads towards the lion. As he comes closer to the lion, he hears the lion saying a prayer: "Thank you Lord for the food I am about to receive."



Lot again... A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt."

His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

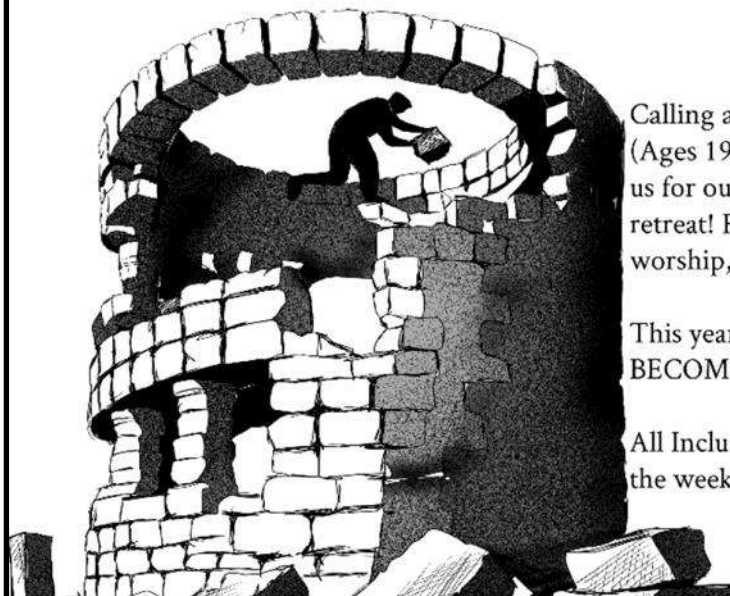


BECOMING

Young Adult Retreat

May 2-4, 2025

Hidden Acres Camp & Retreat Centre, New Hamburg



Calling all Young Adults (Ages 19-35) Please join us for our 3rd annual retreat! Rest, play, pray, worship, discern, & more.

This year, our theme is: BECOMING.

All Inclusive Price for the weekend is: \$80

Please contact Pastor Bethan Riehle-Johns: pastor@faithlutheranbrantford.com



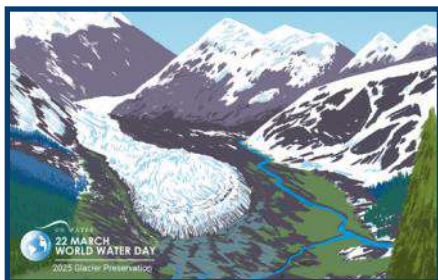
Dancing in the Rain—Women's Retreat

June 20, 2025—June 22, 2025

Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre Niagara Falls

See the ELCIC Website for Details

<https://easternsynod.org/event/dancing-in-the-rain-womens-retreat/>



March 22nd, 2025 was "WORLD WATER DAY"

See the United Nations Website:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/water-day>

for information on Glacier Preservation

Get Involved at St. John's—Part II !

Last month, in the Mustard Seed, you were invited to think about where you were being led in ongoing, regular ministries of St. John's and also to share new ideas for service with others and Pr. Sylvia.

This month, we are pleased to introduce new 'leads'- coordinators, if you like- for varied ministry areas. We have faithful, regular volunteers in most areas, but don't be shy if you are 'newish' and/or would like to offer your time and talents in another spot. The 'leads' will ensure scheduled ministries are 'filled in' on electronic and posted schedules for upcoming months from May onwards (e.g. 3-4 mo. ahead) and will also offer easy training if you are new to a task. Check in with your coordinator of choice. . .who may also be tapping you! We are most grateful to the Coordinators below for accepting to lead us in these ministries!

Coordinator:	Ministry:	Comments:
Bob Witt	Readers	Text website, prayers will be available. Mic time!
Jo Anne Bretzlaff	Altar Guild	Ready to train in pouring and care.
P+ Norine	Communion Assistant	Learn from the best and serve your pastor.
Randy Zimmerling	Music planning	Share your guitar, voice, keyboard skills! Or accompany varied organists.
Maureen Rueckwald	Greeters	You CAN ring those bells! And check lights, heat and doors.
Enid Blackwell	Counters	Calculator available, and you get to check out the safe!
Debbie Kargus	Fellowship, Kitchen	Also known as 'socials'. Sign up schedule in the kitchen . . .Cathy Z.-co-coordinator
Alison Burkett	Youth	Connect with kids and parents – Sunday School once a month, but other nurturing times too!
Fred Steinke	Grounds	Snow blow! Lawn mow! Some inside moves . . .

Dance . . .and Yoga too!

Together with Andréa Villarreal, St. John's is once again offering a time of warm up, easy dance, and cool down on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in our fine, small hall with the 'new' floor, which is great for sneaker or barefoot dance moves. This also is a time of rhythm, music, laughter, sociability and thankfulness for all these gifts.

Recently, Andréa introduced a new friend to our dance time. Gusnara works at the child care centre down the street, and is also a yoga teacher. And now she is joining Andréa to offer yoga to us after the dance session, to finish off our evening.

You can check dance and/or yoga out – dance at 6:00, yoga at 6:45 to about 7:15. All welcome! And the weekly free will donations (\$10 is a common amount) are shared by Andréa, Gusnara and St. John's.

Thank you for Mirrors!

Thank you to all who have contributed large mirrors for the 'dance hall', which are now mounted on the wall (thanks Jeff Kargus!), so that, if you come to dance on Wednesday, you can choose to reflect yourself, or . . . shift to the side.

Our bank of mirrors could do with one more, to complete the row. If you, or a friend, have a 24" mirror by 32", (or somewhat longer than 32"), that can be spared, Jeff would be happy to add that one to the array. Please contact Jeff or Enid.

Thank you for helping to add to the enjoyment and use of our space by our local community!

Special Ministry

At times throughout the year, you may wish to remember or celebrate someone or a special event in your life. Perhaps you are recalling the birthday of a loved one who has left your circle, celebrating a new babe in your close or extended family, congratulating someone who has completed a training program or giving thanks for returned mobility or health. If you care to commemorate such an occasion, you are welcome to do so in St. John's community – maybe with an extra donation for communion elements, by providing flowers, speaking some words of thanks, or offering a favourite food, treat, or story at a social time.

For any plans for a 'special ministry' time, please contact: P+ Norine. She will assist you in making arrangements, and would appreciate hearing of such an occasion at least a month in advance.



Community Friendship Meal



You are invited to a free Community
Friendship Meal
11:30 – 12:30, 4th Tuesday of each month.

Tues. Mar. 25 – Baked Cream cheese
French Toast Casserole with Canadian
Maple Syrup, sausages, baked beans, juice,
tea & coffee

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE:

Tues. Apr. 15 – ham, scalloped potatoes,
peas, homemade pies, tea & coffee

Trinity-St. Andrew's United Church
291 Plaunt Street South

www.tsarenfrew.ca

613-432-2285

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' the teacher asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada**

Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

March 17, 2025

Dear members of the ELCIC,

We are writing to you today in the midst of uncertain and anxious times. Climate crisis, wars, famine, natural and climate related disasters... the list goes on. Added to it recently is the uncertainty that has arisen with the government of our southern neighbours. Threats of tariffs and of annexation have both created more anxiety and fueled a new sense of Canadian pride.

Into all of this God comes to us again with a message of hope. That these will not be the last days of our country. That this time of uncertainty will pass. That our neighbours to the south are also God's beloved children. That this is God's good creation.

We must be careful as a church not to fall into patterns of Christian nationalism that we see being manifested in other countries around the world. God's call for us is to walk humbly as the baptized, loving our neighbour as ourselves. Right now that may feel hard to do.

Supporting Canadian products and taking pride in our country is wonderful, and we can do so while respecting and valuing our neighbours - many of whom are our family, friends and full communion partners.

In the meantime, let us pray together and for each other. Let us support and encourage one another. Let us not fall into despair. And let us hear again God's promise to be with us until the end of the age.

Yours in Christ's love,

Rev. Susan Johnson
National Bishop, ELCIC

Rev. Dr. Ali Tote
Bishop of the Saskatchewan Synod

Rev. Kathy Martin
Bishop of the British Columbia Synod

Rev. Jason Zinko
Bishop of the Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod

Rev. Patricia Schmermund
Bishop of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Rev. Carla Blakley
Bishop of the Eastern Synod

400-185 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3J1
PHONE: 204-984-9150 / 888-786-6707 WEB: info@elcic.ca

*The ELCIC acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast,
are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.*

St. John's 2025 Annual General Meeting was held on February 23rd.



News about Barb LeBlanc

Several people have been asking how Barb, a long-time neighbour (& Neighbourhood Watch!) and friend of St. John's, was doing. Since we're hosting a social after worship next Sunday – April 6th – in honour of Barb's birthday, maybe this is a nice opportunity to bring her friends at St. John's up to date.



Barb moved, reluctantly, to Granite Ridge long term care in Stittsville on March 1, 2022, after macular degeneration in her second eye gave her very minimal sight – just enough to move around. Barb loved her neighbourhood in Arnprior – she'd lived in that apartment for over 30 years; I swear everyone on McLachlin and nearby streets, knew Barb for her good spirits and her jokes (often really corny). Barb would sit outside and people stopped to visit on their way by. Her beloved cat, Toby, found a good home in Arnprior, and was able to stay with Barb until she moved. The good news is, despite her reluctance, Barb said the afternoon of the first day she moved "this place is clean, and bright". On the second day, it was "I feel safe here." And since then, she frequently tells other residents that "I like it here".

Barb lives in Meadow House at Granite Ridge – it's not a locked floor and so Barb is able to recreate her neighbourhood "visiting" by taking her walker to the main hall or outside in nice weather where she kibitzes with staff, visitors and other residents. Her other enjoyment is her "cats" (remember – very limited sight); you'll see in the picture her realistic looking cat who she named Toby, along with Toby's friends.

I hope you get a chance on Sunday to say hello; Barb regularly asks about St. John's. She will not remember names but she'll have a grand time reconnecting with the many people from St. John's who helped her and visited with her in the years after her husband died. Barb has her own phone – (613) 831-5956 and always loves a call – between 1:00 and 4:30 is the best time to reach her.

Alison & Dave



We all should give what we have decided in our hearts to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Through the generosity of people like you, Canadian Lutheran World Relief has the ability to respond to poverty and suffering by offering much needed assistance to those affected by war, natural disasters and more.

Please help us fill our globe by dropping in some loose change. (psst...the globe accepts paper money as well!). One hundred percent (100%) of what is collected will be donated to CLWR to help them support numerous relief efforts around the world.

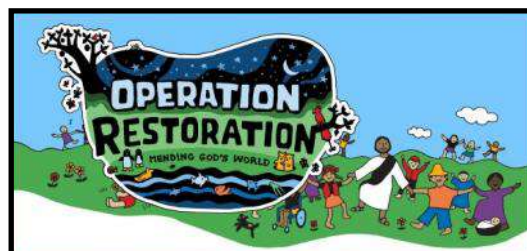
Thank you.
The Outreach Team



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

Vacation Bible Camp

This summer's Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) will be held the mornings of the week Mon August 11 to Fri Aug 15. The theme is "**OPERATION RESTORATION**" - borrowed from Augsburg Fortress who describes it as:



"This VBS invites kids to be menders in God's world. As they make connections between Bible stories and mending actions, they'll discover simple ways to live out faith in daily life. Everyone at Operation Restoration explores language and practices to mend God's world."

We are developing all the materials around mending and caring for all aspects of creation and ensuring hands-on engagement of the children. We (the Youth Planning Team) are looking for members or friends of our congregation who are interested in helping in planning and running a part of the program for 1 day or all 5 days. Please get in touch with any of us to get further information and to explore how you can help.

"It takes a community to put on a great VBC!"

Pastor Sylvia, Ryan Zimmerling, Mellissa Watt, or Alison Burkett

PRAYER LIST

Please pray for these people in your daily prayers:

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

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

April 2025



BIRTHDAYS

April 9th—Chloe Zimmerling

April 22nd —Rory Brohart

ANNIVERSARIES

April 22nd—Mark & Diane Boese

Easter Greeting!

(written with snow and freezing rain in the forecast, and 3 Sundays until Easter!)

Christ is Risen! Hallelujah!

Graham and I share in wishing you and those you love a blessed and joy-filled Easter observance, wherever you are!!!

The risen Christ changes everything in our lives, each and every day. We are loved, worthy and valued in the eyes of God.

Praying that we embrace that message Christ brings into the days ahead,

In service,

rev sylvia



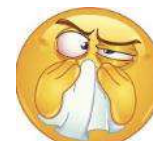
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

April 2025

DATE	READER	ALTAR	COMMUNION ASSISTANT	MUSIC	GREETERS	COUNTERS	SOCIAL
April 6th	Joy Statham	P+ Norine	Bob Witt	Karen Prince	Marion & Ellmer	Marion & Ellmer	Alison & Dave B. (Barbara L.)
April 13th Palm Sunday	Maureen Rueckwald	P+ Norine	Enid	Craig B.	Marion & Ellmer	Marion & Ellmer	
April 18th Good Friday	TBD	P+ Norine	TBD	Karen Prince	Marion & Ellmer	Marion & Ellmer	
April 20th Easter	Mark Boese	P+ Norine	Randy	Sylvia E.	Marion & Ellmer	Marion & Ellmer	Easter Breakfast (Men)
April 27th	Karen Greening	P+ Norine	Greg S.	Sylvia E.	Marion & Ellmer	Marion & Ellmer	



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.