

# CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025



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NEWS FOR UPCOMING EDITIONS  
OF THE NEWSLETTER!



# Central Okanagan United Church

DECEMBER 2025

# WELCOME

## 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

Saibun / Room Rentals, Bookings & Buildings  
saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com



 (250)762- 3311

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

 CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM



# ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



**30**  
NOVEMBER

Advent 1 worship with Potluck and Advent Party to follow

**6**  
DECEMBER

Twinkle Tour - Christmas Lights 4pm

**7**  
DECEMBER

Advent 2 with Communion 10am Worship  
Jazz Vespers Christmas Special 5:15pm

**14**  
DECEMBER

Advent 3 Musical Cantata at 10am Service

**16**  
DECEMBER

CGIT Christmas Vespers service taking place at Benvoulin Heritage Church 7pm - 2279 Benvoulin Rd

**19**  
DECEMBER

The Alleluia Ringers & Friends Concert 12 Noon

**20**  
DECEMBER

Longest Night / Blue Christmas  
Worship Service 4pm

**21**  
DECEMBER

Advent 4 with Christmas Pageant at 10am worship  
Queer Vespers 6pm

**24**  
DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS EVE :  
4PM INTERGENERAIONAL WORSHIP  
11PM CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

**28**  
DECEMBER

10am Worship - Wassail Carol Service

**04**  
JANUARY

Breakfast Church with Ally 10am

**Sing your favourite Christmas Carols each Sunday, 15mins before worship!**

Note: Church office is closed from Dec 29<sup>th</sup> and reopens on January 5<sup>th</sup>

# Central Okanagan United Church



## Singing, Playing, Wassail & Epiphany!

### **Calling all youth musicians and performers!**

If you have a child who would like to play their instrument or sing a song before worship on Christmas Eve at 4pm, please email the office. We invite all ages, abilities and ranges to join in this well loved tradition! [admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

### **Carols Before Worship are BACK!**

Ready for a round of joyful caroling before worship on Sunday mornings?! You are in luck! Join in at 9:45am every Sunday in Advent for your favorite carols - requests invited!

### **Wassail Service 10am Worship December 28<sup>th</sup>**

The word Wassail comes to us through Old English/Old Norse and means "be of good health," and is associated with the practice of singing house to house or orchard to orchard while drinking spiced cider. For the first Sunday in the Season of Christmas we will enjoy mulled (non-alcoholic) cider, sing favourite carols, read scripture, and enjoy some treats. You are invited to bring leftover Christmas baking to share.

### **Epiphany Breakfast Service 10am January 4<sup>th</sup>**

Join us for a "Messy Church" style service in the Hall- an intergenerational service including breakfast, liturgy, reflection, singing and crafts (for young folks, and those who wish to participate), as we welcome the Magi and this Season of Epiphany.

**Office Closed: Christmas Day & Boxing Day  
Dec 29<sup>th</sup> - Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> . Reopening for the New Year on Jan 5<sup>th</sup>**



# Outreach

## **November Update and December Plans**

Outreach continued on Tuesday mornings throughout November serving 521 meals and distributing 536 bags of groceries, with an average weekly attendance of about 135 individuals.

Outreach will be operating throughout December except for December 30<sup>th</sup> as the church is closed that week.

## **Christmas Meal – Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**

Our special Christmas meal will be offered to our Outreach guests on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. This will be a full turkey dinner and we will be looking for volunteers to cook and carve turkeys, and cook and mash potatoes, as well as to help with serving, set-up and clean-up. If you are available and would like to be involved in any way, please contact Jayne Brooks.

## **A Farewell and A Welcome**

Our interpreter, Rasha Ghomeed, started a new full-time job with Kelowna Community Resources near the end of November and had to end her employment with COUC. Rasha did an amazing job while with us and we will definitely miss her, but we wish her all the best in her new position, and I'm sure she will be stopping by for a visit from time to time as she is just a block away.

Big thanks go to a quickly organized search team, which held interviews the last week of November and hired our new interpreter who will start on Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Fawaz Abdalla, who was a volunteer with our Outreach program in the spring, comes from Sudan and has been in Canada for about one year. He speaks fluent Arabic, which is important for our Tuesday morning Outreach program, as well as basic French. His English is very good but he continues to study English as a Second Language – luckily in the afternoons next semester so he can be with us on Tuesday mornings! Please stop by and meet Fawaz some Tuesday morning.

Continued on next page...





## **“Gifts of Care” Campaign**

We are here to solve your dilemma of what to buy “that person who already has everything” for Christmas. We are offering you the chance to give a gift of care. For \$20 each, you can purchase a bag of groceries (or multiple bags) to help support a family in need. You will receive a Christmas card and certificate stating that a bag of groceries (or several bags) has been purchased on behalf of the person to which you are giving the Christmas card. You and the person receiving the card share the joy of giving and sharing at Christmas, and a family in need will have the gift of food on their table – a wonderful win-win for everyone.

## **Christmas Gifts**

As is our tradition at COUC around Christmas time, we are again asking for gifts to support our Outreach program. These gifts could be scarves, gloves, toques, socks or other personal items that our guests might need this winter season; or gift cards for groceries or gas that can be distributed at Christmas and over the coming months.

## **Truth & Reconciliation Workshops**

The workshops on November 22nd and 29th were well attended and well received with over 30 attendees. Jasmine Peone was an excellent facilitator and kept everyone engaged throughout the workshop as we learned about the Syilx People of the Okanagan Nation, their cultural teachings and perspectives. The final workshop in this series will be offered early in the new year.





## **KAIROS PALESTINE II**

### **A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide**

As you read this, the season of Advent has just begun and we are headed towards the manger in Bethlehem. Many Christians around the world have the Holy Land most in our minds at this time of year. Yet for Palestinians living under a brutal occupation and genocide, they have a different perspective on the Holy Land.

The Kairos Palestine Initiative is the Palestinian Christian movement that has grown from the Kairos Palestine Document of 2009. They launched a new document, The Moment of Truth: Faith in the Time of Genocide, at the 16th Annual Kairos Palestine Conference, held in Bethlehem in November 2025. It begins by stating:

We live now in a time of genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement unfolding before the eyes of the world. This moment demands from us a new stand, one unlike any before it. It is both a decisive moment and a moment of truth. Today, we renew our stand for truth and our commitment to fundamental religious, theological and moral principles. We look at our reality and take a renewed stand, responding to the voice of the Holy Spirit deep within us, listening to the call of faith in this time of genocide. We renew our message of faith, hope, and love — offering a faith-inspired vision for the time after genocide

The document goes on to challenge Western silence and introduces a theology of resistance linking faith with justice. It provides a critique of international and church policies with a clear call for us to stand for justice. The full text of Moment of Truth: Faith in the Time of Genocide can be read by clicking [here](#).

So how might we respond to the cry and the call of Palestinians? Prayers are always good but so is other action. Here are a couple of ideas:

- Consider signing up for the It Didn't Start on October 7 online course being offered beginning in January. You can learn more by clicking [here](#). The talks are non-academic and no prior knowledge of the history of Palestine / Israel is necessary.
- Sign up for the PalNet Pacific email list by sending an email to [palnetpacific@gmail.com](mailto:palnetpacific@gmail.com). This is the Palestinian Solidarity email list for Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church. Emails are sent with opportunities for additional learning and action.

Questions? Reach out to Debbie at 250-46904468 or [seekingequalrights@gmail.com](mailto:seekingequalrights@gmail.com)



# Stewardship

Thank you to everyone who has already returned their pledge sheets for 2026.

Although the official Stewardship campaign ended in November, we will still accept pledge sheets in December so please return yours to the church office.

The information you provide us now helps us improve our planning for activities, programs and events in the coming year.

Your gifts to COUC help to change lives in many different and rewarding ways.

·Imagine someone who can now be heard on the phone and can connect with friends and family, when before joining the SongShine program they were feeling isolated.

·Imagine someone who could not afford to give her child a birthday cake, but who came to Outreach and got a cupcake that she saved for that beloved child's special birthday dinner. And imagine the smile on that child's face.

·Imagine the relief of someone fighting addiction who knows they have a meeting to go to for help when challenges arise.

·Imagine the homeless person who lost all his possessions in a theft on the street, but who knows they can come to our church to at least get a hot drink, a meal and some warm clothes to help them survive the street.

·Imagine someone who comes to one of our book studies or workshops and finally finds the true joy of the Bible message and a sense of belonging and self worth and purpose that was missing from their life before.

·Imagine the joy of the family receiving support from the United Church of Canada's Mission and Service Fund after a natural disaster claimed their home and all of their possessions. Your contributions to COUC support the national church's Mission and Service Fund to the tune of \$33,000 per year.

·Imagine a disillusioned young person being bullied at school and in the community and feeling lost and confused and desperate, but finding love and acceptance in a COUC youth program.

I'm sure you can imagine many other examples of how COUC makes a difference in the lives of those in our local community and around the world. You may know of actual examples of lives that have been changed. We are making a difference, and with your support, we will continue to make a difference.

Amazing things are possible when we all work together to do God's work.

Thank you!

Your Stewardship Team



*Thank  
You*

# IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK

Join Us for a special 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event to draw together women, whether they were active in the Canadian Girls in Training or other groups for youth, girls, or women in the United Church.

Tuesday, December 16 at 7PM

**YOU ARE INVITED**



CGIT CHRISTMAS VESPER SERVICE

16  
DEC

7  
PM



- PLEASE JOIN US -

 Benvoulin Heritage Church  
2279 Benvoulin Road



Questions?

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

Followed by a reception with  
tea and goodies provided  
by the ladies at  
Central Okanagan  
United Church!



# ADVENT STUDY SERIES

## PARABLES AS POLITICAL COMMENTARY

(led by Heather Burton)

**Sundays, Dec. 7, 14, 21 from 11:30 to 12:30(ish), Room 14**

Based on the book “Parables as Subversive Speech” by William Herzog II, this 3-week study will look at the agrarian society of 1<sup>st</sup>-century Palestine within an aristocratic empire, and the systems of oppression found there.

**Week 1** A pedagogy of the oppressed: blaming the victims. Focus parable: The Labourers in the Vineyard {Matthew 20:1-16}

**Week 2** The vulnerability of the whistle-blower. Focus parable: The Parable of the Talents {Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19: 11-27}

**Week 3** The moral economy of the peasant class. Focus parable: The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11 5-8)

Feel free to bring your lunch.



# Queer Vespers

Central Okanagan United Church - 721 Bernard Ave

## Monthly Evening Queer Vesper Worship at COUC

Worship Fellowship Community Connection



6:00pm

Monthly:

December 21st

January 18th

February 15th

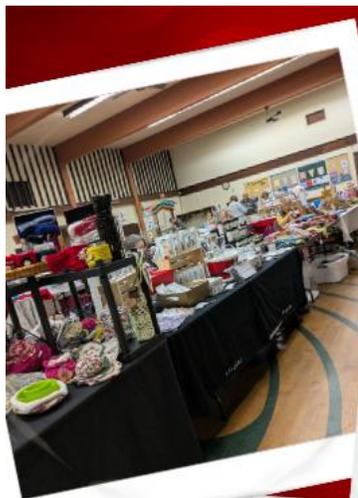


721 Bernard Ave.  
Kelowna BC



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

**Our 26th annual Christmas Craft Fair was held on November 15th from 10:00 to 3:00. About 500 members of the public attended and we raised over \$6,000. (and received several of tubs of food) for our Outreach Meal and Grocery program. A huge thank you to all those congregants who donated their time and talents to the event. We couldn't have done it without you!**



**Christmas  
Craft Fair  
2025!**



# Gifts of CARE

Do you know someone who is impossible to buy for?  
Someone who has everything and wants nothing?

Well, we have a solution for you!

Why not give them the gift of sharing the joy of the season by buying some groceries on their behalf – to be distributed to those in our Central Okanagan communities who are experiencing food insecurity.



## \$20 Per Bag of GROCERIES

The distribution of groceries will be administered through the COUC Community Outreach program.

# Gifts of CARE

You Give \$20+

We buy the groceries to be given out by COUC Outreach to those in need

Someone has the gift of food on the table

You give a Gift of Care





# 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!**



# Winter

What's on at COUC  
Groups  
Events  
and More!



# CHRISTMAS

# TWINKLE TOUR

Time to sign up for the annual Twinkle Tour! Saturday, December 6th, 4-6PM. Reserve a spot in your motorized sleigh! A volunteer from the church will pick you up at your home between 3-3:45pm, 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 [admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)



# YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

RSVP - ALLY (HE/HIM)

[ALLYP@CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM](mailto:ALLYP@CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM)

CALL OR TEXT 905 329 1552

**7 DECEMBER**  
**6 - 8:00 PM**

**COUC FITZPATRICK SITE**  
**1370 RUTLAND RD N**

**JOIN US FOR OUR YOUNG ADULTS GROUP (18-25)**

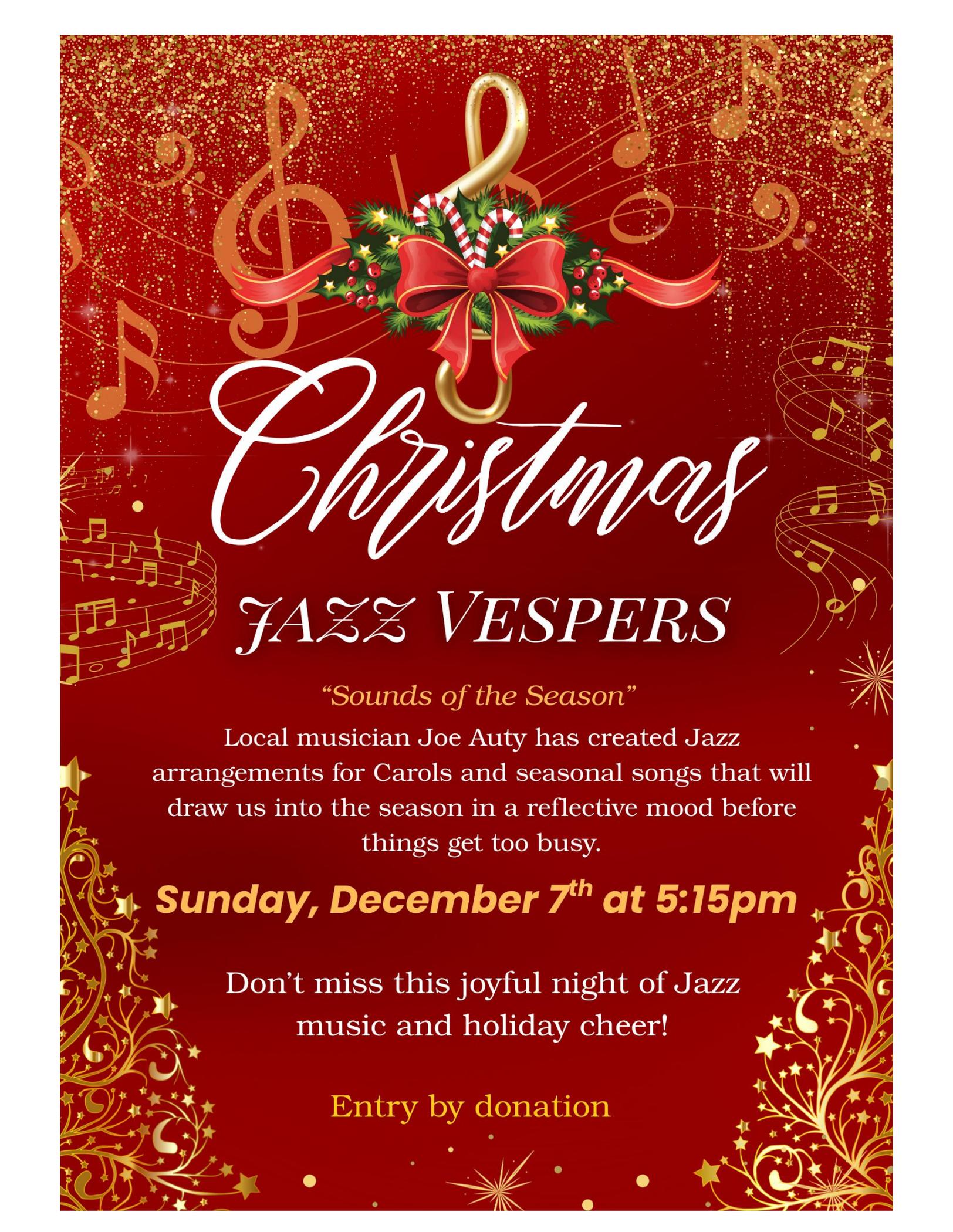
**FOR DINNER, FELLOWSHIP AND LAUGHS!**

**DINNER PROVIDED!**

**GLUTEN FREE & VEGAN OPTIONS AVAILABLE!**

**CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH**





# Christmas

## JAZZ VESPERS

*"Sounds of the Season"*

Local musician Joe Auty has created Jazz arrangements for Carols and seasonal songs that will draw us into the season in a reflective mood before things get too busy.

**Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:15pm**

Don't miss this joyful night of Jazz music and holiday cheer!

**Entry by donation**



ALLELUIA RINGERS BELL CHOIR  
& FRIENDS

# RINGING IN THE SEASON



December 19th

12 Noon

Central Okanagan United Church

721 Bernard Ave

Entry by Donation



# The Longest Night

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!

**Saturday December 20th @ 4:00pm**  
**721 Bernard Ave.**

**Also on Zoom**

A large, abstract watercolor splash in various shades of teal and green, with irregular, feathered edges, occupies the top half of the page. The colors range from light, airy greens to deeper, more saturated teals.

# 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



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

**Final SongShine of 2025 – Dec 15<sup>th</sup>. Returns Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2026**

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>





*Merry Christmas*

*From  
Central Okanagan United Church*