

# CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER —

December 2023

HOPE  
PEACE  
JOY  
LOVE

*What's On?*

**DON'T MISS:  
CAROLS BEFORE  
WORSHIP  
THE TWINKLE  
TOUR  
...AND MORE!**

Send in your photos  
and news for the  
upcoming editions of  
our Newsletter.



# WELCOME TO ADVENT!

Welcome to the Church New Year! The season of Advent is upon us. A time of anticipating an incredible, miraculous, extraordinary event!

Signs and portents of epic proportions are all around us. Earth quakes and shakes, storms gather, droughts permeate the land, fires burn, floods pour, famine strikes, the dogs of war are unleashed upon helpless populations, and volcanos mutter loudly. Our leaders are caught in justification, hand wringing or outright denial. What are we to do?

Look for the helpers, as Fred Rogers used to say. They are not so easily seen or noticed against the more dramatic backdrops of world events, but they are there. Inspired by the spirit of love waiting for birth and renewal in Bethlehem. Even today's Bethlehem, invaded, surrounded, besieged and slowly consumed by occupation, can be home to newborn love. What are we to do?

Nurture the helpers. Find someone, somewhere, working for peace, bringing food to the hungry, shelter to those living without it, sowing seeds of understanding, bringing reconciliation and renewed relationship to the table, find them, support them, be them. Together, we can be present to midwife a new creation, a home for helpless love. A place of safety and welcome and blessing for our aching and sorely tried world. What can we do?

Be love's present wherever and however we can.

Submitted By: Keith Simmonds



# Central Okanagan United Church



DECEMBER 2023

welcome

To the Monthly  
Newsletter!  
Central Okanagan  
United Church



## SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship together on Sundays at  
10am - 721 Bernard Ave, Kelowna  
Zoom and Facebook Live options  
available.

## CONTACT ADMIN

Tanya / Bernard Office / E-Letter Submission  
250 762-3311 [tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

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250-765-5141 [saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

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[delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)



(250)762- 3311

MAIL TO: PO BOX 24042, RPO TOWN CENTRE, KELOWNA BC, V1Y 9H2

[CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM](http://CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM)



# Church News

What's Happening this month.



## DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

- Bid on Christmas Baskets every Sunday until Dec. 17th
- The annual Twinkle Lights Tour is on December 9th
- Christmas Cantata on December 17th
- All Choir Concert on December 18th at 7pm
- Blue Christmas December 21st



## Covid19, Flu Season & Illness:

Please stay home if you feel unwell, or have been exposed recently. There are masks available in church if you need one. Please wash your hands frequently and use sanitizer when eating or drinking and practice social distance.


Let's work to keep each other safe!



## SUBMISSIONS

Please have your news, articles and photos in by December 21st to [delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com) to be included in the January Newsletter.

Please submit weekly E-Letter news to Tanya [tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

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# Newsletter

## Order of Notices



### IN A BUSY CHURCH SEASON - HERE IS A LIST OF WHAT IS IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER!

- Christmas concert and event listings
- Photos of our November memories
- Winter season events listings
- Stewardship and Grocery program
- General COUC notices



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MERRY  
*Christmas*

Take a peek and what's on at Central  
Okanagan United Church this month!



# Christmas Calendar

DECEMBER 17TH-31ST 2023

17

10AM

Advent 3 - All Choir Cantata concert  
Love of Light, Joy of Dark

18

7PM

Central Okanagan United Church  
Choir concert - Oh Holy Night!  
Entry with a non perishable donation to  
the food cupboard.

21

7PM

Blue Christmas / The Longest Night  
A quiet, reflective  
Service of Contemplation

24

Christmas Eve! Advent 4

10AM Intergenerational Christmas Pageant


7PM Family Christmas Celebration

11PM Candlelight service of Lessons & Carols  
with Communion

31

10AM

New Year's Eve Carol Service  
A musical service with carols and hymns.



**Are you longing to sing those  
favourite carols?  
Can't wait until Christmas?**

THEN THIS IS FOR YOU!

**Advent Christmas Carol Sing-along  
Sunday mornings beginning December 3rd @ 9:45**

JOIN OUR MUSICIANS IN THE SANCTUARY AND ON-LINE  
TO REQUEST AND SING-ALONG WITH ALL THE  
CHRISTMAS FAVOURITES!

HOPE TO SEE (AND HEAR) YOU THERE!





**ALL WELCOME!**

**SATURDAY  
DEC. 9TH  
4 - 6pm**

# **CHRISTMAS TWINKLE TOUR**

**Time to sign up for the annual Twinkle Tour! Saturday, December 9th, 4-6PM. Reserve a spot in your motorized sleigh! A volunteer from the church will pick you up at your home, bring you to the church for refreshments and carols before taking you on a tour to see displays of Christmas lights around our city and then drive you safely back home!**

**Contact the church office at  
(250) 762-3311 or by emailing  
[tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)**



CHRISTMAS CANTATA

LOVE OF LIGHT  
JOY OF DARK

SUNDAY

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DECEMBER 17TH  
AT 10AM WORSHIP

CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH PRESENTS

# Oh Holy Night

## Christmas Concert

MONDAY DECEMBER 18TH 2023

Featuring

GOSPEL PRAISE, ALLELUIA SINGERS,  
ALLELUIA RINGERS, MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CHORUS'

ENTRY BY DONATION OF CASH OR FOOD FOR FOOD  
CUPBOARD

Concert starts @ 7PM at  
721 Bernard Ave, Kelowna BC  
250 762 3311

# Making Spirits Bright

Wednesday, December 13, 2023 | 6pm  
Central Okanagan United Church  
721 Bernard Ave, Kelowna

Adults \$15.00

Children & students free

Tickets via Eventbrite or at the door



*Frances Chiasson,  
OCC Music Director.  
Taylor Bone,  
OYC Music Director.  
Jessica Crawford, piano.*

*Featuring guest choir:  
Dr Knox Middle School Choir*





# PLAIN GIFT

SUNDAY - DEC 17TH

BRING ITEMS FOR THE FOOD CUPBOARD OR  
COLD WEATHER CLOTHING DONATIONS IN  
PLAIN PAPER OR UNWRAPPED





*It's beginning to look a lot like*

*Christmas!*

***THE CHRISTMAS BASKET AUCTION!***

Get ready to bid!

We have a Birthday Party Theme Basket, Aroma baskets, Relax by the fire basket with wine, cheese, books...and more!

Bid on Sunday December 3rd, 10th & 17th -  
Bid as many times as you like!

*The lucky winners will be announced following worship on December 17th.  
For more information contact any one of the Fundraising Team. Beryl  
Itani, Myrna Holman, Jim Harnden, Shelley Adamson,  
Joa Lazarus, Liz Basisty.*

*The most wonderful time of the year!*





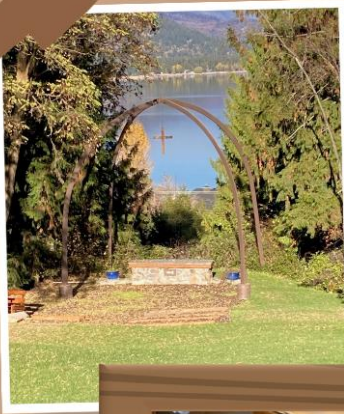
# Blue Christmas

Central Okanagan United Church Welcomes You  
Need some quiet space in the midst of “jingle bells”  
and “joy to the world”?

When loss, grief, depression,  
pain or hopelessness fill Christmas...  
our church is offering a service of hope and healing.  
All are welcome!

**Thursday December 21st @ 7:00pm**  
**721 Bernard Ave.**

**Doors open @ 6:30pm with an opportunity to  
walk the labyrinth.**  
**Also on Zoom**



# Women's Retreat







*Christmas in the air!*



# Hello Winter



Events and happenings at COUC



*“Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead  
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed  
Clear the chaos and the clutter.*

*Clear our eyes that we can see all the things that really matter*

*Be at peace and simply be.”*

*~ Shirley Erena Murray*



# Walking the Labyrinth

It can help us calm our thoughts; focus on what's important; offer clarity of thinking; provide a method of reflecting on our life journey; guide us into next steps; and draw us closer to an intimate relationship with The Holy.

Some move slowly, some rush, some dance and others simply follow the path using our eyes. How ever we choose to journey through the path, we are sure to be gifted with a holy experience.



*Beginning Wednesday, November 29th, our  
labyrinth will be open for quiet  
contemplation on a weekly basis. Come and  
find the quiet center.*

November 29th	7:30-8:30am
December 6th	7:30-8:30am
December 13th	7:30-8:30am
December 20th	7:30-8:30am

# Undivided Love

*Navigating Landscapes of Living Faith*

JANET GEAR

“...This book will not only illuminate your personal faith journey, but also provides a useful framework for understanding communities of faith, discovering how, in our differences, we can find a deeper life-giving unity.” - Very Rev. Dr. Gary J Paterson

## JOIN US FOR THIS ENLIGHTENING STUDY

*Sundays: Jan. 14th, 21st and Feb. 4th and 11th*

*@ 11:30 (following worship) Room 14 @ Bernard*

Register early by contacting Tanya at  
[tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

Reading the book is not mandatory but may enhance your experience.

If you wish to purchase a book, they are available from the church office or e-books from Amazon.ca





## **A GOOD ENDING: A CONVERSATION SERIES**

**Join us for a series of conversations intended to provoke thinking and conversation on what constitutes a good ending for ourselves and those we care for who are approaching the end of their life. Thursdays January 11, 18, 25, and Feb 1 from 9:30-11:00am at the Bernard site.**

# Stewardship

—

The Stewardship Team asks you to financially support the Central Okanagan United Church through one of the methods outlined below.

With God's help and the generosity of your contributions of financial resources, time, talent and energy we will fulfill our church's mission.

Need more information? Contact any member of the Stewardship Team: Terry Welsh, Beryl Itani, Judy Valks and Sharon Pendleton.



Scan QR Code  
to Donate

or Read on for  
How to Give

## Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)



Specify the amount of monthly donation to be deducted from your chequing account. Contact the office to join PAR or make changes to your current PAR contributions. We are setting up a new email address for donations - watch this space!

## Cheques & E-Transfers

Please make out cheques to Central Okanagan United Church, and place in one of the offering offertory boxes in the sanctuary, drop off at 721 Bernard, or mail to:

Central Okanagan  
United Church  
PO Box 24042  
RPO Town Centre  
Kelowna, BC  
V1Y 9H2



E-transfer your donation to  
[finance@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:finance@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

## Donation of Shares

Contact our office for information to receive the appropriate form.



## Bequests or Memorial Gifts

Include Central Okanagan United Church in your will or make a gift in memory of an individual.

**Thank you for your generous and continued support!**



# Community Ministry



## Tuesday Morning Coffee, Social Time, Meal and Grocery Distribution

Well, I still do not have a new name to announce for our Tuesday Morning Coffee, Social Time, Meal and Grocery Distribution. We are still waiting for that one incredible spark to ignite our imaginations. But in the meantime, our service to the community continues each week. In November we continued distributing about 55 bags of groceries and feeding 60+ people every Tuesday.

In December, the first two Tuesdays will be our usual offerings, but we are planning a special full turkey dinner for our guests on Tuesday, December 19th - the last Tuesday we are open until the new year. If you would be interested in being involved with the prep or baking for this special turkey dinner, please let me know.

In 2024, we will continue with our regular Tuesday morning service and we will have a special event sometime around mid to late January. Some consider this part of year, with the Christmas and New Year's festivities and visiting over, the bills to pay for all the past festivities coming due, and the cold dark dreary days of winter continuing, to be a very depressing time. So we are going to try and liven things up and cheer up our neighbours in the process. No decisions have been made yet on the exact format so we are looking for all suggestions. Music? Games? Hot chocolate and cookies? A dinner? We are open to all ideas.

This new event later in January will replace the former New Year's Day Dinner that has been held for many years at the Bernard site. The timing of that event, on January 1st, was considered problematic with the office being closed between Christmas and New Year's, people away on holidays or at home entertaining company, etc. Also, there are many other community events throughout the holiday season and we felt doing something a bit later would be more beneficial to the members of our community. We will keep you posted as we develop ideas for this special event while honouring the New Year's Day Dinner events of the past.

I must say a big year-end thank you to the many countless volunteers that make our Tuesday morning program possible, and that includes so many of you who cook the food, make sandwiches, serve the meals, bake desserts, do dishes, buy groceries for the Food Pantry, and so many more. We definitely could not offer this program without the help of so many willing individuals. You are all truly "blessed to be a blessing" and we wish you all health and happiness this holiday season. Merry Christmas!

Jayne

**New Volunteers are always welcome!**  
**Anyone wishing to get involved please call Jayne Brooks at**  
250-762-9606 or email [k.jaynebrooks@gmail.com](mailto:k.jaynebrooks@gmail.com)







***Worship the Lord! Worship Creator, Spirit, and Son,  
Raising our hands, in devotion to God who is One!***

Worship is a mainstay in the life of any Community of Faith. We are all familiar with the standard **10:00 am Sunday worship**. A time filled with music, prayer, and preaching, reminding us of our call to community and action. But did you know, that here at COUC, we have other opportunities for worship?

**Morning Sharing Circle: 8am Sundays**

Richard Wagemese writes about the grace that comes to participants in sharing circles, where we bring what we need and receive what is there for us. Keith is offering an opportunity for a circle based in that form of communal sacred presence. These circles offer opportunities for spiritual nourishment grown out of the sharing circles Keith encountered as a diaconal student at the Centre for Christian Studies. There is singing, praying, a reading, communal reflection time, more prayer and more singing.

**Lydia Circle: 6pm Thursdays** (6pm Tuesdays beginning in January)

There are at least twenty-six references in the New Testament that talk about believers meeting in homes or being part of a household. One of these “house churches” gathered in the home of Lydia of Thyatira, whose story is told in Philippians (Acts 16:14). Homes are usually comfortable places—places devoid of pews, hymnals and PA systems. They are places where people can open up, listen, learn, and grow. This group meets at the church but each group member takes responsibility for providing and hosting the meal for one week. We eat together, open the Bible together, discuss our beliefs, pray and have Communion together.

**This group is limited in size to 8-10 members and is open to all genders.**

**A Time Apart – Contemplative Labyrinth Walk: Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall**

Sometimes we need a time apart, a time to be in quiet reflection. Labyrinth walking is a spiritual practice to quiet, center, and allow contemplation and prayer. Beginning in Advent (Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>) Ivy will be facilitating a contemplative labyrinth walk, including instruction for those who are experiencing the labyrinth for the first time. The schedule for these walks through December is as follows:

Wednesdays Nov. 29, Dec 6, 13 & 20 @ 7:30-8:30 am

If you are an outdoor adventurer type, you might appreciate participating in **Wild Church**, where the Holy is experienced, not explained as you gather outdoors in some of our local wild places. For dates and times, check out <https://www.wildchurchbc.org/>

**All are welcome to join these worship opportunities. (Please notify Ivy if you would like to participate in the January-March Lydia Circle.)**

**If you have other worship styles you would like to see us offer, please speak to Ivy, Keith, or Cheryl.**

**If you would like to assist in any of our worship opportunities, in any way, please speak to Ivy or our Worship & Music Chairperson – Linda Hutchinson.**



**SCRABBLE GROUP -  
WE WILL PLAY DECEMBER  
5TH AND 12TH, THEN TAKE A  
BREAK, RESUMING WEEKLY  
AGAIN WEEKLY ON  
JANUARY 9TH.**

**ALL PLAYER LEVELS WELCOME!**

T<sub>2</sub> U<sub>3</sub> E<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub> D<sub>2</sub> A<sub>2</sub> Y<sub>3</sub> S<sub>2</sub>

1 : 3 0 P M

# One Bottle...

*One box, one bar, one bag at a time...*

*"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." - Mother Teresa*

You might ask what difference does buying a bottle of olive oil, a box of dates, a bar of olive oil soap or a package of Za'atar make? Palestinian producers experience many challenges in growing their olives and in getting their finished product to market.

The occupation by Israel that they have been living under since 1967 has impacted them in so many ways. The destruction of their olive trees by settlers, the refusal to give them permits to build wells or irrigation systems and the many permits they need to get their product to the global markets are just a few of the challenges they face.

Each purchase you make supports them and their families directly. There are several ways for you to make your purchase:

- By stopping at the Community Ministry table on the Potluck Lunch Sundays,
- By contacting the church office or,
- By contacting Debbie Hubbard at 250-469-4468 or [sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com](mailto:sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com)





**Strengthening Voices. Inspiring Possibility.  
WHERE VOICES COME TO LIFE**

Welcome to *SongShine*, vocal music and creative drama-based classes designed for those who have communication issues due to Parkinson's, stroke, other neurological challenges, or aging. Our goal is to help you communicate more easily and clearly. *SongShine* harnesses the power of brain, breath, and emotion to reclaim voices. It creates community, camaraderie, and confidence

**...AND IT'S FUN!**

Meet: Mondays at 1pm, at Bernard Church, in Room 14

Hosted by Choir Director Sylvia Clerke



CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH IS  
PROUDLY A CHRISTIAN PLACE OF BELONGING  
FOR EVERY PERSON, WHERE DIVERSE FAMILY  
STRUCTURE, GENDERS, CULTURES, FAITHS AND  
SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS ARE  
CELEBRATED AND TREASURED!





Meetings:

In person in Room 14 - 2nd Wednesday of each month 3:00pm

Hosted By: Rev. Ivy Thomas.

RSVP TO TANYA : [Tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:Tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

If you have a question or thought you wish to explore,  
please include that in your registration  
or bring it with you to the gathering  
At the end of each gathering we will randomly choose one of the  
submitted questions for our next discussion.



**Keep up to date, watch worship videos and more.  
Find us online! Like and Follow us on Facebook &  
Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!**

Website

<https://centralokanaganunitedchurch.com>

**Facebook Page SUNDAY LIVESTREAM SHOWN HERE**

<https://www.facebook.com/Centralokanaganunitedchurchkelownabc>

Facebook Group (Our Private Church Group)

(A Private Group for members & friends of COUC to share church news or discussion)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/319967703235745>

United Church of Canada Private Group –

Join in for all UCC chat & news!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UnitedChurchCda/permalink/10167795547890401/>

YouTube Channel (Worship videos posted weekly):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJRqGV1Zra36gbm1jSlks1w>



CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH

Merry  
Christmas

SORRY, WE ARE  
**CLOSED**

25 DEC 2023 - 02 JAN 2024

*See you in  
the new year!*

**MERRY**  
*Christmas*  
**AND**  
**HAPPY NEW YEAR**