

CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER —

January 2024

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR
2024**

What's On?

**SMALL GROUPS
FOR THE NEW YEAR**

**LABYRINTH
WALKING
WEDNESDAYS
7:30AM**

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



Welcome to *the New Year*

Yet another year of change and direction setting! Who would have thought it?
I suppose the correct answer is 'Almost anyone who has been on the planet any amount of time, especially lately.'

We see change all around us: disruptions in earth, sea, air and in many of our solid, reliable, dependable systems. Why would our church be any different? Nationally our church is exploring ways to decolonize, including respecting the request of the Indigenous Church for full and meaningful autonomy. Regionally our church continues to seek ways to live out its call to support congregations, ministries and leaders with tangible, meaningful resource allocations, while figuring out how to help those who have share with those who have not. Locally we have our own changes to consider.

Reverend Ivy Thomas has announced her retirement, setting the date for the end of July, just about the time Cheryl Perry, our Pastoral Care Minister, returns from her 6 month leave of absence. Our posting for an Intergenerational Minister closes at the end of February, while a posting for a new Worship Minister might be in place by the end of January. We could be welcoming new ministry personnel by late summer or early fall. Bringing their own experiences and approaches.

In the meantime we will be setting our sights on, well...our sites. How best can they serve the needs of congregation and the community? A natural next step following the development of our Amalgamation Plan (2021) and our Ministry Plan (2023). We hope to have a well-defined sense of the physical infrastructure needed to meet the needs of congregation and community, with an indication of who we might partner with to put it in place. Our board is hard at work developing a facilities/partnership plan and will be seeking advice periodically to chart a course.

In all of this it is good to remember who we are and whose we are. We are part of a more than 2000-year-old tradition, following the teachings of the One we know as the Son of God, who came to remind us that institutions and institutionalization are not divine. Even if we think they are. Institutions and individuals do not have a corner on the presence of God in our lives and our being. Our rites and rituals, traditions and practices can evoke God in our lives, although even they dry up for some, while feeding others.

We have, in some ways been an ever-changing, ever-evolving tradition, doing our best to follow Christ's teachings with faithful adherence to the call to love G*d with all of our heart, mind, spirit and strength. Holding fast to that presence while the Creating currents of change wear away at institutions and understandings. As we navigate 2024 together, may faith be our companion and guide. May we trust in Love's insistence to beckon us on and hold us well. Even as tempests roll and rivers rage.

It is good to be on the journey together, adding our efforts and energy to the New Creation that is, even now, being birthed among us.

Happy New Year!

Keith



Central Okanagan United Church

JANUARY 2024

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

Saibun / Fitzpatrick Office
250-765-5141 saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

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delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com



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Church News 2024

What's Happening this month.

JANUARY AT A GLANCE

- HAPPY NEW YEAR!
- Small Groups Resume
- New Year's Dinner Jan 20th.
- A Good Ending - Conversation Series
- Walk The Labyrinth - Wed Mornings



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 January 21st to delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com to be included in the February Newsletter.

Please submit weekly E-Letter news to Tanya tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

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Newsletter

Order of Notices



HERE IS A LIST OF WHAT IS IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER!

- Welcome to 2024!
- Photos of our December memories
- Winter season Small Groups
- Stewardship and Grocery program/NY Dinner Info
- General COUC notices



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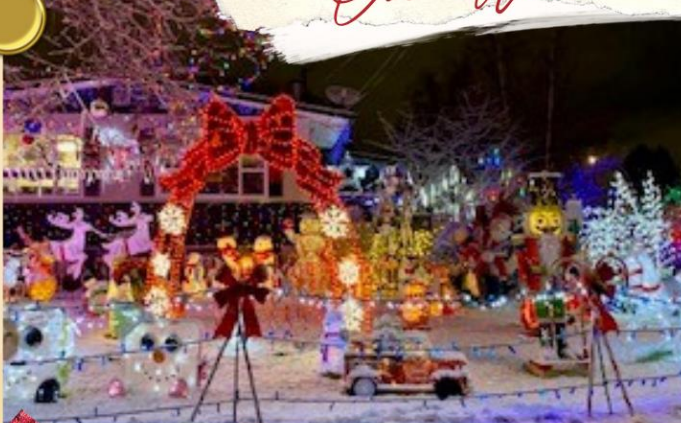
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Oh What a Time!





Twinkle Tour 2023!



Hello
Winter



Events and happenings at COUC





SongShine
and
Breathing
Class

Morning
Sharing
Circle

Choirs
For all ages

Lydia Circle:
Small spiritual
gathering with
hosted meals

SMALL GROUPS THIS WINTER

Wonderlust
Conversation
Group

Labyrinth
walking

Scrabble
Group

A Good Ending
Conversation
Group

Men's
Breakfast
Group

Friday Night
Women's Group

Undivided
Love Book
Study



Winter Small Groups

**Lydia Circle/
Dinner Group**

Tuesdays at 6:00pm - 7:30pm
Jan. 9th - Feb 27th.
Room 14 at Bernard

Wonderlust

3rd Wednesday @ 3:00pm-4:30pm
Beginning Jan. 10th
Room 14

**Walk the
Labyrinth**

Wednesdays - 7:30am-8:30am
Beginning January 10th

**A Good Ending:
A Conversation
Series**

Thursdays at 9:30am - 11am
Jan. 11th - Feb. 1st
At Bernard

**Men's
Breakfast**

First Saturday of the month 8am - 10am
Men's Breakfast - Room 14

**Sharing
Circle**

Sundays - 8:00am -9:00am
Sharing Circle - Room 14

Book Study

Sundays 11:30am - 12:30pm
Undivided Love, video/book study
Room 14

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



A GOOD ENDING

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.



SESSION TOPICS

January 11 - What is a good ending? What do we hope for the end of our lives (and beyond)? What are our beliefs about life after death? In a time when there are medical interventions to prolong life that weren't available in past generations, how do we define quality of life and approach ethical questions and decisions such as when to end life support? This session will touch on the role of hospice, and define terms such as euthanasia, medical assistance in dying, and palliative care.

January 18 - Practical Matters: The Personal Stuff As we consider what legacy we wish to leave to others, there are practical matters to consider such as gifting things of value and recording our memories. We will draw on the wisdom of *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning*, a radical and joyous guide written by eighty-something Margareta Magnusson, who outlines how to de-clutter our lives, take stock of what's important, and make our lives as stress-free as possible.

January 25 - Practical Matters: The Legal Stuff Often referred to as "getting our affairs in order," there are practical matters to planning for a good ending. This session will touch on both the practical and spiritual aspects of wills, planned giving, and define terms such as Power of Attorney, Substitute Decision Makers, advance care planning, DNR.

February 1 - Honouring a Life: Planning A Service of Celebration Reflecting on our faith and what is important to us, expressing our wishes to family, and the practical steps of preplanning and prepaying funeral arrangements. This session will explore scripture, ritual, define terms such as funeral/celebration of life, and offer practical guidance in planning your own service.



*“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.



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

7:30-8:30am

Please Note: Walks resume on January 10th

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

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





Meetings:

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

Hosted By: Rev. Ivy Thomas.

RSVP TO TANYA : Tanyap@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

First Meeting of 2024: January 10th at 3:00-4:30

Our opening topic will be:

“Is the church like an iceberg – only the tip walking the way and following the tenets of the church, while the majority is just talking?”

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.

Dinner Group - Lydia Circle

January 9th – March 26th at 6:00 - 7:30pm, in Room 14

Small Group



Weekly gathering at the church.
This group will be limited in size to
8-10 members.

All Welcome



A safe space for all people,
regardless of gender or age,
where we can open up, listen,
learn, and grow.

Weekly Meal



This group will meet at the church
but each group member will take
responsibility for providing and
hosting the meal for one week.

Prayer & Connection



We will eat together, open
the Bible together, discuss
our beliefs, pray and have
Communion together.

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

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



Another year has come and gone and we must look back and be proud of all that was accomplished and look ahead with excitement and anticipation for what is to come.

The pictures above are of the turkey dinner we served to our guests on Tuesday, December 19th, the last day we were open in 2023. At least 75 guests joined us for fellowship, a delicious meal, Christmas carol singing, and treats; and 65 bags of groceries were handed out. Our volunteers were busy all morning!

Thank you to all the volunteers who worked that morning to make everything run so smoothly for our guests, and thank you to another group of individuals who provided food for the meal. Thank you also to all the congregation members who donated goods for our food pantry on "plain gift" Sunday and throughout the entire year. Without the support of so many people, we would not be able to run this program.

In terms of what we handed out this year, in total we distributed over 2,000 bags of groceries with toilet paper, canned fruit, and fruit cups being the most popular items. Chef Boyardee, chilli, and canned meat (ham or chicken) were close behind with over 1,000 of each item distributed. With the help of your generous contributions of non-perishable items, we were able to stay within our originally approved budget despite the rising cost of food.

In 2024, we will continue with our regular Tuesday morning program and we will have a special event on January 20th. See elsewhere in this newsletter for more details on that event and how you can get involved. And if you would like to be involved with our regular Tuesday mornings, please feel free to contact me. We are always looking for volunteers to help cook meals, do baking, make sandwiches, do dishes, shop, serve meals, bag groceries, visit, and so much more. I wish you a Happy New Year and health, happiness, and many blessings in 2024!

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



Community Ministry

New Year's Dinner 2024

As reported earlier, your food security/serving folk have decided that the New Year's Day Dinner would be better offered and celebrated on January 20th. We've made that choice for a variety of reasons, including resting volunteers after the holidays and sharing community during the midst of a long and sometimes bleak January.

Our plans are to get together at around **5pm on Saturday, January 20th** for an evening of music, food, entertainment and table games. There will be many opportunities to participate, including:

- 1. Setting up the hall for dinner**
- 2. Providing entertainment**
- 3. Gathering menu items and preparing them for dinner**
- 4. Receiving menu items and making them ready to serve**
- 5. Hosting tables**
- 6. Plating menu items**
- 7. Serving menu items**
- 8. Sharing at table**
- 9. Gathering dishes**
- 10. Washing dishes, pots and pans**
- 11. Putting chairs, tables and other items away**

Please contact Keith Simmonds or Jayne Brooks for more information and/or to sign up for one of the opportunities shared above.

Blessings,

Keith



Stitching Palestine: A time for women to share some food, a film and conversation.

Saturday, January 6th

Central Okanagan United Church - 721 Bernard Avenue, Kelowna

Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Food will be served beginning at 10:45 a.m.

Film will begin at approximately 11:00 a.m. followed by discussion.

A gathering for women of all ages and stages. Bring a plate of finger food (e.g., cheese, fruit, muffins, etc) to share at a light brunch.

The brunch will be followed by a viewing of the film 'Stitching Palestine.

Stitching Palestine is the story of 12 resilient, articulate and determined Palestinian women from different walks of life. The women talk of their lives and memories before they were displaced from their homes and their homeland. They share an unwavering determination that justice will prevail. Their stories are connected by the enduring thread of the ancient art of Tatzeez (Palestinian embroidery).

Pre-registration will help us plan for seating and food. You can register online or by calling Debbie Hubbard at 250-469-4468 or by emailing her at sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com.

Hosted by CJPME:Okanagan, Community Ministry at Central Okanagan United Church and the Kelowna Muslim Women chapter.



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

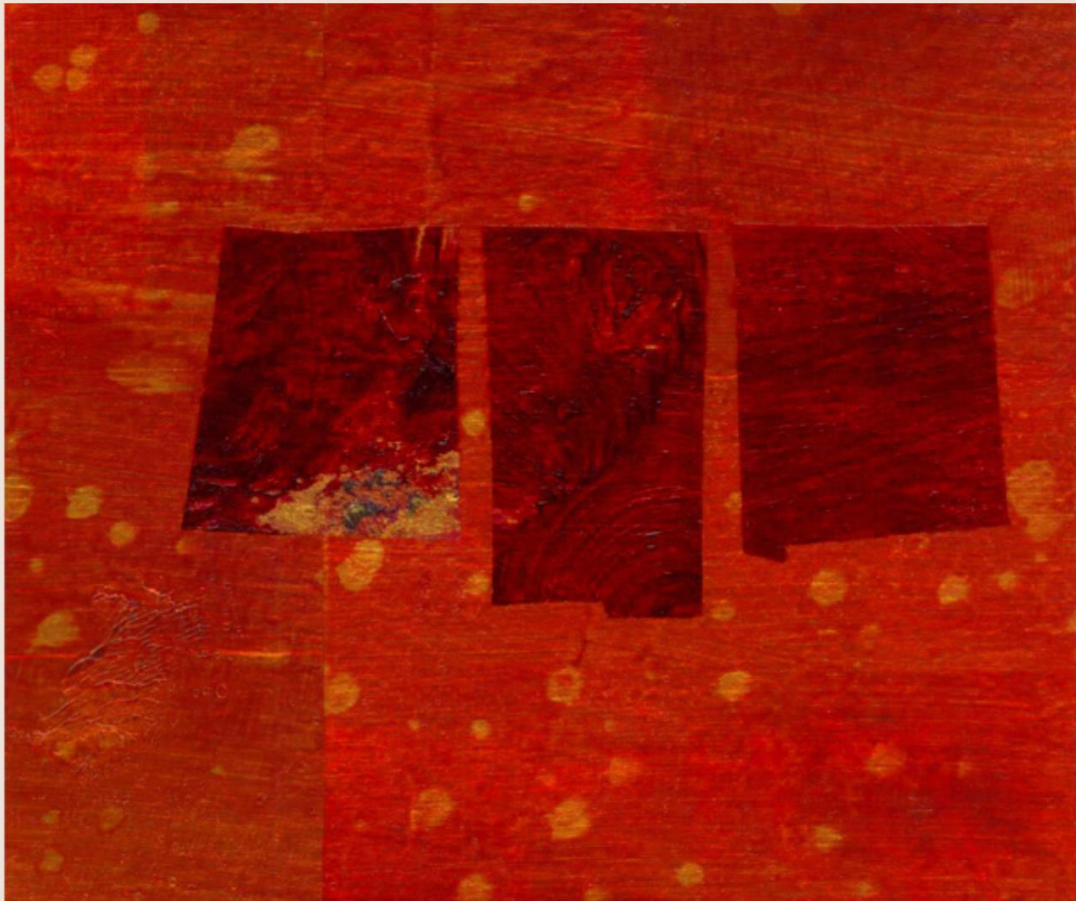
You might ask what difference does buying a bottle of olive oil, a box of dates, a bar of olive oil soap or a package of Za'atar make? Palestinian producers experience many challenges in growing their olives and in getting their finished product to market.

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





JAN RICHARDSON

BELOVED IS WHERE WE BEGIN:
AN ONLINE CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR AND
ARTIST JAN RICHARDSON

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO JOIN US FOR AN AMAZING ONLINE CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR AND ARTIST JAN RICHARDSON IN THE NEW YEAR ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH, 2024 FROM 9:30 AM - 12:00 PT. THIS EVENT IS CO-HOSTED BY OASIS UNITED CHURCH AND NARAMATA CENTRE, AND REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER GIFTING A REGISTRATION TO SOMEONE FOR CHRISTMAS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE NARAMATA CENTRE WEBSITE.

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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!

A graphic for 'Zoom Cafe' featuring a coffee cup and a heart. The background is a textured brown with watercolor-style coffee stains. The text 'Zoom Cafe' is written in a large, brown, serif font at the top. Below it, a coffee cup with a white sleeve that says 'Coffee Espresso' and a small orange coffee cup are shown. A heart shape is also visible on the left side.

Zoom Cafe

Online Zoom chat and social time
Wednesdays at 10am
Zoom link available in Friday E-Letters.

**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>



The background features a soft, light green watercolor wash. In the top right and bottom left corners, there are illustrations of green leaves on thin branches. Scattered throughout the design are several four-pointed starburst graphics in a dark green color. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

Thank You

FOR READING!

Special thanks to all the drivers, singers, bakers, servers, volunteers, crafters, cooks, basket fillers, meal preppers and beyond - We are so thankful for each of you and proud of another vibrant Central Okanagan United Christmas!