

Sunday Morning
Worship Time
Every Sunday
Starting at 10:30 am



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The St. Thomas Newsletter is published monthly except for July and August. Submissions are due by the 20th of the preceding month. Send submissions to pr@stthomasunited.ca.

Minister's Message: Reverend Marion

Oh my gosh! Where did the summer go? When I was returning from my holidays on August 30 the leaves were already turning yellow and falling. Why is that? Well apparently, leaves turn colour if they are watered too much or not enough. In other words, they need a healthy balance of watering.

And so, it seems with us.

As we leave one season, and enter another, we need to be reminded again that there is a time for everything and everything in its time (Ecclesiastes 3).

If we were to reflect on these verses more deeply, during this changing season, might we be able to find the balance that we need in our lives?

I invite you to take time throughout the next month to reflect on each of the verses. I inserted a few thought-provoking questions after each verse, to get your thoughts churning.

Enjoy the changing of the seasons, and hopefully you can find the balance in your life that you need. Cheers!

There is a time for everything,

- a season for every purpose under heaven: What is our purpose and what in lives do we need to re-focus on? What is our passion? What feeds us?
- a season to be born and a season to die; What makes us feel alive? What drains us? What do we need to let go of?
- a season to plant and a season to harvest; What sorts of things have we planted around us and what has the harvest been?
- a season to hurt and a season to heal; Where have I been the instrument of pain? Where can I be an instrument of healing?
- a season to tear down and a season to build up; What in our lives needs to be torn down (literally or metaphorically)? What needs to be refurbished or enhanced?

Continued...

- a season to cry and a season to laugh; a season to mourn and a season to dance; What sorts of things make us cry? What do we need to cry/mourn for? What causes us to laugh/dance and how can we create more laughter and dance more in our lives?
- a season to scatter stones and a season gather them; a season for holding close and a season for holding back; What sorts of things do we need to spread around more? What do we need to gather up, hold on to, and keep in our lives?
- a season to seek and a season to lose; a season to keep and a season to throw away; What sorts of things might we want to learn about? What in our past have we learned that we should let go of?
- a season to tear and a season to mend; a season to be silent and a season to speak; What in our world needs to be torn apart? What in our world needs mending? When and where should we learn to be silent? When and where should we speak up?
- a season to love and a season to hate; a season for hostilities and a season for peace. What or who is it that we are called to Love? Are we called 'hate'? Where in your life do you hold hostilities? What brings you peace? How can we be more at peace within ourselves? How can we be more at peace in the world?

Peace to you

Worship at St. Thomas - Cathy Rivard

Join us this month as we celebrate Worldwide Communion Sunday on **Oct 5, 2025**. Curtis Veer (Building & Property) and Greg Hyatt (Finance) will share messages on Renovations and Stewardship on the **October 19, 2025**, and our two Reverend's, Tracy and Marion, will switch places on the **October 26, 2025**, with a pulpit exchange. All the Choirs, the Orchestra, Strummers, and accompanist Kari will be part of our October schedule. See you Sundays.

Upcoming Services for October 2025.

October 5

Creation's Beauty,
Worldwide Communion Sunday.

Reverend Tracy
Scripture:
Psalm 148

Music:
Orchestra, Kari Orosz

October 12

Thanksgiving: Sharing Our Bounty

Reverend Tracy
Scripture:
Luke 16:19-31

Music:
Adult Choir,
Kari Orosz

October 19

Renovations and Stewardship

Reverend Tracy,
Curtis Veer,
Greg Hyatt

Scripture:
John 6:5-14

Music:
Children's Choir,
Youth Choir,
Kari Orosz

October 26

People With Itching Ears Will Turn Away From the Truth

Reverend Marion
Scripture:
Timothy 3:14 - 4:5

Music:
Strummers, Adult Choir, Kari Orosz

Treasurers Report – Greg Hyatt

Operating Fund

Operating Fund donations year-to-date to August 31, 2025, are up about \$12,000 versus the comparable period last year. This increase is primarily due to two factors: donations from a few families having been contributed in a lump sum early in the year as opposed to monthly; and a couple of significant one-time additional donations.

Year-to-date facility usage income is up by approximately \$8,500 versus the comparable period last year, primarily due to increased usage by the Muslim prayer group.

Operating Expenses year-to-date are up about \$10,500 versus the comparable period last year. This is due primarily to salary and benefit costs being up by about \$9,500 due to inflationary increases in both salaries and benefit program costs.

Our Operating Fund expenses to August 31, 2025, have exceeded our Operating Fund revenues by \$1,700, which is more favourable by about \$10,000 than for the comparable period last year. This improvement in the deficit position is primarily due to the net impact of the factors noted above.

We had budgeted for a \$12,000 Operating Fund deficit for 2025. I am currently projecting a small Operating Fund surplus for the full year 2025.

As we move forward to 2026 and beyond, we expect to be financially challenged in generating sufficient Operating Fund revenues to cover this Fund's expenses. We are all getting older. We've had some significant donors pass away or relocate to other communities, and going forward we will continue to experience this. With our total annual donations in future being challenged by our demographics, growth in our congregation is paramount to our continued financial viability.

Building and Memorial Funds

We started 2025 with \$166,000 in our Building and Memorial Funds combined. These Funds are available for capital costs and major repairs. They are very necessary given that our facility is now over 35 years old. Our sanctuary refurbishment this summer, new carpets and chairs, repainting the walls and refinishing the ceiling, has reduced the combined balance in these Funds by \$70,000. While this project was in progress, we identified a major, long-term water damage issue with significant structural implications. In addressing this issue, we provided for effective rainwater/snowmelt drainage, including a retaining wall. We encourage you to walk outside behind the sanctuary to check it out! Total costs for addressing this water issue, including the drainage and retaining wall solution, were \$40,000. After these expenditures, we currently have about \$75,000 remaining in the Building and Memorial Funds combined. The fact that we had reserve funds that could cover the unexpected \$40,000 cost to permanently address our water issues is a testament to the importance of maintaining such reserves.

Closing Remarks

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of you who continue to generously contribute to St. Thomas throughout these very challenging times. And don't forget to purchase your grocery gift cards! This is our biggest fundraiser and we all need groceries. Why not have St. Thomas benefit from the significant discounts at which we buy these cards?

The Wise Women of St. Thomas United Church

Commitment - Maureen Dodd

Commitment seems like an easy and noble virtue to demonstrate, until it's the day before the newsletter deadline and the Muse has not appeared. Then it feels like commitment is a good virtue for other people to have, and the suggestion to let Copilot assist me in my writing becomes tempting.

I like to think of myself as a committed person: committed to my family, my church, my volunteer work, meeting the newsletter deadline, but then I compare myself to really committed people, like Noah, for example. He didn't decide just to build a small boat and take along a couple of kittens and goats. He was truly inclusive. And what about Mrs. Noah? Was she also committed to the cause, or was she rethinking her 'for better or for worse' commitment?

Although I say I'm committed to my family and to improving the environment, I would not have been a good farm wife. My mother-in-law spent most of her adult hours feeding family. She had a huge garden, froze or canned all the produce, kept chickens, made three meals a day on a wood stove, and didn't complain. Nor did she ever seem bitter or resentful or lie on the couch with a magazine and use Skip the Dishes, like her less-than-committed daughter-in-law.

Most of us no longer must put in so many hours getting food to the table, that part of life has become easier. But maybe we all now need to channel Noah and commit to doing everything in our power to save humanity from the despair, discrimination, and fanaticism that is now threatening to flood our world.

Commitments - Wanda Veer

One of my pleasures in life is shuttling grandchildren to appointments or gatherings. I have them trapped in my car, and we can talk about many things. Usually it begins with "is this a long story, Grandma?" The other day, Granddaughter #4 and I were discussing marriage. She said, "I don't see any point in marriage". Good thing, since she is only 14! But it started a long conversation about sex, birth control, arranged marriages, and yes, commitments. I stumbled around trying to explain that after making the "commitment" I believe most couples try that extra bit to make a marriage work. I wasn't entirely successful in convincing her, since I also had to acknowledge that many great partnerships did not, and do not, include marriage vows.

I like commitments, and I am very proud of anyone who lives up to their commitments. Whether it be economic, spiritual, familial, or community. Spouting the words is easy, following through is much more difficult. My children always laugh at my "self-commitments": I'm going to walk every morning! I'm going to work outside every Tuesday for 2 hours! I'm going to wash the kitchen floor every second day!"

Somehow my PhD in Procrastination manages to detour all those great ideas. But I do faithfully follow through on my commitments to others and organizations. It keeps me whole and focused.

Continued...

We all know that when someone fails in their commitments to us it is deflating and heart wrenching. Our whole life is actually full of commitments to others: we will pay the mortgage, we will obey traffic laws, we will follow many rules to keep society running smoothly. And when you think about it, we should be very proud of ourselves. We try hard to build a unique life within those many boundaries. And usually succeed.

Joining a church is a commitment to “do your best to live a life sanctioned by Christ”, at least that’s what I believe. Be kind, be faithful, share, love, have patience, be tolerant, listen to everybody. Do we manage this every day? Not a chance. But we try. And who knows where these commitments you make will take you? The Bible is absolutely full of the Lord demanding, cajoling, asking politely and impolitely to “Commit to your Faith”. Who knows? You may yet “walk on water”. Keep trying!

Commitment - Ruthann Watson

Mainline churches are collapsing; that’s not news. Accepting that we will be a small group is a good start, but what will it look like? In a world of Christian sectarianism and secularism, with every group claiming to have the “real truth” how will centrist Christians survive? Mainline” doesn’t mean much if you’re a tiny minority. As religious affiliation and church attendance plummet, political religion and religious politics seem to be filling the void, which isn’t good for society or democracy. Almost every NGO and charitable group is populated with good-hearted people who want to make the world a better place. How will we differentiate ourselves? How then shall we live?

I’m trying to see the future as full of opportunities for adaptation and growth, since Canadians and the UCC aren’t immune to the forces sweeping the western world. I admit to occasionally longing for bygone times. But, if we commit to our faith, to prayer and study, generosity, respectful debate, and resist the urge to dehumanize those with whom we disagree, we just might be the light the world needs.

Fasten your seatbelts: it’s going to be a bumpy ride.

Note: If you want statistical reasons to be discouraged, check out Ryan Burge Graphs about Religion on YouTube or Google. If you want to be really discouraged, read *The Second Coming* by W. B. Yeats. More hopefully, how our Jewish antecedents moved to Rabbinic Judaism after the 2nd Temple was destroyed is an example of survival and adaptation.

Gift Cards - Richard Taylor-Kerr

As we head into the fall season, we have fundraised over \$6200 through the sale of gift cards. This is 78% of our goal of \$8000 for the year. Excellent work St. Thomas!

We have gift cards available in \$50s and \$100s for Safeway/ Sobeys, Co-op, and Superstore. Payment is by e-transfer, cash, or cheque (payable to St. Thomas United Church). Safeway/Sobey’s and Superstore cards can be used in any of their affiliated stores across Canada. Co-op cards can only be used in Calgary.

The best way to order cards is to e-mail fundraising@stthomasunited.ca Cards will be ready for you on the following Sunday. We can also make arrangements for pickup.

Thanks for you for supporting this important fundraiser. Every purchase helps, no matter how small.

Faith Formation - Gayle Wilderman

Now that school's back, and backpacks have been blessed, Ashley has October plans around the theme of Thanksgiving; blessings and gratefulness. There will be no Sunday School on the Thanksgiving long weekend, though there are always books and art materials available for children to use while listening to the music and scripture.

Ashley is trying to go paperless and can send you an e-mail to register your child in Sunday School. If you haven't received anything, please contact her at sunday-school@stthomasunited.ca.

Messy Church will be on **October 24, 2025**, arriving between 5:00 pm and 5:30 pm with supper to follow until 6:00 pm. After a Johnny Appleseed Grace and Myrna and Marion's delish spaghetti, Marion will share with us an engaging story. Family pumpkin carving afterwards! As always, families and individuals of all ages are welcome.

The library has been tidied up and there are a lot of good books to check out. Especially if the teachers go on strike, you might consider taking out some of our books.

Some suggestions:

For pre-teens and teens: Judy Blume, who is well represented in our library, including the wonderful, *Are You There God – It's Me Margaret*.

Picture books with Bible Stories.

Each time Ashley reads a book for Children's Time, the library crew either reshelves it or puts the newly purchased book on the shelf to take out. For **September 28, 2025**, *Raven's Ribbons* has been ordered. It should be cataloged and ready to be borrowed in October.

The adult section also has interesting selections.

The Faith Formation committee is small, but mighty. If you are at all interested in joining, we would love to have you! Faith Formation members: Library: Fiona, Elaine G., Sheila H.; Ashley Dressler, Myrna M. Reverend Marion Martin, Sharon R., Marie V., Gayle Wilderman.

Foothills United Thrift Store: Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Clothing Donations

Foothills United collects used clothing for their sales. They are in need of donations of gently used clothing. Donations can be dropped off at Foothills United between 9:00 am and noon Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday but please call the office ahead if you are coming at 403-288-5632. If you have clothing to donate but are unable to get to Foothills, please contact Elaine Taylor-Kerr.

Volunteer Opportunities

Foothills United runs a Thrift Store as part of the outreach to the community and as a fundraiser, open from 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm on the first and third Thursday of the month plus one Saturday of the month. They could really use more volunteers to help with the sales. For more information or to volunteer, please contact either Reverend Marion or Elaine Taylor-Kerr.

Paths to Reconciliation - Elaine Gray

A Sacred Dialogue on Climate Justice

Join the global conversation on Indigenous spiritualities, land rights, and climate justice. We invite you to listen and learn from three internationally respected Indigenous leaders in a transformative webinar, *Voices of the Land: Indigenous Perspectives on Climate Justice*, on **Thursday, October 23, 2025**, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. ET.

This is more than a webinar—it's a call to action and reflection. You will deepen your understanding of decolonization and be inspired to advocate for Indigenous rights and climate action.

The conversation features leaders from around the globe:

- * Prof. Dr. Anne Pattel-Gray (Bidjara Nation, Australia)
- * Jocabed Solano (Gunadule Nation, Panama)
- * Rev. Shane Goldie (Cree/Métis, Canada)

All of whom contributed to the World Council of Churches publication: *World Council of Churches Report: Indigenous Spiritualities, Land Rights and Climate Justice*.

Whether you're a climate activist, faith leader, student, or ally, this is your opportunity to listen, learn, and walk in solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

[Learn more about the voices of Land webinar by clicking here](#)

Pew Pads

Free to a good home: We have about 12 pew pads of various lengths left over from the recent sanctuary reno. If you would like them or know of someone else who might, please let Elaine Gray know. Thanks.

AM Fitness

Some of us have been participating in this class for over 20 years, and hope to keep working on strengthening, stretching and balancing for many more years. It is something very simple that is helping to keep us young and trim! What are you doing to look after your body to delay the aging process?

Youth News

Junior Youth Group

We are looking forward to another exciting year with Junior Youth group. The Junior Youth Group is an energetic group of children in grades four, five, and six. We plan to have monthly in-person events this school year. We will also be continuing the collaboration with Symons Valley for some joint events. If you know of a child who will be in this age range this school year, who would be interested in joining in, and who isn't already on the email distribution list, please email junior-youth@stthomasunited.ca to be added to the list.

The second event for the 2025/2026 school year will be held on **October 3, 2025**, at St. Thomas United Church. Sam and Elaine look forward to seeing you there!

Youth Group (Grades 7 to 12)

The Youth Leaders of St. Thomas and Symons Valley United Churches are excited to invite you to Youth Group! Youth Group is for everyone who is in grades 7-12. Typically, we meet on Friday evenings or Sunday afternoon for our social event and at service on Sunday morning. The Youth Leaders will send out an email every Monday to let you know what activities will be taking place that week. Our social events typically last two hours and include activities such as charades, crafts, and movie nights. Sunday mornings are focused on faith discussion, learning more about various scriptures, or exploring social justice issues. Friends are always welcome! A Zoom link can be provided for Sunday mornings if you would like to join us virtually! If you are interested in joining us and aren't currently receiving our weekly emails, please reach out and send us an email at youth@stthomasunited.ca or call the church office to be added to our mail-out list!

What is Happening this Month?

Here are the events we currently have planned for October.

Sundays

October 5, 2025: World Wide Communion - Join us as the youth help out with communion during the service and learn about why we do communion.

October 12, 2025: Thanksgiving - Time to give thanks with your families. No youth group today.

October 19, 2025: Mental health - Together we will talk about the importance of taking care of our minds, spirit, and supporting one another. We will also be exploring the stigmas behind mental health.

October 26, 2025: Helping out with Sunday School - Our youth will be lending a helping hand with the younger kids this week.

Fridays

October 3, 2025: Outdoor Games at Symons Valley United Church - Bring your running shoes and dress for the weather. We will be running games outdoors. Assuming weather permits.

October 10, 2025: Baking Night at St. Thomas - get ready for some in the kitchen as we bake together. There May be a special twist.

October 17, 2025: Naked Faith at St. Thomas - A night of food, worship, and games with friends, Naked Faith really has it all. It will also be the 15th Anniversary of Naked Faith.

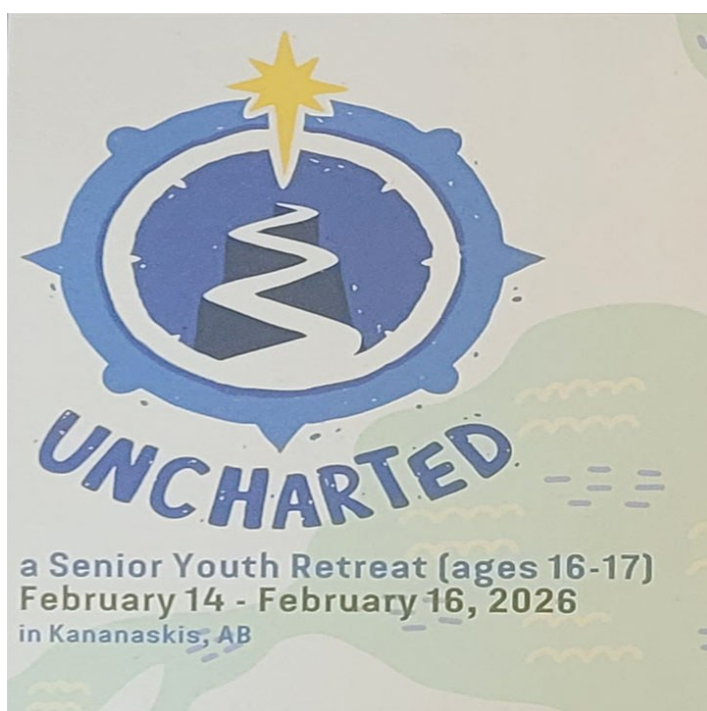
October 24, 2025: Messy Church at St. Thomas - A night that's fun for the whole family. There will be fun activities and stories shared. Senior High stay late afterwards.

October 31, 2025: Halloween helping at St. Thomas - We will be helping out with the Halloween activities. So make sure to wear your best costume.



Fall Fling - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Save the Date: **Saturday, October 18, 2025**, 6:30 pm - 10:00 pm for this third annual family event. Come and enjoy a live band performing 60's, 70's, and 80's music. Snacks will be provided and wine, beer, and pop will be available for purchase. Join us for an evening of fun and relaxation or hit the dance floor and shake a leg. Tickets priced at \$20 per adult, \$10 per child, and \$50/family will go on sale in September. Family and friends are welcome! For more information contact Carol Rix (pgrix14@gmail.com) or Elaine Taylor-Kerr (taylor-kerr@shaw.ca).



Hello!

We are so excited to share our plans for our first ever Senior Youth Retreat! We will welcome youth, ages 16–17, from United Church of Canada places and spaces across BC, The Yukon, and Alberta! Join us for Uncharted!

We will be gathering at Camp Chief Hector in Kananaskis, Alberta, for a time centered on personal discovery, contemplative faith, and meaningful connections; all in a place of inclusive welcome and joy.

Registration opens **June 15, 2025**, and is limited to 40 participants. Please reach out if you have questions to

firstthirdministry@united-church.ca

Music News - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

All of the musical groups are looking forward to another year of making music together. New members, regardless of skill level, are always welcome in all groups.

Upcoming Special Music Presentations and Events:

November 23, 2025: Cocoa and Carols following the service – a chance to enjoy singing some of your favorite Christmas Carols.

November 30, 2025: Maple Leaf Brass will provide the music for this service

December 14, 2025: Children and Youth Choirs' Christmas Musical

December 24, 2025: 8:00 pm service: Adult Choir Canata will be the message for this Christmas Eve service

Group	Practice Time	Ages	First Fall Practice	Contact
Children's Choir	Thursdays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	ECS – Grade 6	Sept 4	Kate Power childrens-choir@stthomasunited.ca
Youth Choir	Wednesdays 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	Grade 6 – University	Sept 3	Barb Robertson barbrob@telus.net
Adult Choir	Thursdays 7:15 pm – 9:30 pm		Sept 4	Pam Bazinet pmbazinet@shaw.ca
Orchestra	Mondays 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm		Sept 15	Dick Worton dworton@telusplanet.net
Strummers	Thursdays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm		Sept 4	Ron French rondifrench@telus.net
Strummers	Tuesdays 1:00 pm -		Sept 2	George Ziroff gziroff@shaw.ca

Adult Choir

We started our new season off with our annual choir advance on September 13, 2025, in the community of Ghost Lake thanks to Corinne Smith. We had a grand time singing, eating, and socializing in the beautiful Ghost Lake Community Centre and surrounds.

We sang for the welcome back service and were delighted to be part of this event. Now we are working on more music including pieces for Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, and Christmas.

As always, new members are welcome. If you are interested in singing, come on out on a Thursday evening and give us a try. You do not need to be able to read music. You just have to love to sing!

Youth Choir

Youth Singers Wanted.

Weekly practices have begun, and yes, we are already learning music for the Christmas musical, "Carol and the Belles", and looking for more members to join the fun.

After three practices, we sang at the **September 21, 2025**, church service, followed by a pizza lunch and a read through of the musical.

Do you know someone who would like to join the youth choir?

For further information please contact: Barb barbrob@telus.net

Children's Choir

Children's choir is off to a great start! Our seven fearless singers have already performed with the strummers, and we're looking forward to getting started on our Christmas musical. New singers are always welcome!

Kate Power childrens-choir@stthomasunited.ca

Orchestra

The Orchestra has resumed rehearsals and is looking forward to sharing our music with the St. Thomas family. We are fortunate to have so many wonderful people in our group and are always eager to welcome other musicians. We rehearse Monday evenings from 7 :00 pm to 8:30 pm. Players of any level are welcome.

Dick Worton dworton@telusplanet.net

Strummers

The Strummers will be practicing on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm in the Library. They are practicing for both church services and outreach concerts. A subset of the group also practice on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm to learn extra music for their outreach program. They plan to sing for worship services and at various seniors' residences. New members are always welcome.

If anyone is interested in joining, please contact Ron French. rondifrench@telus.net

Strummers Outreach

Our purpose is to bring live music to those who are not as mobile with songs they will know so they can sing along and maybe dance to. It's been a fun September for us this year with four performances. Our first time playing at one Seniors Home, the residents enjoyed it so much, they brought us back to play at their open house the following week. We practice Tuesday afternoons from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, working on new songs and tightening up the setlist for our next performance. We play an eclectic mix of songs from Rock such as Katmandu, Jailhouse Rock, and Cadillac Ranch; to Classics like Bridge Over Troubled Waters and Amazing Grace; to Country and Folk songs. We have a fantastic group of people and have a lot of fun performing for others. You can hear some samples of one of our performances at stthomasunited.ca under Music and Strummers Outreach.

Please contact George for more information: georgeziroff@gmail.com

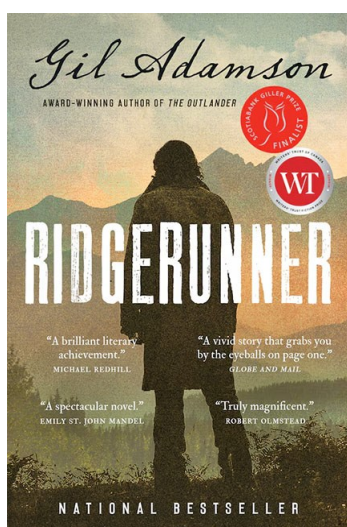
Other Opportunities for Soloists and Instrumentalists

If you would like to share your talents as a singer or instrumentalist during the offering time, as a prelude or postlude or when one of our regular groups is not available to provide an anthem, there are lots of opportunities to do so. This invitation is open to people of all skill levels. It would be particularly fun to have some children play the piano or another instrument, for example. If you are interested, send an email to music-team@stthomasunited.ca or talk to Elaine Taylor-Kerr.

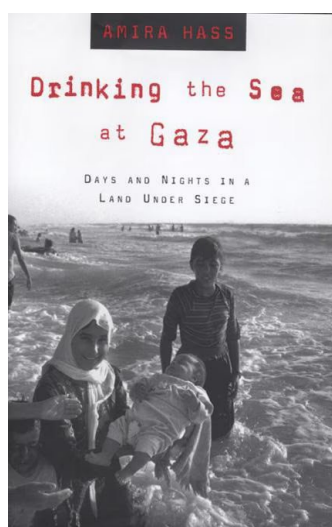
St. Thomas Book Club - Rachel Murray

For more information contact Rachel at rachelmurray@shaw.ca

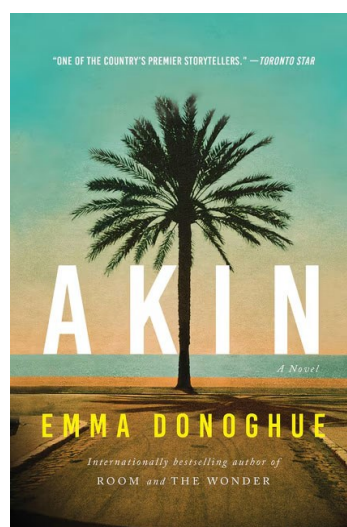
New members welcome! Meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom.



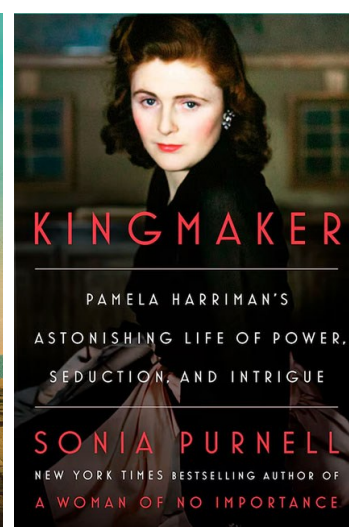
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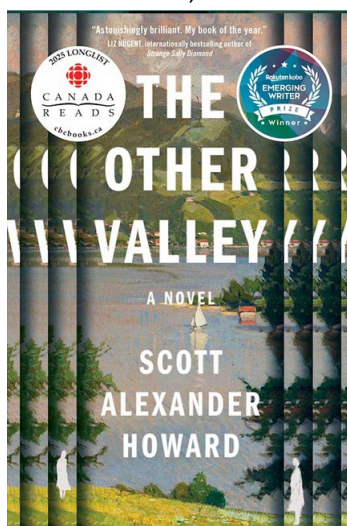
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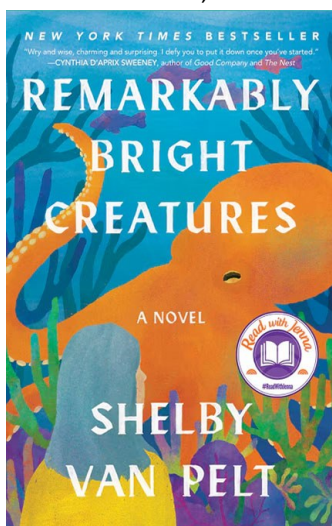
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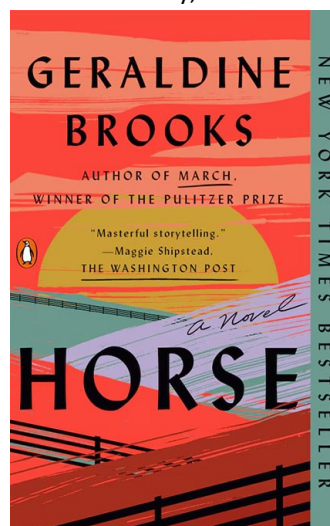
February, 2026



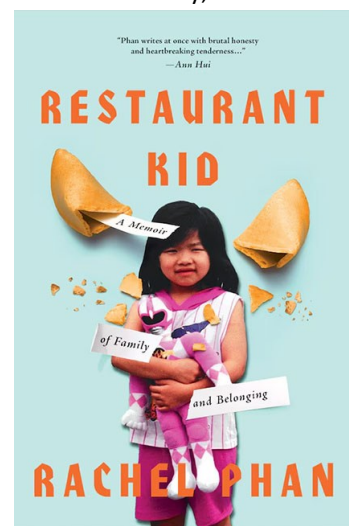
March, 2026



April, 2026



May, 2026



June, 2026

Building and Property - David Blackadar

I'm happy to report that repairs to the exterior back wall of the sanctuary where the leak occurred this summer have now been completed. Mitigation work was also done to protect the back wall and foundation from water damage in the future.

The repair included excavation of the soil to a level below the elevation of the concrete pad to facilitate the construction of a retaining wall and installation of two French drains, one inside and one outside of the retaining wall. Two buried drainage pipes were then installed to carry rain and melt water to the western flowerbed adjacent to Hawkwood Boulevard.

The repaired wall was restuccoed to match the building. Three corners of the building, where the stucco had been worn away, potentially allowing the ingress of water, were also sealed and restuccoed.



New retaining wall with French drains

Corner repair.



Repaired wall restuccoed.

Buried drain lines to west flowerbed

