

# CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025



CENTRAL  
OKANAGAN  
UNITED CHURCH



SEND IN YOUR PHOTOS AND  
NEWS FOR UPCOMING EDITIONS  
OF THE NEWSLETTER!



# Central Okanagan United Church

SEPTEMBER 2025

WELCOME

A large, dark blue, serif font spelling "WELCOME" is centered over a background image of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow across the sky and water. The foreground shows dark rocks in the water.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

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

## CONTACT ADMIN

Delaine / E-Letter & Newsletter Submissions  
[delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

Saibun / Room Rentals, Bookings & Buildings  
[saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)



(250)762- 3311

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

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



# Church News

## What's Happening This Month

### THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE

Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> @2pm: Celebration of Life:  
Lynda Zorn.

Jazz Vespers, First Sunday of each  
month @5:15pm - Sept. 7th

Sept.12th - Walk and Talk Resumes  
(see poster)

Sept 27, 3pm - Women's Group Meet  
up.at Mission Creek (see poster)



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# COMMUNITY MINISTRY TUESDAY OUTREACH: FOOD BANK VISIT



On August 12, several folks from Community Ministry Tuesday Outreach visited the Central Okanagan Food Bank (COFB). Trina Speiser was our guide through the impressive warehouse and storage facility. Did you know that 2024 was the 40th year of operation for the Food Bank? You might be surprised to know that 35 % of those individuals served in 2024 were working households.

In the front reception area, a noticeboard displays the numbers for July of 2025. Of the 13,134 individuals who received food, 44% were children. Other special programs such as Tiny Bundles (for moms with children under 1 year) and Snack Packs (for children up to age 15 years) supplement the regular hampers. Together these programs reached nearly 3000 recipients. The emphasis is on providing healthy food, especially for children.

COFB also has a location in West Kelowna. Regular pickups from grocery retailers, farmers, and orchardists, along with supplemental purchases, form the basis of the food hampers. These hampers, which provide a 5–7-day supply of food, are available once per month to those who apply and have an address.

Up to forty partner agencies—including shelters and residential services—receive food from the Food Bank for their own programs. During the school year, the Food for Thought breakfast program operates in many schools within SD 23, ensuring children start the day with a nutritious meal. Westbank United Church originally supported this program, and COUC has agreed to continue that support.

The Food Bank also keeps emergency hampers ready for people in the community who are displaced by disasters and who need immediate access to food.

A new community kitchen is nearing completion. This kitchen will function as a social enterprise and provide programming opportunities. Potential courses include Food Safe (to help participants seeking employment), food preservation, healthy meal preparation, and strategies for stretching food budgets.

One outcome of our visit is the ongoing exploration of how COUC can access food or benefit from the purchasing power that a larger organization offers. COUC serves many people without addresses—a group currently not covered by the Food Bank’s services. Additionally, COUC has the opportunity to foster community and connection, which is not a part of the Food Bank’s mission.

COUC regularly supports the Food Bank, with particular focus on the Westbank branch—continuing the support that began with Westbank United Church.

If you would like to read more about the Central Okanagan Food Bank you can access their 2024 Impact Report here: [COFB-Impact-Report 2024.pdf](#)

Written and submitted by: Shirley Piedt on behalf of Jayne Brooks, Andrea Hess & Sharon Pennell

# Queer Vespers

Central Okanagan United Church - 721 Bernard Ave

## Monthly Evening Queer Vesper Worship at COUC

Worship Fellowship Community Connection



6:00pm



721 Bernard Ave.  
Kelowna BC

Monthly:

September 21st

October 19th



[centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](http://centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

# My Evolving Reconciliation Journey

## - Debbie Hubbard

An Indigenous elder once said to me ... the longest journey inward is from the head to the heart. That has truly been my experience.

In February 2014, I had an opportunity to participate in my first Blanket Exercise. The Blanket Exercise is an interactive way of learning the history of colonization in this place we now call Canada and its impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples. To say, that exercise was heartbreaking and eye opening would be an understatement. I experienced the full range of emotions at that exercise – anger, guilt, lament. I will always be grateful to the elder who co-facilitated the debriefing circle.

You see, I grew up in rural Saskatchewan on Treaty 6 territory. I attended an integrated school with members from Mistawasis First Nation. I attended Treaty Days on the reserve and witnessed the \$5.00 distributed to each band member on those days. I frequently visited Duck Lake and saw the residential/day school that finally closed in 1996. In school, I learned about rebels and traitors such as Louis Riel and Big Bear who would not co-operate with the government at the time. Their rebellion fueled by the re-surveying of the land into quarter sections, the subsequent loss of river frontage and the movement of the people onto reserves. But that perspective was completely left out in my schooling.

Not once did I question why we had Treaty Days or why we had a residential school in Duck Lake? Or why the Metis and First Nations rebelled? Or why Bruce my friend since Grade 1 lived on a reserve?

For me, that Blanket Exercise was my day of reckoning – the opening of my heart to the privilege and ignorance that was part of my childhood. The journey from my head to my heart had begun. There have been many more moments since then.

As I write these words, I am reminded that reconciliation is not a destination but a journey – a journey that is both personal and collective.

A journey that begins within myself – to wrestle with the darkest parts of who I am, with my privilege and with my country's history.

It is a journey that has transformed me, that has humbled me and made me more open to listening and creating space for those who have been marginalized – so that they might have not just a place at the table but a voice.

The gap between the world as it could be and the world as it is, is huge. But I have no other place to stand but in the gap. I am confident that in this gap I am not alone but that some of you are with me and that others will join us. May we make it so.



# COUC Women's Group

Formerly known as the "Friday Night Women's Group" this year we have decided to change it up a bit and offer activities on different evenings so more women might be able to participate. Activities are organized by group members and may be held at the church or off-site. Watch your Friday e-letter for details! You are invited to come to all or any activity that interests you. The purpose of the group is to help us meet others from the congregation and deepen friendships. This is an open group welcoming all who identify as women, transgender women, nonbinary folx and all who wish to be part of the gatherings. However you identify, whatever age you are, you are welcome here!

**Our first activity of the Fall will be a bike ride/walk on Sat. Sept. 27, 3pm on the Mission Creek.** Meet up at Robert Hobson Environment Centre. Activity organized by Sarah Kutcher. No cost. Bring bike or comfortable walking shoes & water (light snack provided).

## Other activities planned for 2025/26

- Tuesday Oct. 14**, time TBD late afternoon/evening - A haunted or corn maze. Activity off-site; organized by Jocelyn Smith.
- Friday Nov. 21**, 7pm – A conversation with a Death Doula. Activity will be held at the church.
- Thursday Dec. 4**, 7 pm - Christmas craft location TBD. Activity organized by Myrna Leader.
- Friday Jan. 30**, time TBD – Making a meal for Tuesday Outreach. Activity will be held at the church; organized by Suzanne Marentette.
- Wednesday Feb. 17**, time TBD evening - Sound Bowls experience with Therese Laforge. Activity will be held at the church.
- March date & activity TBD
- Saturday April. 11**, time and location TBD – Board Games night; requires organizer
- Sunday May 24**, noon – Intergenerational Women's Tea. Activity will be held at the church; organized by Cheryl Perry.
- Friday, June 12**, time and location TBC - Supper meal at a park or on a member's patio; requires organizer

# Walking with Palestinians in the Footsteps of Jesus

“I speak as one rooted in the narrative of my people—many of whom are the descendants of the early Church, the followers of Jesus Christ, who himself was born under occupation, witnessed injustice, preached liberation to the oppressed, challenged power, and was condemned to die by an empire that ruled much of the world. Our people continue to suffer. We are dispossessed, displaced, starved, and subjected to ongoing dehumanization and demonization—justified by a narrative that paves the way for genocide...And for many of us, the way we resist is by walking in the footsteps of Jesus, standing beside him as he walks with the suffering.”

-Omar Haramy, Director of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem

The brutal occupation that Palestinians have been living under since 1967 has impacted their lives in so many ways. Unemployment, checkpoints and reduced tourism are some of the factors which have made it difficult for them to sell their olive oil, send their children to university and/or feed their families.

There are many ways for us as a community of faith, to walk with Palestinians as they seek justice and liberation. Purchasing olive oil, dates, Za'atar or Peace by Chocolate chocolate is one of the ways that we can show our solidarity and provide a hand up. The proceeds from the sale of the chocolate support scholarships for students at Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem. We buy our olive oil and Za'atar from a Fair Trade cooperative in the West Bank providing a fair price to the farmers for their product. The dates are purchased from Al Rwad, a Palestinian company in Jericho in the West Bank of the Palestinian territory.

Community Ministry has these products for sale along with the Fair Trade coffee each month at the Potluck lunch after worship. You can also reach out to Debbie Hubbard at [sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com](mailto:sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com) or 250-469-4468 if you would like to make a purchase at a different time.





**VBA FUN TIMES!**



**August  
Memories**



**SUNDAY SCHOOL FUN**



**CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST!  
FILM SET TAKEOVER!**



**TRIVIA NIGHT!**



**We are now halfway through our 100 days campaign for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary!!!**

Have you completed and submitted your card saying what you are doing to celebrate 100 years and to recognize all that the United Church of Canada and Central Okanagan United Church mean to you?

The cards should be in each of the pews on Sunday and there are extra cards in the church office. Many of them say something like “I want to celebrate by ...” or “My commitment is ...” but some are blank. Feel free to fill them in as you wish.

Here are some of the responses we have received so far. These individuals said they would:

- Donate 10 grocery gift cards
- Give \$100 to the church
- Bring items for the Food Pantry twice a month when I volunteer
- Donate 4 - \$25 grocery gift cards
- Make 100 sandwiches for Outreach
- Collect all the loose change in my car, at home, etc. and donate it
- Donate 100 Ziploc recyclable sandwich bags
- Buy 100 rolls of toilet paper for Outreach
- Donate 4 x \$25 gas gift cards
- Your Choice!

I know we have received other gift cards and we have had many new volunteers in various areas, and some of those may be 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary responses as well but there were no cards with them.

And for anyone who is interested in adding to the fund, there is now a Central Okanagan United Church Endowment Fund with the United Church of Canada Foundation. This fund can keep growing and once it reaches a certain level, our congregation will receive payments from it. Right now we need another \$5,000 to make that happen.

No matter how you choose to recognize and honour this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we thank you for all that you do for this United Church of ours!!!

Your 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration committee



# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

If you would like to submit a piece of news / information or photos for our weekly E-Letter or the Newsletter, please follow these guidelines. Unfortunately, we cannot take on outside promotions unless expressly approved or linked to COUC. Email submissions to: [delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

**Please Note:** Placement order is determined by the season or theme of the publication. Seasonal church articles will always place first in order.

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**01** **Please edit**, spell check and double check your written articles before submitting. We unfortunately do not have the capacity to do this for every article we receive.

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**02** **Article length:**  
E-Letter: Keep these to one short paragraph or 100-200 words.  
Newsletter: 350 -400 Words = One Page MAX.  
Due to the many articles we receive, please adhere to these limits.

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**03** **Photos:**  
If your article has a photo to accompany it, please include brief info / people's names etc. For photo collections, a short sentence of explanation of the set is fine.

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**04** **Deadlines:**  
Weekly E-Letter:  
**Submit by Thursday 10am, for Friday**

Newsletter:  
**Submit by the 21st of the month**  
for the following month's issue.  
ie: submit by March 21st for the April issue

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## Our Congregation's PAR Program

### How to Participate

1. Prayerfully decide what you will give each year, and divide that amount by 12.
2. Fill out the authorization form, and attach a cheque marked "VOID."
3. Give this to our designated PAR contact person, or leave at the church office.
4. The amount will be transferred from your account to our congregation's account on the 20th of each month. You can modify or cancel your donation, change how it is designated, or change your information at any time.

### Why Participate?

If you have automatic withdrawals from your bank account to pay your bills, taxes, or mortgage, then you already understand the PAR principle.

Besides being convenient, using PAR for your offering ensures regular monthly givings to help our church's ministry even when you are away. You will be providing our congregation a dependable flow of contributions, which increases our overall financial stability.

Your regular giving supports the ministry of Central Okanagan United Church (COUC) and the many programs that are offered, from worship services in church on Sunday to worship in Senior Care Homes throughout the week; from Sunday School and other children and youth programs to SongShine, book studies, and Walk and Talk for the young at heart; from the morning grocery and meal program for members of our local community to programs of education and support for Reconciliation, Inclusion, and Justice for all.

Your giving also supports the Mission and Service fund of the United Church of Canada and its work at home and abroad through its many vibrant and vital ministries for the healing of the world. COUC currently gives \$33,000 annually to UCC Mission and Service.



Please contact Marg Brooks: [contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

## 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.

**Please contact Marg Brooks:**  
[contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

## 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  
Kelowna, BC  
V1Y 9H2



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

## Donation of Shares

Contact Marg Brooks for information.



## 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!**



# Autumn

**What's on at COUC  
Groups  
Events  
and More!**



How long have you lived in Kelowna. How long were you involved in the life of one of the amalgamating churches of Central Okanagan United Church. These and many more are some of the topics of conversation that the **"Wise Women" of COUC discuss the second Tuesday of the month in Room 14 at 2 p.m.**  
**Next Meeting Sept 9th**

Why are we called the Wise Women? Well, it is very simple most of us who come to this event each month are of a "certain golden age". We have been involved in the church for a long time, we have lived in Kelowna a long time and we have interesting stories to tell each other. Life stories are also told as well.

**All in all it is a very interesting, and fun time. Come and join us on the Second Tuesday of the month in Room 14 for coffee/tea, conversation.**  
**There is usually cake or cookies too!!**



Beryl Itani



Seniors

# WALK & TALK GROUP

Walk and Talk is a program, developed by Dr Charlotte Jones, of UBCO, to meet the identified needs of seniors for socialization, physical fitness and health education. The program consists of three parts: a half hour walk in historic downtown Kelowna, a half hour of exercises developed by the University of Otaga in New Zealand, designed specifically to strengthen the muscles that are most useful in improving balance and preventing falls; and a time for socialization. Everyone walks at their own pace with whatever mobility aids they are most comfortable using. This program is designed for seniors of all physical abilities. Please consider joining us.



ALL WELCOME!



FRIDAYS - 8 WEEKS  
-----  
SEPT. 12, 19, 26 &  
OCT. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31



MEET IN CHURCH  
PARKING LOT  
Start 9:30am  
End 11am



721 BERNARD AVE, KELOWNA





# COME AND BE PHOTOGRAPHED FOR OUR NEW COUC CHURCH DIRECTORY!

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## PRO TIPS!

WEAR SOLID COLOURS (AVOID PATTERNS, LOGOS, GRAPHICS)

· LONGER SLEEVES ARE BETTER

· LAYERS ARE GREAT

· STICK WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY OWN AND LOVE AND DRESS COMFORTABLY

· AVOID PURE BLACK AND WHITE

A PHOTO DIRECTORY HELPS MEMBERS TO RECOGNIZE ONE ANOTHER BY NAME, AND STAY IN TOUCH BY PROVIDING PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES. IT BUILDS COMMUNITY AND IS A LASTING KEPSAKE AND HISTORICAL RECORD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

EVERYONE WHO HAS THEIR PHOTO TAKEN WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THE COMPLETED DIRECTORY. IF YOU HAVE MOBILITY CHALLENGES OR HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER WHO LIVES IN A CARE HOME OR SENIORS' RESIDENCE, WE CAN SEND A PHOTOGRAPHER TO TAKE THEIR PICTURE.

PLEASE CONTACT US AT

[ADMIN@CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM](mailto:ADMIN@CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM) TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS. (YOU MAY ALSO SUBMIT A PHOTO BUT THIS OPTION IS SUBJECT TO A \$25 FEE AND AVAILABLE SPACE.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE SEPTEMBER DATES

BOOK YOUR FREE PHOTO SESSION NOW!

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 1:00-8:00PM – 2 SPOTS LEFT!

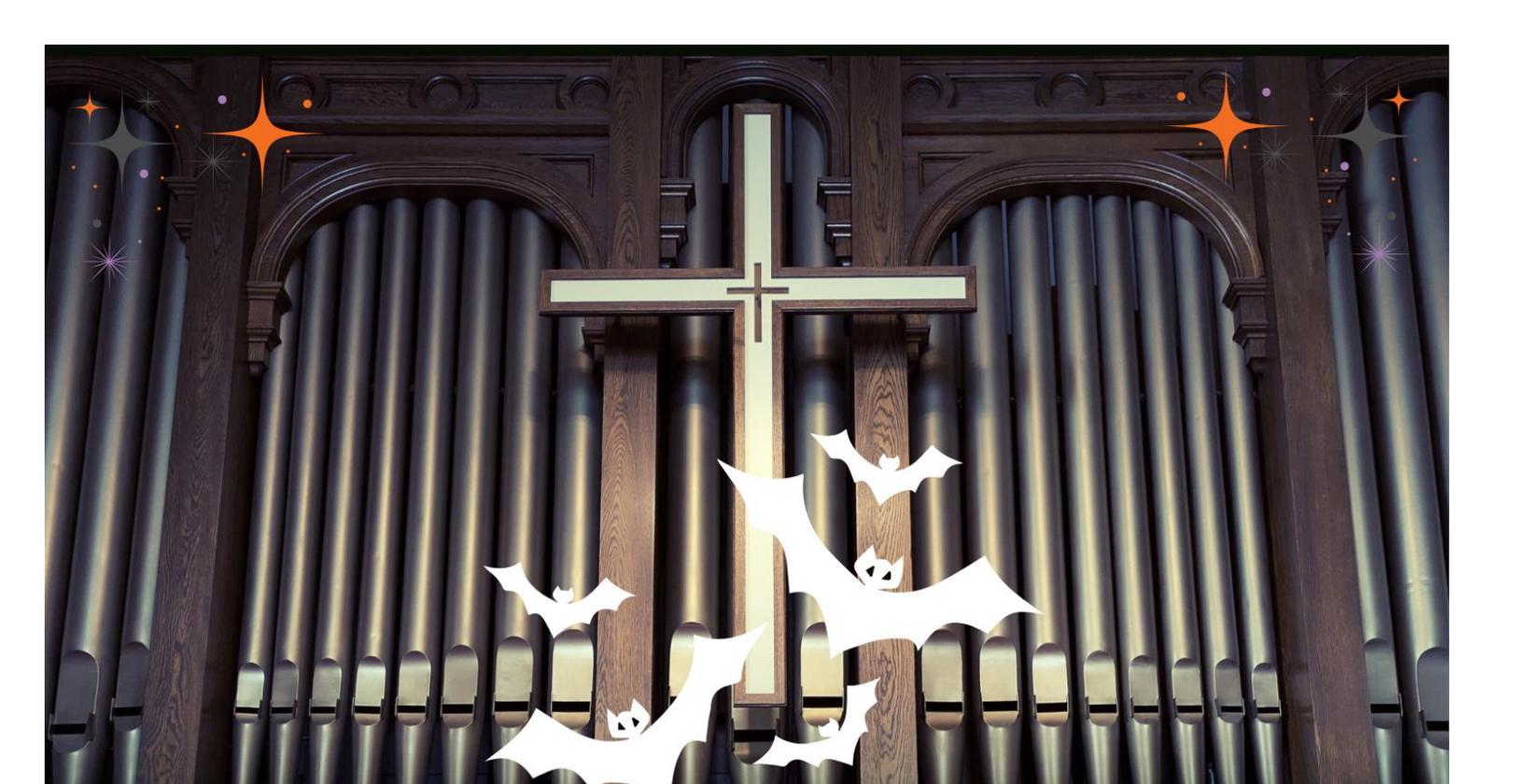
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 1:00-8:00PM – 4 SPOTS LEFT!

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 1:00-8:00PM – 5 SPOTS LEFT!

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 1:00-8:00PM – LOTS OF ROOM!

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 10:00AM-5:00PM – 11 SPOTS LEFT!

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 12:00PM-7:00PM – LOTS OF ROOM!



SAVE THE DATE!

HALLOWEEN THEMED  
PIPE ORGAN  
RECITAL

WITH

*Sandra Fletcher*

FRCCO (CH), ARCT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26TH

COSTUMES FOR ALL AGES ARE ENCOURAGED!



CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH  
721 BERNARD AVE, KELOWNA

*~ ~ ~*  
ENTRY BY DONATION



# JAZZ VESPERS

*MUSIC THAT MOVES THE SOUL*

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY  
LOCAL JAZZ MUSICIANS  
ALL WELCOME!  
ENTRY BY DONATION



**FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH**

**@5:15pm**

**CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH  
721 BERNARD AVE, KELOWNA  
(PARKING LOT BEHIND CHURCH OFF RICHTER)**





**FREE!**

# TAX PREP SERVICE



## Need Help With Your Taxes?

Free Tax Service – September Schedule

**Thursday Mornings: 9 AM to 12 PM**

**Sept 7** – Tax Prep

**Sept 11**– **LOCATION CHANGE THIS DAY:**  
**@Okanagan Regional Library**  
**downtown site.**

**Sept 18**– Tax Prep

**Sept 25**– Tax Prep

***First Come First Serve***  
***No Appointment Needed.***

- For Canadian residents who have low to modest income and simple returns – as outlined by the Government of Canada.
- You will need your social insurance number and government issued photo ID such as BC Drivers License, BC ID card, Status Card.
- For preparation of current tax year returns & e-fileable returns for prior years.
- Non-English speakers please bring a translator.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION



250 762 3311



admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

A large, abstract watercolor splash in various shades of teal and green, with soft, irregular edges, occupies the top half of the page. The text is overlaid on this background.

# Thursday Breathing Class

WITH SYLVIA CLERKE

Thursdays at 11am  
Please have a non rolling chair  
and a glass of water

ZOOM LINK AVAILABLE IN FRIDAY E-LETTER

*“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**

**All Welcome!**





**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

**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>





Thank You

FOR READING

